

ChIPS

wrapper

2 0 2 3



Empowering
Young People

Awards

Congratulations to this year's winners
of our special ChIPS awards:



Liz Dixon Award



Liz Dixon was an inspiring participant of the ChIPS program. Liz's courage, positive attitude, joyous spirit and commitment to those she cared about will be forever remembered.

To keep her memory and her love of the ChIPS Wrapper and the arts alive, the Liz Dixon award was created. This honour is awarded to a ChIPer with the best creative submission in the Wrapper.

2023 Winner – Talicia Bruton

Previous winners:

2022 – Amy Fransen
2021 – Sarah Gill
2020 – Emily Cocks
2019 – Curtis Reeder
2018 – Jade Driscoll
2017 – Emily Wickam
2016 – Jessica Curgenvin
2015 – Tash Payne
2014 – Beth Sleeman
2013 – Sarah Menta
2012 – Jemma Young
2011/2010 – Jessica Marshall
2009 – Geri Herd
2008 – Scott Campbell
2007 – Karen Lay
2006 – Louise Pellegrino
2005 – Elisha Mont

Chris Balnaves Award



Chris Balnaves (Bellsy) was an amazing ChIPer. He joined ChIPS in 1997, and it soon proved impossible to find anybody who didn't know him! Chris was once said to be the heart of ChIPS. Chris attended as many socials

and Reference Committee meetings as possible. Yet he always made time to introduce himself and befriend as many ChIPers as he could.

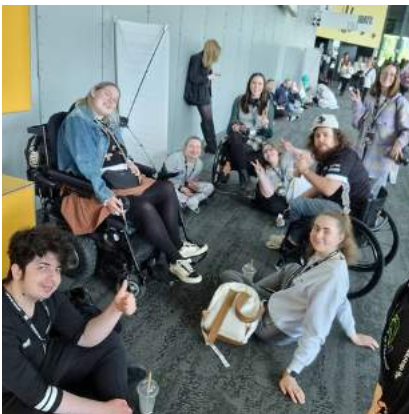
Chris won the first ever Walsh Perpetual Trophy and continued to defend his title in the following years. Unfortunately, we had to say goodbye to Chris as he passed away in 2003. To honour his memory, the Chris Balnaves award was created. It's given to a ChIPer who embodies his spirit. It allows us to always remember his dedication to ChIPS and the contributions he made. Chris was an amazing and inspiring person who will always be remembered and truly missed.

2023 Winner – Stella Hemingway

Previous winners:

2020 – Kale McQuade	2012 – Jemma Young
2019 – Jake Cunningham	2011 – James Williams
2018 – Zoe Perry	2010 – Jordan Hammond
2017 – Natasha Payne	2009 – Scott Campbell
2016 – Emily Ryan	2008 – Stacy Cumming
2015 – Laura Gysslink	2007 – Louise Pellegrino
2014 – Tyrone Kelly	2006 – Bree Regester
2013 – Eliza Masterson	2005 – Andrew Selvaggi

Contents



- | | |
|---|------------------------------------|
| 4 Hellos and Goodbyes | 20 September Camp and Games |
| 5 Chairperson's Report | 21 Good Friday Appeal |
| 6 Harry's Highlights | 22 ChIPS 30th Birthday |
| 7 Bec's Blog & Emily's Experience | 23 ChIPS Creative |
| 8 Jan Camp | 24 Meet your Peer Leaders |
| 10 Meet the RefCommers | 26 Personal Story - Ayan |
| 12 Subcommittee Reports | 27 Personal Story - Elise |
| 14 Run for the Kids & April Social | 28 Creative Contributions |
| 15 Mid year Social | 29 Referral Form |
| 16 Photo Pages | 31 Thank You's |
| 18 Meet your Volunteers | |

Acknowledgement of Country

In the spirit of reconciliation the ChIPS Program acknowledges the traditional custodians of the country throughout Australia and their connections to land, sea, and community. We pay our respect to Elders past and present and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

A message of Diversity and Inclusion

ChIPS prides itself on our core value of inclusivity and is a diverse community that celebrates and welcomes people of different cultural backgrounds, abilities, religions, ethnicities, and members of the LGBTQIA+ community.





Welcome to our ChIPER newbees!

Hadi Alao
Escher Barnett
Naomi Bonacci-Rocca
Victoria Charleston
Kayden Crombie
Victoria Holland
Bella Huybers
Felicity Johnston
Lincon Kent
Anna Leutenmayr
Tahlia Lowe

Mouna Mandara
Dylan Marguccio
Max McDonnell
Kadeja Melhem
Ethan Morfett
Liam Morse
Charlotte Parry-Jones
Kayley Ross
Isabella Rumoro
Vitoria Tuimaseve
Jessica van der Ross



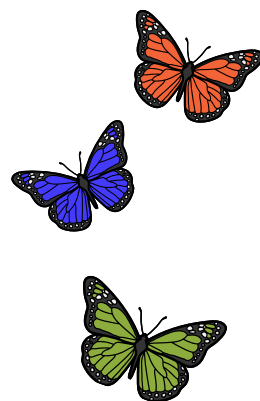
Farewell and all the best to...

the following ChIPERS who are ageing out at the end of 2023.

Caitlin Rohr
Ayan Xusen

Claudia Forsberg
Sam Pichen

Jarryd Mudd
Zali Altman

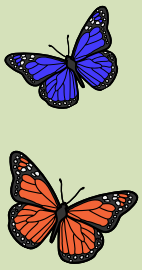


Tribute to Christina

Sadly 2023 saw us bid farewell to a beautiful soul, Christina Curkowskyj. Affectionately known as Christina Ballerina to some, she was a little pocket rocket with a wickedly dry sense of humour and a love for death metal music. Christina was a familiar face at every camp I have attended since beginning with ChIPS and we had many long and wonderful conversations, but my greatest memory of her will always be the Juzzy push up challenge! Ballerina you were taken too soon and will be sadly missed by many.

– Bec





Chairperson's Report

By Stella

It's with great joy and a touch of nostalgia that I reflect on the vibrant journey we've had in the Reference Committee this past year. As I sit to pen down these words, it's hard not to be moved by the essence of what Reference Committee stands for within ChIPS. We've continued to be the heart of this remarkable program, embodying the spirit of "By ChIPERS, for ChIPERS."

This year has been an incredible chapter, marked by collective dedication, growth, and a commitment to our shared values. I am truly humbled by the trust you bestowed upon me to lead this esteemed committee. When I was nominated and elected as Chairperson in my first year on RefComm, it was both exhilarating and nerve-wracking. The path seemed daunting, but the unwavering support from all of you made the journey not just manageable but deeply fulfilling.

First and foremost, I extend my heartfelt gratitude to the incredible ChIPS staff—Harry and Bec. Your constant encouragement, guidance, and unwavering belief in our endeavors have been invaluable. To our mentors and Volunteers, your wisdom and support have been instrumental in shaping our growth this year.

A special acknowledgment goes out to the dedicated leaders of our subcommittees. Your collaborative spirit, diligence, and the sometimes hilariously awkward moments of throwing you completely on the spot made me immensely proud. And to every member of Reference Committee, your unwavering commitment despite the challenges of life and health has been awe-inspiring. Your dedication is the cornerstone of this committee's success.

For those contemplating joining Reference Committee, take that leap! It's a space where growth is inevitable, where you'll discover more about yourself amidst unwavering support.

As we turn the page to a new year, my hope is for Reference Committee to continue thriving. I envision a space where new members find their voice, grow exponentially, and become advocates not just for themselves but for the values that define ChIPS.

To everyone reading this, may the upcoming year be filled with boundless joy and support. Let's keep fostering an environment where each voice is heard, where growth is nurtured, and where the essence of ChIPS shines brighter than ever.

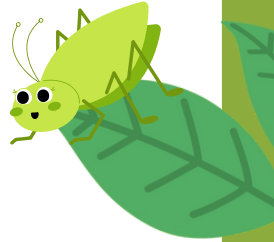
Good luck in 2024!



Harry's Highlights

ChIPS is back!!! I mean, we didn't go anywhere but those COVID restrictions certainly put a damper on things for a few years. January was our first IRL Camp since 2020 and we started the year with a bang. We had a string quartet and Pizza food truck as part of the garden party night... not sure we'll ever be able to top that, what a highlight! The Camp Committee Zak, Ayan & Juls did an extraordinary amount of work to make this happen and were amazingly supported by our Camp Medical lead Jess (Chop) in the lead up and all of our wonderful staff and vols on camp.

For the first time ever, ChIPS joined the RCH at this year's Pride March in St Kilda. It was a bit last minute but a few ChIPERS managed to joined in the fun. With a little more planning we're hoping to get a bigger crew together for 2024. It was lovely to join RCH staff to celebrate at Pride.



We also went back to one of my favourite social activities in the April school holidays, wheelchair basketball, definite highlight for me. Well done Socials Committee! Watching the Advoc/JEDI Committee present at the Academy of Child and Adolescent Health (ACAH) conference in October was great. They had a room full of doctors reflecting on how they communicate with young people and talking openly about how they could improve.

What about the ChIPS 30th Birthday Party!!! It was a pleasure to meet and celebrate lots of original ChIPS staff and hear stories about how the program began. What an amazing legacy they've had. Another highlight for me was the return of September Camp, known as the ChIPS Holiday Vacation. We had lots of positive feedback about the planned chill time but also didn't miss any of the adrenaline activities like the giant swing and rolling treetops course, so much fun!

This year we bid farewell to Asher, due to personal circumstances Asher had to sadly step away from his position at ChIPS. We are grateful to Asher for his contributions while with us and wish him all the best for the next part of his journey.

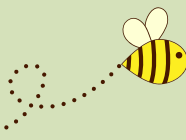
We are excited to welcome Jimmy to the ChIPS staff team. Jimmy has been a much loved volunteer with ChIPS since January 2020 and has slotted in seamlessly with the team and ChIPERS. Big thanks to Bec for her extra work this year and supporting the program while we were a staff member down.

A personal highlight was finishing my Masters of Social Work in Feb, it was a busy few years and I'm excited to incorporate what I've learnt into the work we do at ChIPS. Looking forward to a massive 2024!!!

You can always just eat snails if you're trying to avoid fast food!



Bec's Blog



2023 kicked off with a bang with our first Jan Camp after lockdown and OMG it did not disappoint! What a camp! I can honestly say I've never been to one with such high highs and low lows (or so much road kill!). It was a busy camp, I feel like I didn't really get time to connect with many of you or time to say proper farewells to all the ChIPERS ageing out. Of course, by the time you'll be reading this you will have just finished another Jan Camp and the 2023 one may be a distant memory. I hope we managed to make better connections this time! Jan Camp is always bittersweet with the farewells, and I know there are a couple of ChIPERS who have been a really important part of my ChIPS experience who will be aging out in Jan 2024 (there may be tears). I really want to say thank you for all the amazing times we've had together over the past years and best of luck with your future adventures!

I'd like to say a big welcome to all our new ChIPERS who joined us in 2023 and of course, a HUGE welcome to Jimmy, our newest staff member! It has been a tricky juggle this year with only Harry and I on staff and we are both really looking forward to working with Jimmy. Most of you know he has been volunteering with ChIPS for some time now and will be a great addition to the team, welcome Jimmy!

As usual I'd like to give a special shout out to all our RefComm members this year. You've all put in a huge effort to keep the program running and you all deserve a massive thank you. If you're not on RefComm and have enjoyed being part of the program over the last 12 months maybe consider saying a personal thanks to someone on the team. Someone else who deserves a big shout out this year is Harry, you stepped up to work full time to fill in the staff shortage and worked hard to keep the program running. We are very fortunate that you were able to dedicate so much time throughout 2023, thank you! And of course, I can't go without thanking our amazing volunteers, you guys are all so dedicated to the program and the effort you put into helping the ChIPERS is so greatly appreciated. The program wouldn't be the same without you, thank you!

So what are my highlights for the year? September Camp was fantastic, the 30th birthday celebration was a great night, and I really enjoyed the ChIPS Creative sessions that we ran. Here's hoping we can fit in a few more of those in 2024!



*After ChIPS I'm feeling
buzzed!*

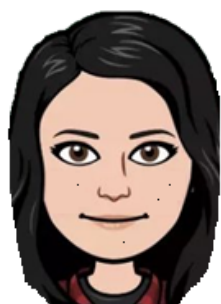
Emily's Experience

Hi Everyone!

It was such an amazing opportunity and experience undertaking my final Social Work placement at ChIPS for 67 days! During day 1 of my placement, I was extremely nervous and wondered what ChIPS would be like. After my first week, I got used to the setting and tasks because ChIPS and the RCH provided a safe, welcoming, and supportive environment for me to learn and utilise social work theories/approaches during practice.

A highlight of my placement was going to the September Camp and meeting all the ChIPERS, volunteers, and Drs/Nurses. I had a really fun time talking to the ChIPERS and hanging out during camp. The bus ride to camp was very lively as we were all chatting away with our peers and anticipating camp.

Another highlight during placement was my involvement with the ChIPS referral and group intake process. I had conversations with many young people living with chronic illness which was a great learning opportunity for self-reflection, knowing my strengths and weaknesses, and areas for further development.



With placement coming to an end, I will take everything I've learned with me during placement to my future practice and won't forget all the wonderful memories and experiences I've had with ChIPS. I wish all ChIPERS, staff, volunteers, med team, mentors, and everyone involved with the ChIPS program a happy and healthy journey heading toward 2024!



January Camp

Now I have butterflies in my stomach!



After a 3 year hiatus due to Covid, ChIPS started the year with a bang at the highly anticipated January Camp 2023. Being able to see everyone reconnecting and getting back into the camp spirit was amazing. The 2023 Jan Camp was held at Lady Northcote YMCA and the theme was Chips (like the snack, not ChIPS), just like previous camps we were all divided into teams with themed names like Grain Waves, Salt and Vinegar, Burger Rings and Original.

One of the more memorable moments of the camp was the garden party held on the second night. The scene was set and everyone dressed to impress, we enjoyed fine dining from a delicious wood-fired pizza truck, while listening to the captivating Invictus Quartet. It was a fantastic evening that was unlike any other ChIPS camp party! The camp activities were as always thrilling and unforgettable, featuring classics such as, canoeing, the giant swing, archery and tee-ball. Everyone did so well supporting their team members and challenging themselves.

The last day of camp was bittersweet as it often is, as we said goodbye to a record number of ChIPERS. The award ceremony and magic moments were a fitting end to the three days and we all headed home tired but with lots of fond memories.

– Caitlin R





They say challenge by choice, but there's no way of worming out of this one!

Meet the 2023 Reference



Freya - Advocacy /JEDI Committee

I enjoy Hanging out with my dog, graphic design, calligraphy, acting, gaming and taking naps.

Why did you join?

I've always had a strong sense of justice and am passionate about inclusivity, equality and equity. The advocacy/JEDI sub committee aligned perfectly with what I hope to have an impact on. I also want to help more people find the ChIPS community across Victoria. Through Ref I've gained greater insight as to how chips runs, met those with similar interests and have practice in leadership roles and public speaking.

Elise - Publication Committee

Enjoys being a gym junkie, reading and scrapbooking.

Why did you join?

For extra social engagement with other CHIPERS and friends.



Amy - Socials Committee

I like to crochet, knit , cross stitch and play sims 4.

Why did you join?

To give back to the program and plan fun socials and events for CHIPERS. By being the leader of my committee I have gained confidence in speaking to bigger groups of people e.g., when the sub committees report back.

Caitlin R - Camp Committee

Enjoys making all sorts of things.

Why did you join?

I have always enjoyed being a part of Reference Committee and I've gained many new friends and lots of confidence from it.



Talicia - Socials Committee

Enjoys crafting, board and card games, and loving her pets.

Why did you join?

I love being able to help out behind the scenes and provide fun opportunities for other CHIPERS to enjoy.



Emily - Socials Committee

Enjoys finding new random hobbies to hyper fixate on, only to be sick of them after a week or two.

Why did you join?

I love being involved in the behind the scenes work of ChIPS and seeing my sub-committee's hard work paid off when we run a successful social! I've gained so many valuable life skills over the years, as well as some amazing memories that I'll hold onto forever.

Ava - Advocacy /JEDI Committee

Enjoys playing cricket, loves sports like formula 1 and soccer.

Why did you join?

I wanted to join Ref to become more involved in the ChIPS community and to learn from it.



Sarah - Advocacy /JEDI Committee

Loves baking and watching horror movies.

Why did you join?

I wanted to create preventative measures so children and young adults didn't fall through the cracks and received great medical care. Part of this means teaching the professionals but also teaching young adults how to advocate for their chronic illness/disability. I gained life long friends and a chance to make a difference.



Georgia - Socials Committee

Enjoys craft, DIY, reading, dancing, swimming and Pilates.

Why did you join?

I joined Ref to become more engaged with the program and to hopefully become a peer leader in the future. I have learnt what is required to organise a social, and connected with other CHIPERS.

Committee Members

Haylee - Advocacy/JEDI Committee

Enjoys makeup, reading, art, movies, and gaming.

Why did you join?

I wanted to be part of a good team.



Caitlin H - Publications Committee

I love baking sourdough bread and focaccia, and crocheting.

Why did you join?

I wanted to give back to the ChIPS community and get to know more CHIPERS.



Sam - Socials Committee

Enjoys going to the gym and sports.

Why did you join?

To help make the program as fun and enjoyable as it can be.



Stella - Camp Committee

When I'm not working or doing ChIPS stuff, I spend most of my time with my horses, riding and competing.

Why did you join?

I wanted to join Ref to give back and put back into the program after only being a participant the past few years. I have gained so much being on Ref this year, not only being a part of organising what's shaping up to be an awesome Jan Camp but also getting to work alongside my amazing peers.



Ayan - Camp Committee

Walking and having brunches with friends.

Why did you join?

I joined Ref because it was a way for me to expand my skills and also make better connections with other CHIPERS and vols. I've gained immense confidence in presenting and also advocating for what I am passionate about.



Jordan - Publications Committee

Playing games is my usual hobby.

Why did you join?

I wanted to join RefComm to give back to ChIPS in some form or another for the impact it has made on me.

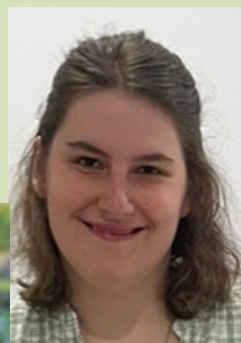
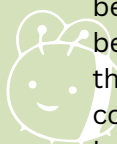


Nicole - Publications Committee

Enjoys reading, tarot card reading, and cooking.

Why did you join?

I wanted to join Ref for fun, to be social and be back within the ChIPS community. I gained more knowledge and friendships through Ref.



Niki - Socials Committee

Enjoys listening to music, going to Kmart, seeing friends, going back to Kmart.

Why did you join?

ChIPS is an awesome community of young people who share similar experiences and I wanted the opportunity to contribute to RefComm to be part of the group of CHIPERS who have an impact on the day-to-day running of ChIPS. I also see RefComm as an awesome opportunity to learn new skills and work in a team.



Siti - Publications Committee

In my free time I love to paint, go for long walks, watch anime, and read fictional books.

Why did you join?

I joined RefComm because I wanted to be actively involved in ChIPS and to give back to ChIPS for what it has done for me. I gained friendships and a safe place where I felt seen and not judged.

Sub-Committee Reports

Advocacy

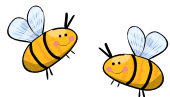
We've made major strides in 2023 for Advocacy/JEDI (Justice, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion). We have been able to do a variety of presentations online, but also in person since restrictions have lessened which has been wonderful. We started strong with our first presentation to Complex Care Hub online and continued with the Adolescent Health Study Day for Teachers and School Nurses and more! We presented at the Academy of Child and Adolescent Health (ACAH) Conference on the topic "Talking the talk with teens" which was received exceptionally well. Plus we did our very first ward visits since the pandemic! We also assisted with the organisation and running of ChIPS 30th Anniversary which was held in October at the Melbourne Zoo.



We've also been directly communicating with the RCH Communications Team to better promote the ChIPS program and bring more awareness to the supports available for disabled and chronically ill young adults including our very own promo video that may debut on RCH screens next year!

We'd like to shout out and express appreciation for our wonderful mentors Felipe and Laura H. Their advice and guidance are invaluable to our wonderful little sub-committee.

– Sarah D



Publications

The Publications Committee is responsible for capturing memories from ChIPS and showcasing this incredible community. I have really enjoyed working together with the Publications Committee this year to produce the Wrapper that you are currently reading.

Thank you to my fellow CHIPER members Elise, Jordan, Siti, Nicole and Tahlia. Creating a magazine is not an easy feat, and I am very proud of our team for all of the time and effort that has been dedicated to deliver this magazine. Thank you to our volunteers, Allen and Kaitlin and Emily. And of course, we would like to thank Bec for supporting the Pubs team and help us to bug everyone for articles!

I hope you enjoy reading the 2023 ChIPS Wrapper as much as we enjoyed making it.

– Caitlin H



Camp

Myself, Ayan, Stella and Mitch have had an amazing year on Camp Committee, We have been working non-stop to plan Jan Camp and ensure that it is as much an amazing event as every Jan Camp in the past has been.

The year started very well and things were going smoothly but of course, things didn't stay that way. As the year went on it felt like we had more and more to do with less and less time, but through lots of hard work and many meetings and messages, we have been able to choose a theme, design t-shirts, create timetables and all the other things that go into planning camp. It has truly been a very busy and fun year and we are all really excited to watch everyone's reactions to our theme and see how much fun everyone has on camp. I believe Jan Camp 2024 is going to be amazing and hopefully, if you are reading this after you will agree with me.

Before I finish I would also like to give a big thank you to James for the immeasurable amount of hard work and support he has given us throughout the year, we couldn't have done it without you.

– Caitlin R



Socials

Wow what a year, 2023 has just flown by so quick but has been filled with lots of fun and camps are back yay! It has been a change of pace for me on this committee compared to Pubs but having my amazing team (Talia, Emily and Georgia) who have put a lot of work, time, commitment and dedication into everything they do, has made it easy to adjust.

In socials this year we have been hard at work planning four amazing and fun filled socials for you all to enjoy. Once again it has been amazing having another social collab with the Sydney CHIPERS with our fun Would I Lie to You online social. We have also had wheelchair basketball, Eureka Skydeck and our end of year social.



I would like to say a big thank you to our volunteers Laura G, Jano, Jimmy and our staff member Harry for all your extra support and guidance you have given us. None of these socials would have happened without every single person's help. It has been a fun year working with you all and having some good laughs. Thanks again team for an amazing year.

– Amy



We snailed it!



Run For The Kids



Continuing our tradition, on Sunday 29th of March we took part in Run For The Kids under team 'Run For Rachael'. The sun was beaming as we crossed the Bolte Bridge in our sea of purple shirts. We "ran" in memory of Rachel Farrelly. She was a lovely member of the program who sadly passed away in 2019. Rachel took part in our Run For The Kids event annually. It is now a great privilege to come together and join Rachel's loved one's in honouring her memory.

– Emily W

April Social

It has been ages since I have been to a CHIPS social. In previous events I have always come home bouncing off the walls and I don't shut up for about a week... and this social was no exception! First of all, I am known to be a very sporty person and the combination of friends, food and some serious physical activity, it couldn't have been more up my ally. Cutting to the chase - I had crazy fun!

Peter from Disability Sport and Rec came with a bunch of basketball wheelchairs, firstly giving a little spiel on himself and his personal experience with sport, life and his disability. It always amazes me the strength people have through their own life challenges. Peter in his case, told us about life for him growing up in Nigeria with Polio.

We played two great games, shooting some hoops and I had serious fun setting my competitiveness aside, with the no-rules policy Peter reinforced. Harry had organised some much needed Subway, as a mid games energiser, where we had some time to update each other on life's going-ons. Overall it was a fantastic afternoon!

– Elise R



There's no feeling sluggish!



Wheelchair Basketball!

Eureka Skydeck! Mid-Year Social

An amazing social took place during the June school holidays, we visited The Eureka Skydeck! The lift shot us all the way up to the 88th floor. We made our way around the Skydeck as we crossed off all the Melbourne Land marks on our bingo cards. The view was absolutely amazing! Those of us who were brave enough even had the opportunity try the edge experience (a transparent glass cube looking down on the city 300 meters below us). To make the day even more memorable, we witnessed a marriage proposal! Anyone would think we were the ones getting proposed with how we reacted, excited would be an understatement. All in all it was a great day!

– Emily W

The Skydeck was a really cool experience with bingo boards to look for locations around Melbourne and “the edge” experience where we moved out in a glass box high above the city. As a new ChIPER this year, I found this social a really good environment to talk and get to know new people.

– Victoria

This was my first social outing as a new ChIPER! I pushed myself out of my comfort zone not only once, but twice! I got to hang out with an amazing group of people, who also have chronic illnesses. It was great to be around people who are so understanding and kind, but I was a bit nervous to meet everyone especially as there was over 20 of us! I also faced one of my biggest fears, heights. I even went in the first group on the sky deck, and I actually enjoyed it. It was great that they organised activities such as sight seeing bingo, as this kept me busy and calmed my nerves. Whilst also getting to know everyone. I enjoyed it. Everyone was so kind and welcoming. I had the best time and am looking forward to the next social event.

– Nae







Meet the Volunteers

On behalf of the ChIPS community, we all would like to say a big thank you to all our amazing volunteers and Medical Staff for the hard work and support they give the program. If it weren't for the Volunteers, ChIPS would be a puzzle with a missing piece!

We asked our volunteers to tell us about dream places they would like to visit and their favourite moments from ChIPS!



Laura H
The Maldives.

Finally coming together post COVID to celebrate and toast to all the graduating CHIPERS at the 2022 End of Year Formal.



Jessica (Sista Chop)
In Australia - my next dream place is Ningaloo Reef. Overseas is Nashville for a music trip.

January Camp in Anglesea when we went to the beach, so many CHIPERS were able to swim at the beach and for a number of CHIPERS this was their first ever visit to the beach!



Jano
I'd love to go back to Uluru, what an amazing experience & special place in our great country.

Being able to support the CHIPERS when they are planning events, camps or other gatherings!



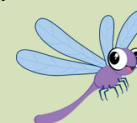
Kaitie
Jordan, Iran and Morocco. (I couldn't decide on one place).

Meeting everyone face-to-face!



Tim (Dr Tim)
I'd love to go to check out Darwin and see some buddies there.

Bohemian Rhapsody would have to take the cake.



Rach
Jan Camp 2024!

September Camp 2023 – my first camp! Celebrity heads game (Julia Gillard speech re-enacted by Stella and Victoria)



Whoever said the beetles have
six legs forgot about Ringo Star!



Felipe

Sweden.

Each camp, seeing the groups create a performance piece, seeing these groups come together and see them form a group and create unique works of art.



James

I'd love to go back to Uluru, what an amazing experience & special place in our great country.

Being able to support the CHIPERS when they are planning events, camps or other gatherings!



Jimmy

I want to go to Morocco in North Africa.

There have been many excellent moments, but I would have to say Jan Camp 2020, the first time I experienced Magic Moments. It was such a nice way to end the camp and it sums up the ChIPS experience for me.

Laura G

I would love to spend an extended period of time in Southern Italy.

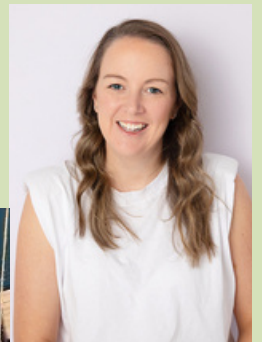
I'm a new volunteer to ChIPS this year (Although I was a member of the program between 2012 – 2019!) but I have no doubt there will be some amazing moments on camp – I can't wait!



Allen

The gateway to hell in Turkmenistan, catacombs of Paris and Göreme in Turkey.

Getting to know the CHIPERS. I don't have a history/had much knowledge of what Chronic Illness is and it's been very insightful getting to know you all.



Elle

Maldives.

Sending a ChIPER in a wheelchair up a high ropes course.





September Camp

From the 20th-22nd of September, the CHIPS program had the opportunity to spend three days together at Camp Manyung, and I think it's fair to say – it was an amazing time. We haven't been to this campsite for many years; however, it overlooked the sea and was absolutely beautiful (minus the hills). Our groups did a range of activities such as high ropes and the giant swing. We also made some skits, and did some art. I personally loved the vibe, and my favourite memory would be hanging out with a few peer CHIPERS in the sun, chatting about life, and so much more! We also had a dress-up night, with a games theme. We had a silent disco and danced our hearts out!

– Niki



Games Nights & PAX 2023

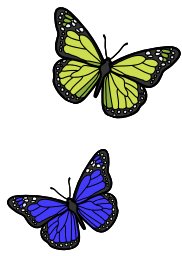
This year, a monthly games night has been introduced online and in person, hosted by the amazing volunteer James W. We have had a Uno championship, which saw Ayan crowned winner and Stella awarded the loser potato. We've played Jackbox online and participated in some trivia. Games nights have been a fun social event where non-gamers and gamers can come together, play new and different games, and have fun doing so. Thank you to James for organising these great nights, and coming up with interesting themes.

– Talicia



On the 6th October, accompanied by Harry and James, 9 CHIPERS went to the PAX Convention at MCEC. It was an amazing day with two of the many highlights being a group game of "You Can't Say the Word Umm" which involved many laughs, and a competitive round of "Golf with Friends" in which some of us ended up rage quitting (definitely not me...). Common consensus of the group was it was an amazing day and hopefully we can go again next year!

– Ella



On Friday the 7th of April, a group of ChIPERs had the opportunity to walk through the banner at Marvel Stadium at the super-clash AFL game. This is all thanks to the Good Friday Appeal and the Royal Children's Hospital and truly was a once in a lifetime experience that was incredible and I am forever grateful for. In total the Good Friday Appeal raised **\$23,061,330**. This was record breaking and I am so thankful to have been given the opportunity to be a part of this event.

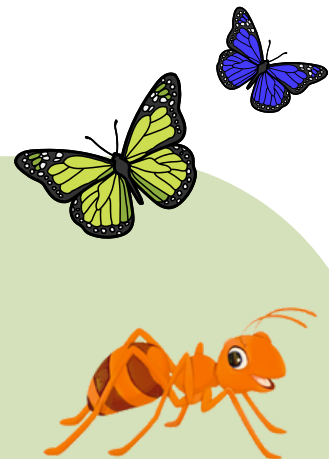


– Ava



Wow, it has been 3 years raising money for the Good Friday Appeal and this year was really special! I challenged myself to play video games online for 30 days in a row in the lead up to Good Friday and the support from the gaming community was beyond what I could have imagined! With all donations directed to the GFA with the support of the Hammond Family Foundation, Cherry Collectables and the Carlton Football club we raised a record \$40,000! \$20,000 of which was nominated to go to ChIPS - bringing the total I have raised to over \$95,000 in the last 3 years! To next year and beyond!

– James (Volunteer)



Trivia Time!

1. What year did the new Royal Children's Hospital open?
2. What year was ChIPS established?
3. What was the Royal Children's Hospital originally called?
4. What is the song that is traditionally played at every Camp disco?
5. What animals live at the Royal Children's Hospital?



ChIPS 30th Birthday Celebration!



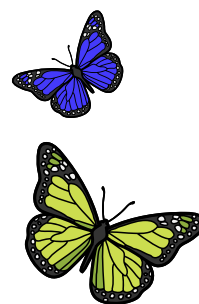
To celebrate 30 years of the ChIPS program, the Advocacy/JEDI Committee organised a celebration that took place at the Melbourne Zoo. Guests included 10 current ChIPERS, the Advocacy/JEDI committee, RefComm Peer Leaders, program donors, volunteers, ChIPS staff (past and present) and medical staff.

The night included a formal aspect and then a chance for guests to spend time together and reflect on memories and experiences of ChIPS over the years. Personally, it was amazing to hear personal stories of what ChIPS has meant to different individuals. For some speakers, ChIPS gave them a sense of community when they were newly diagnosed. ChIPS also provided a space for ChIPERS to go on camps and be supported in activities when their illness impacted on so many aspects of their lives, and often meant that they could not go on camps, or that they would miss out on opportunities that other youth without a chronic illness get.

Chop, a guest speaker, spoke about the efforts that the staff made to help her attend a ChIPS intensive. This ultimately led her to being introduced to ChIPS, which has had such a profound impact on her life. This is one specific speech that was given; however, it reflects the overall reflections that were made. Freya also spent a lot of time and effort creating a wonderful slide show, which displayed so many ChIPS photos of the last 30 years.

I would like to thank the Advocacy/JEDI Committee, staff and volunteers for organising this wonderful night. The team included Ava Guthrie, Mac Zamani, Freya Elliot, Sarah Dhedi and myself. Thank you to Harry and Bec for being instrumental in the facilitation and success of this program - from organising and implementing activities, camps and socials, to spending time side by side with ChIPERS and doing daily life with us at times.

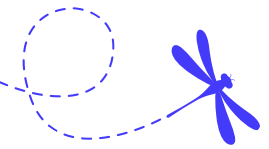
– Niki Mitchell



What a great night! It was so hard to choose the best pics because everyone was looking so fly



ChIPS Creative



A new fun adventure is starting full of quirky creation and imagination, be it drawing, building, or crafting with your own flair, you're bound to have a blast on our creative workshop of fun! Not only making new things but new friends too. Come and join the fun and find your artistic flair and style at ChIPS Creative!

– Zac Mohan

Clay Play Day

On the 19th of July, ChIPers got together once more at the Foundation Space for the return of ChIPS Creative! Offering a variety of creative mediums, ChIPS Creative is a fun, inviting, and safe space that allows ChIPERS to express themselves through art!

This time we got our hands dirty with a 'CLAY PLAY DAY!' Each given a sizeable portion of clay and various tools to sculpt it with, we moulded and shaped our creations! No two pieces were the same! Everyone went out their sculptures, creatures or structures, it was inspiring to see how creative everyone was! Even those like myself, who had no specific vision in mind, found it very enjoyable just making it up as I went! It'd been over 10 years since I'd created anything with clay, so it brought me back, in a way. It was fantastic to see so many brand-new ChIPERS getting involved, as well as older ChIPERS returning after a break! There were lots of engaging conversations had and new connections were made!

The night was a great success! By the end of it, we were already speculating what next month's creative session would be! We were able to take home our creations, should we wish! Although, some of the creatures still hide away in the ChOFFICE, so I hear!

– Kale

Snow Globe Soiree

At this ChIPS Creative event, we made our own snow globes. We included figurines, glitter, beads and glow stick liquid in our jars, along with water and some glycerine. We had some fun with the glue gun putting them all together, and everyone was able to take their unique creation home. We chatted and laughed while we were crafting, and it was great to catch-up with everyone. Thanks to Bec and Felipe for organising this event!

– Caitlin H



Meet Your Peer Leaders

Who is a Peer Leader and what is their role?

A Peer Leader is a ChIPER that upholds the ChIPS values of Inclusivity, Participation, Peer Support, Understanding & Respect. A Peer Leader is selected by current Peer Leaders and staff. Peer Leaders contribute to maintaining a positive, stimulating, and supportive environment in ChIPS by working together with ChIPS Staff and volunteers to support fellow ChIPERS.



We asked our Peer Leaders to answer any of the following questions...

- What do you enjoy most about being a Peer Leader?
- What is your favourite memory from ChIPS?
- What is something creative that you enjoy doing?
- If you could have dinner with any celebrity or historical figure, who would it be?



Talicia (she/her)

1. I love helping with ChIPS intakes and making the new ChIPERS feel welcomed and comfortable. Being able to work with other Peer Leaders to make the program even better is also great.
2. Magic moments on Jan Camp. They are empowering and inspiring.
3. My favourite would be quilling. My Nan taught me.
4. I don't really have a desire to meet any celebrities to be honest.



Caitlin R (any pronouns)

1. I enjoy getting to welcome new ChIPERS to the program
2. Games night earlier this year, my team created a really funny ChIPS RPG and we couldn't stop laughing while we were demonstrating it.
3. I enjoy trying new things. At the moment I'm having a go at sewing.



Amy (she/her)

1. To be able to support ChIP and be a friendly ear to listen.
2. This year, when we had the wheelchair basketball social. It was so good seeing everyone having so much fun and seeing Harry become so competitive, plus my team won.
3. Baking, cross stitch, diamond painting.
4. The cast of Home and Away, and some who are no longer on the show.



Kale McQuade (he/him)

1. Trying to aid in new ChIPERS having a warm welcome into the program, the same way I did when I first joined!
2. Everything about my very first camp! How great it was to meet so many new people & how welcoming everyone was!
3. Video editing!
4. See, I would love to go on a date with Margot Robbie, but in reality I would just be a nervous wreck, hands shaking and teeth chattering.



Caitlin H (she/her)

1. Supporting other ChIPERS and helping to uphold the values that make this community so special.
2. The disco and warm fuzzies at my first Jan Camp – I remember feeling so lucky to be part of this community.
3. I really enjoy baking sourdough bread and focaccia, crocheting and knitting.
4. Elvis Presley would have been an interesting person to have dinner with, and to see live in concert too.



Elise (she/her)

1. Getting to know more fun new ChIPERS, feeling more connected and a part of the ChIPS community and having conversations and a say with the running of the program.
2. Definitely my first Jan Camp, I made some fantastic friends and I really got to physically challenge myself with the different activities, giving my team extra points!
3. I love scrapbooking and journaling, it's a great way to put down all your thoughts.. it's my very own therapist!
4. Jesus, I would love to chat to Him as I feel He would give me a different perspective and understanding to my life.



Ayan (she/her)

1. Being able to support new ChIPERS and volunteers in the program and helping them enjoy it fully.
2. Magic moments on camps will always be my favourite thing.
3. I love baking.



Emily W (she/her)

1. So far I have absolutely loved getting to see the growth of the new ChIPERS both individually and as a group while co-facilitating my first intensive & six week group!
2. Every Jan Camp!
3. I love photography and journaling.
4. Harry Styles. Are we really surprised?!



Stella (she/her)

1. Supporting ChIPERS through all aspects of life and watching them grow both within the program and as young people.
2. Winning the Chris Balnaves award at Jan Camp 2023.
3. I enjoy drawing and graphic design in my spare time.
4. Rosa Parks, because she wasn't afraid to stand up for what was right.



Haylee (she/her)

1. Being able to support others in the program.
2. Always camps - I particularly loved avengers camp.
3. I enjoy makeup and art pour paintings.
4. Meet and have dinner with the cast of Charmed.





*I am proud to have finished
uni after 7 years!*

Ayan!

Personal Story 1



I've been putting this off for a bit (to the absolute dismay of the pubs team, sorry!!!!) & I'm realising that it's because this is immensely bittersweet and completely full circle - the first time I wrote something in the wrapper was my personal story after my first camp & this is my last camp and the last thing I'll be putting in the wrapper & I didn't know how to start it if I'm completely honest. As much as this is a personal story, it might also be part reflection so I'm not sure how this will look or sound at the end so come along for the ride.

I was 10 when I was officially diagnosed w/ Crohn's disease - an inflammatory bowel disease that can affect your whole digestive system. It took a minute to get diagnosed but after I was, I felt better than I had in a long time. I was put on some meds and I thought the hard work was over. *Note to self: the hard work was just beginning*.

I spent years in and out of hospital, many admissions and surgeries and part of that was because I never took my meds and didn't tell anyone about it. It took me a long time to even tell my friends I had Crohn's - in my head I couldn't fathom how to just casually bring up in convo that I had a bowel condition and how that would be received (especially in grade 5 which is an ugly time of school). Truthfully, I never really processed what it meant to have a chronic illness - after my diagnosis I kind of just went on w/ my life. I didn't realise I needed to until years later - when I joined ChIPS. I met people who had the same condition as me and understood on a deeper level my exact feelings, feelings I didn't know existed for me until then.

Processing my chronic illness also helped me figure out my voice and the contribution I'm supposed to have when it comes to my treatment - for a long time I kind of just let my doctors treat me how they saw fit and didn't voice my opinion on certain treatments because I didn't feel like I had a say (not bc of my doctors but that's just how I thought it was supposed to go). That changed years later and sure, it's meant changing doctors to find the right fit, but doing that has helped me immensely, not only w/ my confidence and instinct about myself but also with my mental health because I'm not stressed about doing something I'm not comfortable with.

I think one of the biggest lessons I have learnt and I'm still learning is that I not only have a say, but arguably the most important say over my health, & that striving to find a wonderful team of different clinicians who I get excited to see and am comfortable with - enough to say when something doesn't work for me, without fearing reprimand or repercussion, is one of the best things I've done. It makes trusting my instinct and feelings much easier than it has ever been because I know that it'll be listened to and validated.


Lastly, I am super thankful to all of you - both current and past chippers who welcomed me when I really didn't want to join and for those who've given me friendship, joy and support which has made my experience better than I expected. It is a weird yet huge privilege to reflect on 7 years of experiences and long-lasting memories. A huge shoutout to not only the staff but especially the med staff and vols, who this program wouldn't be what it is without them, who I've never seen people with more dedication and joy and fabulous costumes + who tirelessly work behind the scenes to make it all a wonderful experience for us - I'm immensely grateful to you all.






Elise!


Personal Story 2



Hi my name is Elise, I'm 20 years old and a bit of a nut when it comes to physical activity. Under the age of 4 year old, I broke both my parents noses, broke Mum's jaw and dislocated my Aunt's. Flinging myself around and thumping into things, became part of my personality. Anything that makes you sweat I was doing, from rugby to water sports, tree climbing to sprinting. But unfortunately I haven't always been able to do what I love, due to my health. For years I'd been bumbling along with life always knowing something was wrong. I did a lot of sport.. mostly just running into things, but I was in constant pain and of course none of the doctors knew why. Years later, at the ripe age of 12 I was finally given a diagnosis. I was told I had Lupus. My constant pain was the juvenile arthritis kicking in, freezing up all my joints whenever I did any sport or broke a sweat. For a long two years my health wasn't properly managed, I was still in pain, the fatigue was a killer and I was constantly struggling to eat. From being an active young person, chance's were most of the time you would find my huddled up in bed. Then the worst happened - my Lupus attacked my spinal cord. Lupus is the king of autoimmune diseases. Like an organ transplant the body rejects, my body does spontaneously. But like always, I had to have a special case. My lupus shut down my central nervous system. One night I got up to go to the bathroom and like being double bounced on a trampoline (one of my past-time activities) my knees buckled and that was the last step I ever took. I was rushed to hospital, and after MRI's of my spinal cord and brain the doctors discovered my spinal column was entirely filled with inflammation. The worst part of the inflammation was at my T10 vertebrae, which is about at the height of your bellybutton and that is approximately where I became paralysed from. After a 7 month hospital stay involving chemotherapy, plasma, immunoglobulin transfusions and plenty of Allied Health, I was sent to go home. One of the Allied Health staff Aleisha, introduced me to ChIPS. When I heard about it, I didn't want to know. "Another support group with a bunch of random sick kids? No thanks!" But after about the fourth time she brought it up, I agreed to give it ago and haven't looked back since. Even though I was now paralysed, I knew that it wasn't going to stop me from doing any sport. Disability Sport and Rec, who often came into Monash Health and played modified sport activities with the hospital inmates, which fueled my fire to get back into the things I loved doing. I'm sure you wouldn't be surprised to know that I became a personal trainer once I finished school and the sport also didn't stop. I tried out para equestrian, wheelchair basketball and finally fell into wheelchair racing. Unfortunately, in the beginning of 2023 my lupus damaged my spinal cord for a second time, making the level of my paralysis higher, losing the little bit of function and feeling I had. Back on the chemo, infusions and treatments again.. all sport stopping for a while. It wasn't easy. To make things a little more complex, an unusual antibody marker was found in my spinal fluid. It's a relatively new discovery, the doctors don't really know what it means because it's so rare... which isn't very helpful. But they suspect that the internal spinal damage occurrences could be a common affair. Besides this recent blow, I'm still living a very active lifestyle. I'm currently training for a marathon in Japan, working as a personal trainer, doing further study, starting up my own business and hanging out with my favourite supportive ChIPS family.



Don't worry, I have anti-bodies!



Creative Contributions

A Creative Story

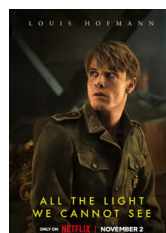
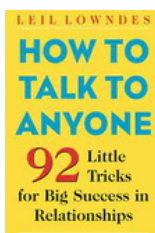
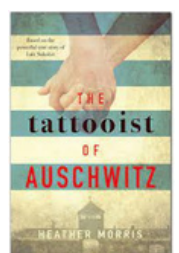
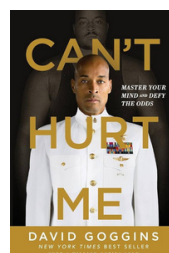
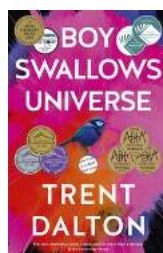
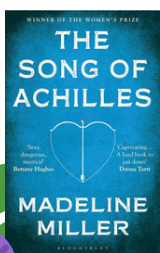
Lily and Amelia are on the clock to find a safe place from the encroaching "War of Magic". They have used magic in the past and are being hunted. Lily's Elfish ways and Amelia's witchcraft have been outlawed in their land and the Purists are hot on their trails. Lily and Amelia are on the clock to find a safe place from the encroaching "War of Magic". They have used magic in the past and are being hunted. Lily's Elfish ways and Amelia's witchcraft have been outlawed in their land and the Purists are hot on their trails. After a couple of days they encounter a slime named Sam on the same mission, looking for a new home. Slimes are amorphous masses that can take on the form of a human and are well trained in travel, mainly staying human. One late night, after many close calls dodging the Purists and detouring in search of safety, the travellers found themselves lost in the forest. They hear small howls and feel eyes watching them, a small wolf jumps out and falls right in their path. The wolf's name is Kate, she is a young wolf who has a very active mind but is very accident prone. Kate decides to join them and she helps Lily, Amelia and Sam get back on the right path to Derian, better known as the safe zone.

– Zac Mohan



I'll be reading and watching all of these!

Book & Movie Recommendations



Chronic Illness Peer Support (ChIPS)

Adolescent Medicine
The Royal Children's Hospital Melbourne
50 Flemington Road
Parkville Victoria 3052 Australia
TELEPHONE +61 3 9345 6616
Mobile: 0438 155 527
www.rch.org.au/chips



Chronic Illness Peer Support (ChIPS) Referral information

The Chronic Illness Peer Support program (ChIPS) is a vibrant adolescent peer support program that has operated for over 25 years providing critical psychosocial and peer support for 12-25 year-olds living with a chronic illness.

Entry into the ChIPS program begins with participation in an Intake Group, either weekly during school term or over two days in school holidays. Participants share experiences of living with chronic illness and learn from each other in a facilitated, semi-formal and safe environment. Once program participants have completed their Intake Group they can take advantage of year-round recreational, social and leadership activities.

Qualifying criteria

ChIPS is available to young people who are:

- 12-25 years of age with a primary diagnosis of chronic illness
- living with a chronic illness or condition that affects their daily life
- able to attend an eight- week peer support group or a two-day intensive group
- ready and able to participate / function well in a group setting

Referral process



FAQs

Q. Who can refer a young person?

A. ChIPS takes referrals from health professionals including, but not limited to: doctors, nurses, psychologists, school counsellors, social workers, youth workers. Parents/guardians and individuals may fill out the referral form and have it endorsed by their healthcare professional.

Q. When does ChIPS accept referrals?

A. ChIPS is accepting referrals year round on a rolling basis and will do its best to place those who are referred in a peer support group as soon as possible.

Q. Does the young person need to be a patient of The Royal Children's Hospital?

A. No. ChIPS is run at The Royal Children's Hospital, Melbourne but it engages young people from throughout Victoria.

Q. Is there anyone the young person can talk to if they are not sure about ChIPS?

A. Yes. ChIPS staff are available to speak with the young person or referring health professional, or if the young person would prefer, they can talk with a current ChIPS participant from the ChIPS Reference Committee. Telephone (03) 9345 6616.

Chronic Illness Peer Support (ChIPS) Referral

This form is to be endorsed by a relevant healthcare professional.

Mail to: ChIPS program, Adolescent Medicine, The Royal Children's Hospital, 50 Flemington Road, Parkville Victoria 3052

Facsimile: (03) 9345 5943 Email: chips.program@rch.org.au Telephone: (03) 9345 6616

Young person's details

Date of referral: / /		RCH UR (if applicable):	
First name:		Surname:	
Age:		Date of birth: / /	
Address:			
Email:			
Home telephone:		Mobile:	
School:		School year level:	
Parent / guardian name:		Telephone:	
Parent / guardian name:		Telephone:	

Nature of illness

Current medical condition/s:
Symptoms and how the young person is affected (incl. phys/psych/socially/family/school):
Hospital/Mental Health Care system linked with:
Other information:

Referring healthcare professional's details

First name:	
Surname:	
Occupation:	
Organisation / department name:	
Organisation / department address:	
Telephone:	Email:
Other healthcare professional (if applicable):	Telephone:

a) Please initial if you give consent to be contacted prior to, during and/or post this young person's involvement in the ChIPS program if the program staff should need your assistance, guidance or support.	Initials:
b) Please initial if the young person and their parent/guardian are aware that you are referring the young person to the ChIPS Program.	Initials:
c) Please initial if you believe the young person you are referring wants to be involved in and would benefit from the ChIPS Program.	Initials:
d) If a patient of the RCH please initial that the young person and their parent/guardian have been informed their electronic medical record will be accessed by program staff as part of referral review process.	Initials:

We would like to thank...

Our Program Donors

Kmart Australia

Estate of Colin Stephenson

Bob Semple Endowment

William Buck (VIC) Pty Ltd

Helen Macpherson Smith Trust

The Farrelly Family

The Royal Children's Hospital
Foundation

Our In-Kind Support

Victoria Police

Southern Cross Trophies

Trivia Answers

1. The new RCH opened in 2011.
2. ChIPS was established in 1993.
3. The RCH was originally called Melbourne Free Hospital for Sick Children.
4. Bohemian Rhapsody is traditionally played at every Camp disco.
5. Meerkats and fish live at the RCH.



I've been on the web too long and
these puns are starting to sting!





The Publications Committee

Contact CHIPS at:
The Royal Children's Hospital
50 Flemington Road
Parkville, 3052
Ph: (03) 9345 6616
www.rch.org.au/chips