

CHIPS 2014 WRAPPER

CHRONIC
ILLNESS
PEER
SUPPORT

E M P O W E R I N G Y O U N G P E O P L E



Liz Dixon Award



Liz Dixon was an inspiring participant of the ChIPS Program. Liz's courage, positive attitude to life, joyous spirit and commitment to those she cared about will be forever remembered by the ChIPS community. To keep her memory and love of the ChIPS Wrapper and arts alive, we created The Liz Dixon Wrapper Award for Creative Arts. This is awarded to the ChIPS member with the best creative submission into the magazine.

2014 Winner – Beth Sleeman

Previous winners:

2013 Winner – Sarah Menta

2012 Winner – Jemma Young

2010/2011 Winner – Jessica Marshall

2009 Winner – Geri Herd

2008 Winner – Scott Campbell

2007 Winner – Karen Lay

2006 Winner – Louise Pellegrino

2005 Winner – Elisha Mont

ChIPS isn't just about chronic illness.

It's about being an adolescent and getting on with life.

ChIPS aims:

- To continue to provide ChIPS members with opportunities to interact with peers who have a similar understanding about life with a chronic illness.
- To provide ChIPS members with the opportunity to develop and utilise skills, such as leadership and peer support, and raise self confidence through opportunities provided within the program
- To provide ChIPS members with the skills and confidence to increase their ability to deal with life with a chronic illness
- To provide ChIPS members with the opportunity to actively raise awareness in our community, not just about ChIPS but about living with a chronic illness

Chris Balnaves Award



Chris Balnaves (Bellsy) was an amazing ChIPS member. He joined ChIPS in 1997, and shortly after it proved impossible to find anybody who didn't know him, or at least know of him! Chris was once said to be the heart of the ChIPS community, attending all the social events and reference committee meetings he could, whilst always making the effort to introduce himself to new people and befriend as many Chippers as possible.

One of the highlights for Chris was the annual ChIPS camp, which he took delight in organizing and participating in. Chris won the first ever Walsh Perpetual Trophy and proved to be a very competitive team leader, trying his hardest at every camp to win it back. Unfortunately, we had to say goodbye to Chris as he passed away in 2003.

The Chris Balnaves award for Most Outstanding Camper was created to honour and remember Chris for who he was, and his dedicated contribution to ChIPS and the spirit of the program. Chris was an amazing and inspiring person who will always be remembered and truly missed.

2014 Winner – Tyrone Kelly

Previous winners:

2013 Winner – Eliza Masterson

2012 Winner – Jemma Young

2011 Winner – James Williams

2010 Winner – Jordan Hammond

2009 Winner – Scott Campbell

2008 Winner – Stacy Cumming

2007 Winner – Louise Pellegrino

2006 Winner – Bree Regester

2005 Winner – Andrew Selvaggi



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JARNIA'S JOURNAL

What an amazing year 2014 has been in ChIPS!!

Reference Committee began in late February with our 'Lift Off' meeting, which got everyone focused for the year and provided a bit of fun as well. Reference Committee comprised of 22 members this year, it was great to see such a big team and such enthusiasm for adding a fundraising subcommittee. Throughout the year this group has taken on organising many elements of ChIPS including socials, January Camp, publications, fundraising and promoting the work of ChIPS. A huge round of applause to you all for the contribution you have made to the program. Also, an enormous thanks must go to Jano, Jess, Elle, Lesh, and Jordo for your guidance and support of the Reference Committee.

See you all for another action packed year in 2015!

Take care,
Jarnia ☺

It began with a HOT HOT HOT 'Monopoly' January Camp back at one of our favourite venues, Cave Hill Creek. Even the heat didn't stop us participating in lots of fun activities including rafting, archery, kite making, a trivia quiz and of course the highlight of camp the HEROS party. So many awesome costumes and what a touching moment for staff and volunteers to see a group of you dressed as us! Massive thanks to all that attended for making the camp what it was and special thanks to our volunteers and medical team.

You guys are fantastic!

What a range of socials we have enjoyed this year. The first school holidays we headed off to play mini golf, this was followed by Science works then Ten Pin Bowling and finally we got to hang out at the MCG and chill out with a picnic. The socials committee are to be congratulated on their work in making these socials happen. Thanks and well done! ☺

The ChIPS Family Holiday Vacation was an-all new camp this year – and what an amazing camp it was! I think it had it all. Loads of time to hang out with each other, some great high ropes elements, new shoes...and the odd hurricane! Thanks to Meagan, Jano and Elle for all their efforts.

It's been fantastic to see a number of new ChIPERS complete either Eight Week Group or the Intensive this year. Welcome into ChIPS and I hope your journey with us is a great one.

Thanks to all our volunteers and to the peer leader group who provide Meagan and I with so much support. Your passion and contribution to ChIPS is hugely appreciated by the ChIPS community.

Lastly, to the Pubs team, who are in charge of putting this magazine together, an amazing effort - well done!

MEAGAN'S MUSINGS

Wow, is it that time already? Where has this year gone? Is time getting faster? I guess that is what happens when lots of fabulous things are happening and we are kept busy. And that is definitely what has been happening at ChIPS this year. So much fabulous stuff has gone on this year in ChIPS. I will focus on just a few in this episode of Meagan's Musings.

We received 13 written applications of which 9 ChIPPERS went through the 3 person panel interview process. After this intensive process Jemma Young and Scott Campbell were the successful two in achieving the travel scholarships. So we set off, with accompanying nurse Elle Goss and travel guardians Heather Campbell and Jane Franklin to fly all the way to Paris on June 13. We were warmly welcomed by the IAAH organising committee and by the other delegates at the Congress.

Other highlights this year were the very 1st ChIPS Family Holiday Vacation for which I turned my hand to organising for the first time. From all accounts it was a success and the feedback has been really positive so I think we will do it again next year! 36 ChIPPERS and 14 Staff and Volunteers descended on Camp Manyung in Mt Eliza for 3 days where we had giant swinging, crate climbing and high ropes challenges up in the trees plus the selfie challenge, very amusing and creative skits and an awesome crazy hair night party complete with the ChIPS Tunes band performance!

This year we were also able to launch the very first ChIPS Tunes. It was a fabulous ten weeks of sessions which culminated in a successful performance at the ChIPS Family Holiday Vacation. I was so happy to finally be able to bring my music passion and music therapy training into ChIPS so thanks to all involved for making it a success. Thanks especially to Tyrone Kelly for lending his musical talent and peer leading skills and Harry Brown for his multi instrumental abilities, talent, time and ideas. Every ChIPPER who participated in the ChIPS Tunes was a star. We be definitely be continuing ChIPS Tunes so tuned for more details!

The major focus for me for the first half of this year was getting a representation of the ChIPS program to Paris to present at the International Association of Adolescent Health (IAAH) Youth Forum and Congress. It was a wonderfully overwhelming experience for me to facilitate this process and go over there together with a team from ChIPS. Late last year the ChIPS program was successful in getting funding to offer two travel scholarships to two ChIPPERS to attend the IAAH European Youth Forum and Congress in Paris in June, 2014.

Scott and Jemma spent the first day of the congress participating in the Youth Forum. They overcame some challenging language barriers to work with young people from France, Romania, Germany, Denmark and Switzerland to create a presentation on issues affecting young people including mental health and schooling. Scott and Jemma did the ChIPS program proud by presenting in a plenary session to all of the 400+ Congress delegates with all of the participants of the youth forum.

The highlight for me on this trip though was presenting with Jemma and Scott. Together we represented the ChIPS program and presented on how youth participation, peer support and the ChIPS program assists young people with a chronic illness to be connected, take better care of themselves while supporting their peers. You can watch the whole 30 presentation here on YouTube <http://youtu.be/2F1KWIneRJs> or you can catch the highlights in this 5 minute video <http://youtu.be/DrUPI9y9Hew>. One of the things we learnt was that there is no other program like ChIPS in the world and we have a lot to teach others about the benefits of a program like ChIPS. A massive congratulations to Jemma and Scott and all the ChIPPERS involved in the application process and the presentation. And a huge thanks to Jane, Heather and Elle for their energy throughout the trip.

Thank you to Jano for leading much of the camp and Elle and Jess for their organisation and Jarnia for her support along the way. Also a big thanks to the medical team and volunteers too!

In addition to these amazing events we welcomed several new ChIPPERS into the program through the 8 week group and Intensive program which ran throughout the year as usual. We continue to gather new referrals all the time to run the 8 week group and 2 day intensive to bring new ChIPPERS into the ChIPS family.

As with all my musings I like to end them with a musical recommendation. This one has come from a very good friend of mine and I love it. Check out Sam Smith here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p-U6dcTEOg>

I feel a strong sense that the ChIPS program just keeps growing from strength to strength and that only comes from the passion and dedication of the ChIPPERS. Thanks to you all for your inspiration.

Thanks also to Jarnia and John, the Peer Leaders and all the volunteers for the support, dedication, vision and passion.

Here's to next year!

Meagan

CHAIR PERSON'S REPORT

Another year gone, another Reference Committee and my first year as chairperson. Although I've helped out in the past, this was my first time being voted in! James was my co-chairperson, for when I wasn't there. You'll have to ask him how that went, as obviously I wasn't there.

It's been a busy year for Ref Comm, many meetings being packed to the brim and resulting in running slightly overtime... With 1 or 2 meetings finishing early, bonus! I half knew what to expect going into the role, but the actual running of meetings can be challenging (because everyone has important things to say) and I have to keep everyone to time...

Which isn't my strong point but I think I managed okay?!

You know it's a busy year when you can't remember what was discussed. A lot of discussion centred around Jess's Feel Good program idea, which you will all hear about soon, and ChIPS tunes which was such a success that it's going to continue next year. Read on, to other articles about the year that was and for details about other things and stuff.

What's a Ref meeting without tangents and stories and various other forms of controlled chaos. It makes for a fun yet challenging role! This year was unique in that we tried to bring some semblance of healthy eating to the meetings instead of everyone munching on McDonalds. I think this was a great success. We had Turkish food one meeting, a platter of veggies and dip at another and most importantly Grapes at almost every meeting. Because who doesn't love grapes. With a capital G. Because grapes deserves a capital G. Tangents are awesome.

ANYWAY. Thank you for the opportunity to take on this role, and learn some new skills, it's been a pleasure but now I pass the baton on to whomever get's voted in next year.

Jemma.

Happy 2014!

EDITOR'S RAMBLINGS

We have had quite a hectic year in pubs this year (2014) with a lot of set backs but we have managed to move things forward and start a much needed change, The first chill was a battle for us having one of our members in Paris whilst trying to organise putting it together but we got it out and I believe it looks amazing!

We also got the privilege of meeting the crew at dumbo feather which Tash has written a lovely Article about (below) which has helped us with the beginning of the pubs changes, Journalism, We have learnt about hosting interviews and are hoping that in the future publications articles will be mainly written by the publications committee themselves.

Another change we added was a competition at the end of the first chill, we are hoping that it will intrigue more people in reading and in joining in on the pubs fun!

I personally have had a great time in pubs this year and would recommend people join refcomm and give pubs a try.

Lastly I would like to apologize to everyone that submitted something for the second chill, we had a lot of trouble chasing up some important articles and were unable to finish it off, Sorry for any inconvenience this has caused.

Caitlin M.

DUMBO FEATHER

On the 22nd and 26th of September, the ChIPS publications committee and the YAC group participated in a Dumbo Feather workshop.

Dumbo Feather is a magazine company based in Melbourne about extraordinary people who have extraordinary ideas. They showcase 5 interviews in each quarterly mag and aim to inspire people to make a change in the world.

We arrived at a huge, but beautiful mansion situated in St. Kilda and were greeted by the lovely Dumbo Feather staff. We settled in, got a tour of the mansion and then got stuck into learning.

The workshop was based around interviewing techniques and how to present the interview on paper so that it was interesting to the reader's eye. We were taken through the many stages and process that Dumbo Feather use while creating their magazines and got the opportunity to ask questions and engage in conversation about mastering interviewing techniques and how to find people to interview.

Throughout the week, we all were given the opportunity to interview someone, and on our return on Friday, we were able to collate all our answers into a formatted page and style the interview. Everyone's creative side came out and all our interviews looked appealing and were interesting to read.

Throughout this experience, we were able to be guided through a different way of presenting articles and magazines and we hope to use the techniques we have learn throughout the next couple of ChIPS publications.

Thank you to Jordo and Dumbo Feather for this opportunity!

Tash.

SUB COMMITTEE UPDATES

SOCIALS

Hey guys,

2014 has been a pretty awesome year for socials. Laura G, Jemma, Adam and myself have been busy working alongside the lovely Jano. This year we really wanted to take ChIPS to some new and exciting places, we started of with Mini-Golf, which had a pretty great turnout and we were super lucky with the weather, overall the day felt so relaxed and set a great tone for the year ahead. The next social was held at Science works which brought back some school memories for some. Following that we had the Strike bowling and Karaoke social, we tried to keep it a bit more relaxed and close to home because we wanted everyone to be nice and relaxed for ChIPS Family Holiday Vacation!!!! (WOOO). After recovering from an incredible camp we had the last social of the year at the iconic MCG. As I am writing this, it hasn't happened yet, but I have high hopes that everyone enjoyed their time. If you weren't able to make some of the socials, we hope you can come to some in 2015. We already have lots of ideas ready and waiting. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from the Socials Ref Committee. Alycia, Jemma, Laura G, and Adam

FUNDRAISING

Fundraising has had a fabulous first year, with a lot of planning and technical stuff being sorted out to pave the way for some great fundraising ideas! We set up the Everyday Hero page to get people donating to ChIPS and to get it out there, we have photos from past camps, socials and other ChIPS events, some personal stories and information about ChIPS. So don't forget to share it around! We have also organised a barbecue at Bunnings Warehouse which at this stage looks to be in the first 6 months of 2015.

Laura C.

SUB COMMITTEE UPDATES

ADVOCACY

What a ripper year it's been for ChIPS in particular advocacy!

The subcommittee featured -

Myself

Emily

Tyrone

Georgia

Eliza

and the lovely Lesh as our mentor!

I've been fortunate enough to be given such a strong committee throughout the year, we have accomplished most if not ALL we planned too, including organizing a grand round speech and talking at the ASMA national convention both occurring in 2015.

We have also finalized our show bags which will hopefully also arrive in 2015!

James.

CAMP

Camp Committee this year has had heaps of ideas and heaps of achievements. For starters we got things done ahead of schedule for any committee of any year, a camp site was booked by the 2nd reference committee meeting, we decided to invite each member of staff that we wanted to come to camp by a personalised letter of invitation, jazzed up the camp application forms by messing around with fonts and giving them a cover page and have many surprises awaiting everybody who will be attending the 15th ChIPS camp in January. We got many things done so quickly that it really only left the things that have to be left til the end of the year to be done, which is why it was such a bummer that one of our team had to leave us in October just as things are so close. We hope that you can overcome everything life throws at you Abbie and we wish you all the best of luck in your future endeavours. From India, Uli and myself

Phish

REFERENCE COMMITTEE INTRODUCTIONS

Name: Jarnia

Nickname: Jarnia

What do you do in your spare time?: Drink coffee and read the paper ☺ Head to the gym, catch up with mates.

What does the word family mean to you?: Being around people that care about you and can listen – they encourage and support you and are your cheerleaders!!



Name: Meagan Hunt

Nickname: Meags

What do you do in your spare time?: Hippy things and reminisce about camp! Oh and I play music with my band, kayak down the river, do yoga so I can stand on my head and make paper puppets.

What does the word family mean to you?: Acceptance, belonging, laughter, love, support, a place where I can truly be myself.

Name: Elle

Nickname: Junior

Subcomm: Fundraising

What do you do in your spare time?: Photography

What does the word family mean to you?: Friendship, laughter, love and amazing company.



Name: Jane Franklin

Nickname: Jano

Subcomm: Socials

What do you do in your spare time?: Hang out with my dogs on my property & assist with the coaching of the Vic Spirit women's cricket team.

What does the word family mean to you?: Good times with good people.

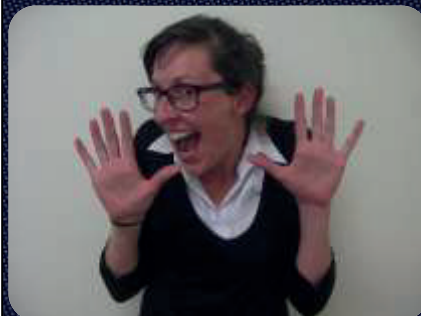
Name: Lesh

Nickname: Lesh

Subcomm: Advocacy

What do you do in your spare time?: Discover choc mint perishables and have picnics for one.

What does the word family mean to you?: It means everything. Family are those around you who know you in your truest form. When you are part of a family, you experience love, care, support, connection, but also challenge, contest and annoy the hell out of you. All the qualities family brings you are a part of your journey and influence the individual you are.



Name: Jordan Hammond

Nickname: Jordo

Subcomm: Publications

What do you do in your spare time?: Reading, knitting, yoga, meditation, gardening

What does the word family mean to you?: Respect, love, communication, it means all getting together and having fun!

REFERENCE COMMITTEE INTRODUCTIONS

Name: Jessica O'Dowd

Nickname: Chopper

Subcomm: Camp

What do you do in your spare time?: Gym, running, playing and listening to music, watching the football – 'The Blues', hiking

What does the word family mean to you?: Love, support, security, safety, happiness, fun, trust, good times and laughs.



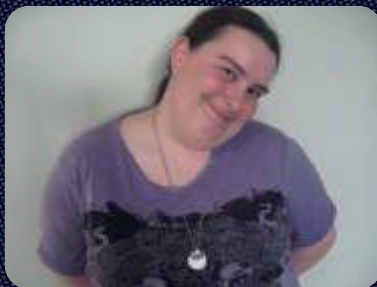
Name: Beth

Nickname: Phish

Subcomm: Camp

What do you do in your spare time?: eat, sleep and contemplate different aspects of life, the universe and everything.

What does the word family mean to you?: Family are the people that you choose to let into your heart and maybe a glimpse at the essence of your soul.



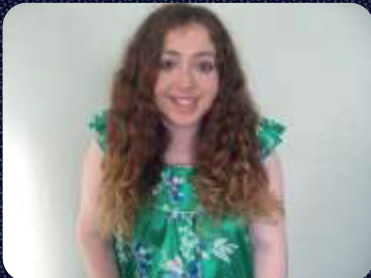
Name: India Murphy-Miller

Nickname: Indi

Subcomm: Camp

What do you do in your spare time?: Watch Youtube videos.

What does the word family mean to you?: Support, caring, togetherness.



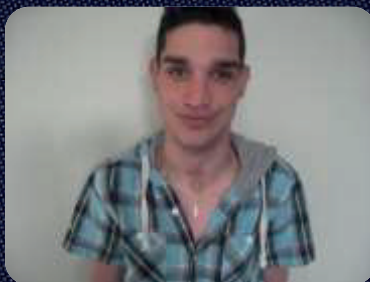
Name: Uli Kaplan

Nickname: Stooge

Subcomm: Camp

What do you do in your spare time?: Watch Movies, Play games and go out with friends

What does the word family mean to you?: Family means to me to stick together love and support each other.



Name: Abbie Kinninburgh

Nickname: Abbz

Subcomm: Camp

What do you do in your spare time?: Go to the movies, walk my dog, Facebook

What does the word family mean to you?: People to spend time with, people to support you, people to help you out.



Name: Jemma Young

Nickname: Jem

Subcomm: Socials

What do you do in your spare time?: Play a lame game called Kitchen Scramble and read... ALOT

What does the word family mean to you?: Family are the poelpe who love and accept you for who you are, faults and all. Most importantly, family is home.



REFERENCE COMMITTEE INTRODUCTIONS

Name: Laura G

Nickname: Lollie or Lauz

Subcomm: Socials

What do you do in your spare time?: Play/listen to music, make Origami, hang out with friends.

What does the word family mean to you?: A sense of community and support, people you can have fun with.



Name: Adam

Nickname: A.C, Crooky, Strauchanie

Subcomm: Socials

What do you do in your spare time?: Work at Woolworths, watch ELP and A-League (Go Victory)

What does the word family mean to you?: People who are close, can trust each other and talk about feelings with each other.



Name: Alycia Mack

Nickname: Boo

Subcomm: Socials

What do you do in your spare time?: I love to play with my cats!

What does the word family mean to you?: Family means two things, I'd do anything for them and they don't have to be related to me by blood to be considered my family



Name: Caitlin Martin

Nickname: Caiti or Rabbit

Subcomm: Publications

What do you do in your spare time?: playing games on the PS4, Xbox 360 and PC, or hanging out with friends.

What does the word family mean to you?: Family to me is people you can argue with but still be great friends afterwards. Family accept you for who you are and love you unconditionally.



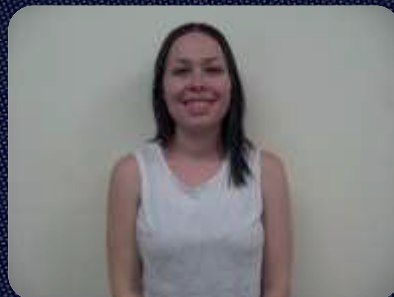
Name: Natasha Payne

Nickname: Tasha, Tash

Subcomm: Publications

What do you do in your spare time?: Walk the dogs, surf the net and study for exams

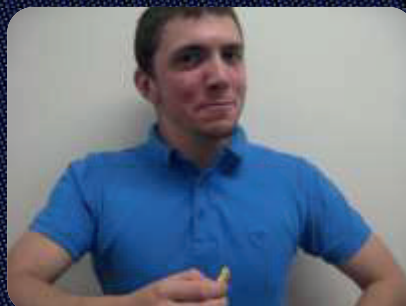
What does the word family mean to you?: Love and happiness



Name: Scott Campbell

Subcomm: Publications

(We unfortunately couldn't get Scott's reply for the Intro. Questions)



REFERENCE COMMITTEE INTRODUCTIONS

Name: Caitlin Rohr

Nickname: Caitycat

Subcomm: Publications

What do you do in your spare time?: read, cook, play with my cats and study

What does the word family mean to you?: The word family to me, means people who you feel comfortable around and people who you don't always get along with but you always need.



Name: James Williams

Nickname: Jdubs

Subcomm: Advocacy

What do you do in your spare time?: Redditor, DJ, nerd

What does the word family mean to you?: Family through thick and thin. They are always there for you.



Name: Emily Ryan

Nickname: Em

Subcomm: Advocacy

What do you do in your spare time?: Walk the dog or cook.

What does the word family mean to you?: Family means the world to me. It means no one is left behind.



Name: Tyrone Kelly

Nickname: Ty

Subcomm: Advocacy

What do you do in your spare time?: I watch as many movies as I can before my eyes shut

What does the word family mean to you?: Those few people you are stuck with so you've got to at least pretend to like them (mum if you've stolen my wrapper and you're reading this, I obviously don't mean you...)



Name: Georgia

Nickname: Georgia

Subcomm: Advocacy

What do you do in your spare time?: Hang out with friends and family

What does the word family mean to you?: Group or people that support each other, Love and connection.



Name: Eliza

Nickname: Liz

Subcomm: Advocacy

What do you do in your spare time?: Bake cupcakes, eat

What does the word family mean to you?: Belonging



REFERENCE COMMITTEE INTRODUCTIONS

Name: Laura C

Nickname: Lulu, Lorz, Lakaflaka

Subcomm: Fundraising

What do you do in your spare time?: Tumblr, eating lots of food and napping in odd places

What does the word family mean to you?: Family means unconditional love and support.



Name: Kristen Waller

Nickname: Kriss / Kippy

Subcomm: Fundraising

What do you do in your spare time?: well im studying nursing at university, so a lot of my spare time is taken up with study, but I absolutely love hanging out with friends, and watching endless amounts of youtube videos.

What does the word family mean to you?: Family to me is people who will go to the ends of the earth for you without a second thought, they surround with you with love and support, especially when you need it most.



Name: Zak Hanyu

Nickname: Zak

Subcomm: Fundraising

What do you do in your spare time?: I love to bake/cook I do it every week, I garden, I go to the theatre all the time, I go on picnics, I am in a choir and finally I volunteer there is nothing I love more than the feeling of helping someone or making a difference in someone's life. I volunteer with seven different groups and I love every minute of it.

What does the word family mean to you?: Family can be defined in one word and that one word is acceptance and the ChIPS Family is a magical place that has this in abundance. The special thing about ChIPS is you are accepted as you, a person and not labelled as someone with an illness or a condition; you are loved for being you. It is a privilege and honour to be part of a family as loving, and accepting as ChIPS is.



Name: Grant Monks

Nickname: Monk or Monkman

Subcomm: Fundraising

What do you do in your spare time?: I do 2 volunteer jobs and work part time and have dialysis 3 times a week, and I try enjoy some time with friend socializing or just spending some down time on my own to mediate and recharge a bit every now and then.

What does the word family mean to you?: I think family is just a word used to describe a group or people who are connected in a very special way. The ChIPS family to me is a bond that even though we aren't related we've gained so much more than just a friendship together.



JAN CAMP 2014

Those of you in the CHIPS community are probably sick of reading what I have to say about January Camp this year as this is my 3rd article on the event but I'll try not to repeat myself too much. So once again about 50 young people from this awesome program turned up to The Children's Hospital very early one Wednesday morning at the start of this year.

Temperature outside wasn't too bad but as camp was in the week where it was 5 consecutive days over 40 it did get a lot hotter. Luckily we have our excellent team of medical staff that seem to be able to solve any problem that may arise.

This year I had a different role on camp, I've been on a team and a team captain and this was my 3rd year helping to organise camp but this year I was not on a team at all but co-leader with the marvellous Smenta. These things are all factors that made this years camp feel very different to me but one major thing was that instead of handing out points to teams we handed out money! Not real notes of course and the reason for this was that we on camp committee had chosen this camps theme to be Monopoly. This added an extra edge to a lot of people and the game was on to get the most points in all activities which were: archery, craft, skits, initiatives and raft building. That's enough about team activities though because as always we have big group activities not just rotational ones. Something that has become somewhat of a tradition at ChIPS camp over the past few years is a big game of t-ball which unfortunately couldn't take place due to the heat but we always have a backup plan.

Something that hasn't been done at Jan camp in a while is a quiz, and to my relief and happiness it was a big hit this year. And that brings me to the biggest point of any ChIPS camp – the party. This year we asked everybody to come dressed as their hero weather that be a fictional character, a superhero or even your mum. I came as the person I look up to most and he decided to dress up as me, and because we know each other so well it kind of freaked people out that we could act like one another so well. Oh and we had a piñata that was way awesome and as it was Caiti's 18th birthday we let her have first whack but I think next year we may need a tougher one as it was knocked down after 4 hits.

Considering the heat and everything tried to bring people down it was great to see people really get into all the elements of camp and have a ball all with a smile on their faces.

Thank you to the ChIPS staff for helping us organise everything we couldn't have done it without you. And one last thank you to Chopper, Smenta, Zak and Grant camp wouldn't have been possible without you. Lastly I hope you all can be there again next year for our 15th Camp! Whoop whoop! Thanks for reading
Phish

Many of those faces which were new to us and I'm sure a lot of older ChIPERS and staff will agree there's nothing better than seeing someone whose 1st camp it is come out of their shell and give everything a go and just enjoy the whole experience and be part of our little family like community. Now we come as we inevitably must to the end of camp and the last day which is always filled with lots of hugs, bit of sadness because it's over but lots of happiness because it happened and also the awards. Many special awards were given out this year and everybody was just so spectacular and involved but the most special award each year is The Chris Balnaves Award. Congratulations to Tyrone Kelly for winning the award this year it's such an honour as all of us know. And well done to everybody on teams Race Car, Old Boot, Scottie Dog, Top Hat and Battleship, you all did a fantastic job and I hope you had fun. Thank you to all the Medical staff and volunteers who gave us their time and took care of us.

FAMILY HOLIDAY VACATION

Bright and early on the 29th of September, a group of excited chippers new and old eagerly awaited to board the bus and head off to our first ChIPs family holiday vacation! We gathered our bags, had our medical checks and off we went, before we knew it we had arrived, we sat down for a bit of housekeeping and settled in to our cabins before some lunch

after lunch we were put into our activity groups and played a few games and were given a bag of funny and random items and were challenged to use the items in a creative short skit that we would perform later on in the camp, we then sat down for dinner and ended the night with a movie with the promise that the next day was going to be action packed

Which it certainly was! We went crate stacking, tackled a high ropes course which I was unfortunately too sick to go on because Jordy kept me company and we went searching for pine cones in the area which I still have today sitting on my beside table and it makes me laugh, also there was a giant swing we got to go on and after all that was over we had to take shelter from the rain in the hall with arts and craft, when we were so pleasantly surprised with a visit from some New Balance representatives

Who fitted us all with brand new runners which everyone loved! We sat down for some dinner when the conversation quickly turned to the party we had planned for later that night, with our hair coloured, spiked, teased, and so much more we all headed down to the hall for our tradition second night party, we had a little parade and gave out some prizes and danced the night away, after falling into bed with exhaustion we woke up on what would be our last morning on camp

We had some breakfast, packed our bags, and then it was time to perform our skits! Everyone had such a great time guessing Elle's favourite food, (chicken nuggets, duh!) while playing the price is chips, we saw Curtis bring auctions to a whole new level, we learnt some morals with Rob and his group, let's not forget all the epic talent that shone through with Allesha's group, and lastly we went on an out of this world Pokemon adventure with Jordan and her group, after all the skits had been performed, we had been given one last challenge, a selfie challenge !

We had to take some awkward selfies, wildlife selfies, selfies on perspective and so much more and once that had come to an end, and a winner had been crowned, it was time to have our last lunch of the camp, load up the bus once more and head back home, we all came home as exhausted chippers, excited to see our families.

Written by India Murphey-Miller.

SYDNEY CHIPS

What a year!

I haven't written a Wrapper article before, as CHIPERS have normally submitted them, however I thought that it was about time I introduced myself. My name is Katie, and I've been nursing since 2006 and have been the Children's Hospital at Westmead ChIPS Coordinator (aka "the ChIPS Mum") for 4 ½ years (time flies when you're having fun!). I have loved being a part of this amazing program, and I'm sure there will be mixed emotions next year when I take a break - I'm leaving in February to have a baby 😊

We have just returned from our annual camp, which was a huge success (although most of us could barely keep our eyes open on the way home!) Everything from the Leap of Faith and volleyball to archery and the waterslide was fantastic and our CHIPERS stepped up to the challenges.

For the last three camps we have run our ChIPS Amazing Race as one of the highlights. This means I sit down and work out challenges for each station, which is manned by a staff member/volunteer, as well as codes and riddles the CHIPERS have to solve to find out the location of the next challenge. It's so fantastic to see everyone having so much fun and working so well in their teams.

Each year we give out a ChIPS Camp Award to a participant who has gone above and beyond during the three days away: encouraging others, participating, inspiring others, and generally just getting out there and making the most of camp. This year the award was given to Rachel Zeng, a new member to the Reference Committee this year, who began in ChIPS in 2013. I don't think the smile left her face all camp, and it was really lovely to see her working so well to include everyone in all activities.

The Davidson Award is our annual achievement award, which this year was given to Aimee Downing, one of our most senior CHIPERS and an amazing leader with an endless stream of enthusiasm. Although she lives the furthest from the hospital, she tries to attend as many meetings as possible, and if she can't attend, she Skype's in (and even offered to do so while she was in the USA running a summer camp!!). She is a valued member of the program and many CHIPERS look up to her and go to her for support and inspiration.

A HUGE highlight for me and ChIPER Oscar was receiving our invitations to attend the Welcome Reception for the Duke and Duchess in April. Oscar was even on TV afterwards – what a superstar! It was an amazing opportunity and the buzz in that room was unbelievable – truly an experience we will never forget.

Going to the Lion King in April was a highlight for the 22 CHIPERS who came along. We were lucky enough to have tickets donated by the Ottomin Foundation, who help support the ChIPS program, and we even got to meet the cast after the show!

Bowling is always a favourite social outing of ours, and we always have a good turnout – especially when it's followed by the lure of a hot chocolate at Max Brenner. We headed to AMF in October, and we try to do it at least once a year to keep our skills up 😊

SYDNEY CHIPS

We have seen many new leaders emerge this year, which has been wonderful. So many ChIPERS showing that they love the program and want to give back, and also develop their leadership skills further. Watching them realise that they are getting as much out of it as the younger/newer participants they are helping is just the cherry on top...we even had tears after one 8-week group when one of our new leaders stood back and reflected on her experiences.

We ran an extra session of talking/discussion groups this year due to increased demand, so it's great to see the referrals starting to pick up even more after all the work we've done spreading the word of ChIPS through the hospital over the years. We already have four names on the list for the person who replaces me on leave to start to work with!

As usual, a big thankyou goes out for the support we always get from Jarnia at Melbourne ChIPS, and we were lucky enough to have a visit from James this year, who gave us a lot of good tips as well as great stories about trips to Paris (jealous much??!!) and the commitment of the ChIPERS down there in our sister program.

All signs point to 2015 being a very busy year!

CHIP-IN UPDATE

The last year has been a little bit of a quiet one for Chip In, we have been spending the year rebuilding the committee, deciding what we want to achieve and working out how we're going to do it!

We participated in the first annual RCH Auxiliaries Bake Sale which was great fun, we sold everything we baked!

We held a Planning and Development Day where we discussed what our vision is and came up with a Mission Statement for the Auxiliary: "Chip In Auxiliary is a group of passionate people, who share a connection to the ChIPS program, working together to make the dreams of ChIPERS a reality"

With the help of lots of ChIPPERS, we participated in the Good Friday Appeal through coin tins, this has raised quite a bit of money and we really appreciate everyone who has put a tin out there somewhere!

We'd like to thank everyone at ChIPS and at Auxiliaries for the support we've received this last year! If you've got a fundraising idea, would like a tin to put out in the community or just want more information, please don't hesitate to email us on chipin.auxiliary@gmail.com

Written by
Lauren Dunbabin.

See you in 2015!









IAAH CONFERENCE

Supported by the Royal Children's Hospital Foundation the ChIPS Program was able to offer two travel scholarships to present at the International Association of Adolescent Health (IAAH) European Congress in Paris and then to visit Great Ormond St Hospital in London.

After an application and interview process Scott Campbell and Jemma Young were the successful applicants and joined the team to present at the conference. The team consisted of Meagan Hunt, ChIPS Program Facilitator; Elle Goss ChIPS nurse, volunteer and RCH emergency nurse; Scott Campbell, CHIPPER; Jemma Young, CHIPPER; Heather Campbell, Mother; Jane Franklin, Guardian.

The IAAH conference

The Conference ran for three days and offered a chance for professionals from all over Europe, and from various fields of expertise to come together and develop their skills by exchanging experiences and different practices from different health systems. Young people's participation in the congress helped shed some light in a stimulating way on what they expect from their doctors.

ChIPS were invited to present at the IAAH congress in conjunction with a team from Denmark. Between the two programs we each had 30 minutes to present. Jakob Larsen and two young people with a chronic illness from the program HR BERG in Copenhagen spoke first and then Meagan, Scott and Jemma spoke. The 70 plus delegates in the room were captivated by the talk. The power of hearing our young people speak about their own experience in health was very apparent in this presentation. Several people come up throughout the congress to report how excellent they thought the presentation was. ChIPS is a very unique program and many other organisations wanted to learn how we set up such a strong peer support program.

Written by Jarnia.

The following 3 pages are blog entry's written by Meagan which you can also find online at the RCH website.

And the following page after are some great photos from the trip 😊

You can watch a video of the conference on youtube at the following link:

<http://youtu.be/2F1KWIneRJs>

IAAH CONFERENCE

Jemma: After another day of going to sleep to a bright sky (and waking up to an equally bright sky) it was time to head off to 'forum de jeune' or youth forum. Elle, Jane, Scott and I took the metro early in the morning and arrived 20 minutes early, much to the surprise of our hosts. It seems it's polite to be fashionably late over here in France. Scott and I met the other youths from countries including Denmark, Romania, Turkey, Canada, Russia and, of course, France. There was a mix of young people with chronic conditions, medical students and medical professionals facilitating the day. The language barriers were immediately obvious, but everyone was patient with each other (and laughter is a universal language, which made everything easier!) Our first activity was 'Slam', a creative exercise. We were given a list of prompts in French (which a bilingual girl kindly translated) and asked to express ourselves through writing, drawing, music or even creative dance. We expressed our way through prompts such as 'Carpe Diem', 'Waiting for Spring', 'Apathy', 'Connection', 'If I was a (opposite gender)', 'If I had known', and 'Tomorrow I will', Among many others. It was a fantastic ice-breaker! After a lovely lunch, we separated into groups according to topics we wanted to discuss and present on at the conference the next day.

These topics were: **school, mental health, sexual health, addictions (drugs, tobacco, and alcohol), rights for minors, new technology** and **global journal**. Scott and I participated in the **mental health**, and **school** presentations.

Scott: The language barriers caused a great deal of stress—however, they also drove many to work extremely hard in preparation for speaking in front of over 300 health professionals. They had the opposite effect on me—I worried that I might *over*-prepare and hence not be able to perform organically, so I spent the day attending workshops and presentations as a form of light preparation. In what felt like no time at all the clock had mystically found its way to 4:00 pm—presentation time—and the first three rows of the auditorium were filled with 26 youths. All were giddy with excitement, gleefully sharing whatever felt funny at the time. Laughter was a welcome release within the group and nervous tension was at a low. After hours of discussion and internal thoughts, all eight groups were ready to present their final thoughts to a group of well-respected health professionals. Despite language barriers, we managed to do it: cohesively form a structured presentation that was (by all expectations) meant to be an amalgamation of disjointed thoughts. **School** was the first theme, a group both myself and Jemma were presenting with. We imparted our message theatrically, much to the appreciation of the amused adults, who seemed to enjoy the new format of presentation after a very long day. (I'd like to claim this as my shining moment for the day, introducing myself by announcing 'I do not like school!' in less-than-fantastic French, instantly marking me as a foreigner—oh well! They applauded my efforts.) Each presenter offered a pro and a con of their schooling experience. Our second presentation on **mental health** was rather different to our last, as we focused on assessing a case study. Jemma courageously offered her personal story of psychosocial evaluation and treatment in this presentation; I felt privileged to be sitting next to her through every word, she is a true inspiration who did the program and the Royal Children's Hospital very proud. The mood never dulled in the amphitheatre, as events concluded with all youths on stage, answering questions and discussing statements from the enthusiastic crowd. I'd love to offer a congratulations and a thank you to all who attended and also to the Royal Children's Hospital for making this possible.

IAAH CONFERENCE

On Tuesday June 17 the ChIPS team became international stars!

After all the hard work Scott and Jemma did at the Youth Forum, they teamed up with me to present to the delegates of the IAAH European Congress here in Paris. Together, we spoke about the ChIPS program and how to work with adolescents with a chronic illness.

The invitation to present at this European Congress came about after I met Anne Maynard, vice president of the International Association of Adolescent Health, at the IAAH Conference in Istanbul in 2013.

Upon learning about our unique model of the ChIPS program and how we work with young people using peer support and youth participation, she invited myself and the ChIPS team to present on ways to work with adolescents with a chronic illness.

It was both a pleasure and an inspiration to present alongside Jemma and Scott. We were like a well-oiled machine, sharing our stories and experiences to a captivated audience. Jemma and Scott spoke with honesty, confidence and authenticity.

I set the scene and structured the presentation, giving the perspective from a healthcare professional and program facilitator and sharing the overall model of the ChIPS program.

Scott and Jemma then filled out the content by sharing their personal experiences of having a chronic illness and how the ChIPS program (and peer support in particular) has helped them grow and develop. We addressed three questions in our presentation:

- What is beneficial about peer support when you have a chronic illness?
- How does youth participation in daily practice empower a young person's ability to manage their own health?
- How can healthcare practitioners better engage with young people with a chronic illness?

To help us answer these questions, we used video clips of ChIPPERS from back home and contributions from other members of the ChIPS Reference Committee. It was a truly adolescent perspective.

It was such a pleasure to be invited, participate and present at the IAAH European Congress. Everyone at the conference warmly welcomed us with delight and interest. After our presentation, many health professionals from around Europe came to congratulate us on our impressive presentation and invited us to visit their country to assist in setting up ChIPS programs! Our ChIPS program and the model we use is unique internationally and hence we generated a lot of interest around how we can support young people who live with a chronic illness.

For now, the work is done and we are off to eat more baguette, walk along the River Seine, check out the Arc de Triomphe and enjoy the Parisian sights. More on that at another date!

IAAH CONFERENCE

As the ChIPS team visits London's [Great Ormond Street Children's Hospital](#) on the way home, facilitator **Meagan Hunt** reflects on the lessons the trip has yielded.

Coming Home

As I sit on the plane with the ChIPS team heading back home to Melbourne and the Royal Children's Hospital (RCH), I am content; I can confidently say that this has been an incredibly valuable experience for all involved. We are bringing home new lessons for our program and hospital; invaluable experience to share with all; and connections that will see us continue to collaborate with colleagues across international waters. Most of all, we've learned that we have a very unique program in ChIPS and have created an international reputation for it.

ChIPS and GOSH

The latter part of our trip was spent in London where we visited the Great Ormond St Children's Hospital (GOSH). They organised an extensive schedule of meetings with health professionals and program leaders who work with adolescents at their hospital. The people we met openly shared their work and experiences—and were interested in learning about ours. GOSH are developing their adolescent-focused health care and are creating a youth advisory council which currently has 10 members, but had not yet considered creating a support network for their young patients who have chronic conditions.

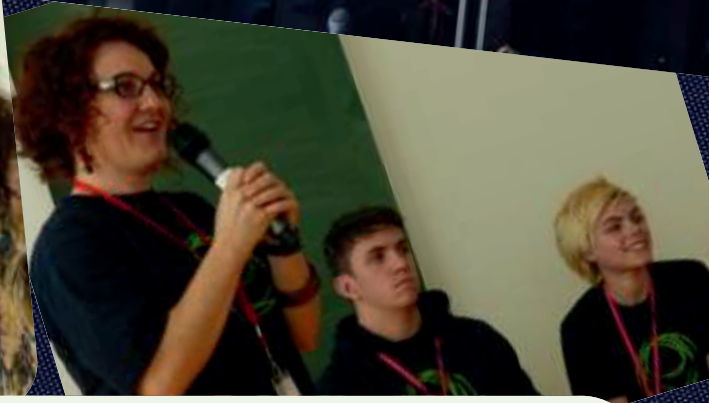
They drank eagerly from our experience as we shared our ChIPS program model, and they learned from Jemma and Scott's personal experience. They were impressed as we informed them of our innovative transition program and the strong status our own YAC (Youth Advisory Council).

'I found the visit to GOSH incredible. Even though we were there to see their programs and facilities, it was more of a mutual exchange of ideas,' says ChIPS member Jemma. 'It was a great learning experience and makes me realise how lucky I am to be a part of a program like no other. ChIPS has given me the confidence and abilities to take life head on, as well as invaluable friendships and connections. I can't wait to share our observations and experiences from the conference and GOSH, and use them to strengthen our already brilliant program.'

To me, this trip has reaffirmed the importance of giving young people a chance to have a voice in their own health care; I found that this element was what most moved and impressed the health professionals we met. After this experience I firmly believe that the Centre for Adolescent Health and Royal Children's Hospital are leading the international field in how we approach adolescent health, empowering young people in their health, how we manage transition and how we work collaboratively with young people to do all of this.

On behalf of the ChIPS team I want to thank the CAH, RCH Executive and the RCH Foundation for supporting this venture.

Next year's IAAH European Congress is in Lisbon, Portugal. So who's coming?



SOCIALS

Scienceworks

On the ninth of July, a group of chippers, jumped on a bus and headed off on an exciting social to the science works museum, when we arrived we headed downstairs for a quick briefing with Jarnia, got split up into groups and off we went! Our first stop was "sports works" where we got to see and control a skeleton on a bike, we got to do little experiments like throwing a ball with one eye closed, and seeing if you could catch it, which is fair to say was very amusing for all to watch, and coolest of all we got to race Cathy Freeman! After that we had a quick lunch break with lots of chatting laughter and lets not forget tom's amazing group selfie! Then we met back up with our groups and went to the nitty gritty super city, which is just as cool as it sounds, where we got to pretend to be news anchors, and we saw recycling, binoculars and ancient bikes, oh my! And to end the day, we said our goodbyes and hopped on the bus and made our way home. All in all it was a fabulous social, everyone had a great time, and we can't wait to do it again, Thank you to the lovely social committee.

Written by India.

Well okay, maybe not the real Cathy Freeman but we got to race against a set of lights that simulated how fast she ran.

Mini Golf

Miniature golf, also known as mini-golf, is an offshoot of the sport of golf, focused solely on putting. Invented in the early 20th century, mini-golf has gained widespread popularity with professional golfers and amateurs alike. In April the ChIPS Crew set out on the first social for the year, you guessed it, mini-golf. Approximately 20 ChIPERS, volunteers and staff members all caught the bus to the LaTrobe Mini-Golf. The bus ride was a great chance for everyone to catch up, especially since it had been a while between socials. Once we arrived at the park the social team kicked off with some fantastic get to know each other games. Afterwards we broke up into teams of four and collected our kit ready to take on 18 holes of strategic ball pushing. Everyone played with gusto and several holes in one were made, several holes in a lot were also made too! The course proved challenging for some, for others it was over before they knew it! The socials team provided snacks and we all embarked on a veritable feast of goodies, of which the Shapes proved popular. The conversation was wide and varied and it was particularly pleasurable to see everyone getting along, relaxing and enjoying the company. A little surprise was had by those who purchased ChIPS Hoodies and watching the mass army of green circles on navy was a highlight, the crackle of excitement was in the air! Mini-golf is a great sport, and proved to be a fantastic social opportunity where everyone was able to let loose and enjoy the afternoon. A huge thanks needs to be extended to the socials team, who put on a fantastic event to start off the year!

Written by Jordo.

SOCIALS

Bowling and Karaoke

Where do I begin, on the 23rd of September we had the Bowling social it was such an amazing day full of good music, laughs and healthy competition, we all started with the worst part of bowling... the shoes, got into our groups and got bowling, so many bumper balls and gutter balls played but still everyone enjoyed themselves, Tye managed to get the highest score out of everyone. After everyone finished their game we all merged to a separate room for some KARAOKE and PIZZA, I don't know what could've been better, we managed to fit in quite a lot of songs including some Eminem rapping and everyone singing along to the lion king, there was only one thing wrong, the frozen song wouldn't work.

From what I know everyone had such a great time so thank you Socials sub comm for working so hard putting it together for us all. 😊

Written by Caitlin M.

Well done Teslet, you will have to give me some bowling lessons.

MCG Christmas

On Saturday the 6th of December ChIPS went to the Melbourne Cricket Ground where we had our Christmas Social and break up for the year. The day was surprisingly enjoyable even for those people who do not like sport. We started off with a tour of the National Sports Museum, which was comprised of four different sections cricket, horse racing, the Olympics and Australian Football, this kept us entertained for a time. Then we went to Game on, where we participated in, archery, netball, Australian Football, cycling and many more sports activities, even a sports injury was sustained. We then had a smashing picnic together in the park where we ate a scrumptious lunch, provided by the Socials Committee. After lunch we partook in Kris Kringle, where there was a mix of beautiful and thoughtful presents which we all had the pleasure of opening together, thus spreading the Joy of Christmas. Finally we ended the Christmas Social, by playing with a bubble wand that created these epically gigantic, mystical bubbles. The day was full of frivolous fun for all involved. What a great end to a great day and even greater end to a great year. What an original and creative set of ideas the Socials

Committee have generated this year, and this cracking Christmas Social was no exception. I wish you all the Merriest of Christmas's and I hope that everyone has a Joy Filled New Year.

Written on behalf of the ChIPS family by, Zak.

CHIPS TUNES

This year we were lucky enough to be granted funding for our very own music program in chips. Each week we gathered in the new music room in the RCH and expressed our creativity through the power of song!

A solid group of about 8 Chippers attended each week and were taught how to play an instrument of their choice and help write our very own songs. Some had never picked up an instrument in their lives and it was really amazing to see how far they came in the 10 weeks.

It started out pretty patchy and we didn't really know if we had gotten ahead of ourselves or if anything would come of it, but each week our jams became tighter and people gravitated towards instruments that suited them and we found that we worked musically and we may just be able to achieve a goal of performing. But we still had a lot of work to do! The weekly sessions turned from jams to full rehearsals to fine tune our songs before the weeks ran out.

Everyone sounded great on the night and even Rylee managed to hit every note.

Cheers for a rockin' year chipstunes

So we picked our new September "chips family vacation" camp to be our debut gig, performing two completely original songs with a little help from the goo goo dolls. I was really impressed with how everyone had no objections to performing and went into it with their heads held high.

A massive thanks goes to harry who helped mentor the sessions and of course we couldn't have done it without the vision and guidance of Meagan, whose idea it had been to incorporate her two loves of music and chips together in the first place.

Meagan and I both hope this is the start of a reoccurring program within chips and believe it's very beneficial to all involved! So we encourage anyone thinking of joining next year to contact Meagan with your interest so she can see just how many people are keen to have it back again!

Written by Tyrone.



MENTOR THANKS

Jano is a great person who is always there for chippers and helping out with activities and camp. she is a great team leader and mentor to all chippers involved on ref com, other leaders and all people involved in chips. I am glad to have got to know Jano and hope to spend more time on camps and activities with her in the future.

Yours sincerely

Adam Cruickshank

Reach for
your goals.

Jordo I feel like it was only yesterday that I and so many other CHIPPERS would look up to you as a role model in ChIPS, now more then ever we look up to you as someone we can look toward to help us further ChIPS for the better.

It's not as easy as I first thought it would be to write something about someone that helped me and so many others in ChIPS continue to grow as people and as chippers, but what I think I can say for all of us is that we thank you for your amazing continued efforts for the ChIPS community.

James Williams.

We can't wait to
have you back
next year!

MENTOR THANKS

Allesha What an incredible year we have had as an advocacy group! From all the laughter's to working hard to getting the goodie bags almost up and running you have supported us every single step of the way and the Advocacy group cannot even express how thankful we are to have you as our mentor for 2014. Your determination and inspiration to us is admirable.

Emily.

So thank you Allesha for
being our mentor for
2014!
love from #advocacy

Jessica (Chop), Consistently you have been the bright, happy and caring Camp committee mentor, and for that we could not be more grateful, you have stood by each and every one of us and supported us whenever we have needed it no questions asked and you have made this committee a great one, your optimistic attitude towards everything makes ref, and chips in general that bit brighter, we honestly could not have wished for a better mentor than you, "thank you" is not enough to describe how lucky we are to have had you by our side through the ups, the downs the trials and triumphs of this year.

India.

Thank you, so
so much!!

MENTOR THANKS

Elle on behalf of fundraising we want to thank you for being an amazing mentor for our sub-committee, especially due to it being a brand new one! Thanks for your commitment and dedication, hard work and mentoring. It's been brilliant to work with you this year.

Laura C.

Thanks from
Fundraising, the rest
of Refcomm and I'm
sure all of ChIPS!

PERSONAL STORY

Eliza Masterson

There are many ways I could tell my story. I can tell the medical side, where I was born with a Pulmonary Artesia, Tricuspid Artesia and a lung that would eventually fail due to many lung infections. I could tell you the story of growing up with a twin, a big sister and Christmas trips to the beach full of Croatians and a toddler named George who ran around the campsite naked. The stories of growing up in a big house in the country with bonfires in the middle of a paddock two feet high. Or I could tell you this; Im Eliza, Chips is the only thing I've been doing for four years and I don't know where to start with this.

I've been told I'm a lot of things in my life, too nice because I stood up for a friend, too short to be in high school by a kid two years younger and five inches shorter than me and brave for having surgeries that were basically necessary to my survival. Once I was told I was too sick to complete my vce at a normal high school so I had to find education elsewhere, somewhere flexible where I could learn but have enough days off in case I had a migraines which were becoming more frequent. With this I found CAE and completed my VCE over two years with a score of 74%. I then decided to take a gap year which became four and a lot of grief.

PERSONAL STORY

With this I found CAE and completed my VCE over two years with a score of 74%. I then decided to take a gap year which became four and a lot of grief. I don't remember much of the first year out of school, just that I wanted to travel to New Zealand or take a train to Sydney, have some sort of adventure. And I kind of did have adventures, I would get up at six am and spend the day in the city, not spending any money and just looking around at everything. I sat on the roof of our home in St Kilda, with my twin and friends watching the stars and streets below. Going to St Kilda pier to watch the sunrise, picnics in the park and coffee in Acland St. In some ways my life was wonderful, on the surface it looked lovely and free but I wasn't. My migraines weren't the only thing getting worse and over time I started to become short of breath faster, lethargic and had dizzy spells when I didn't have a migraine. This led to discovering that I was low in iron. Taking Iron supplements didn't help; in fact it just seemed to make things worse. Instead of just getting out of breath walking down the street I would get out of breath in the shower and need to lie down for a few minutes afterwards. I felt so lethargic and dizzy for months that by the time my next check up with the cardiologist came around I thought that I either had chronic fatigue or something was seriously wrong with my heart. (Well worse than before.)

During that appointment we debated whether I should have portable oxygen. It was decided that while a portable oxygen tank wouldn't help with me being puffed, it would be beneficial to have oxygen at home 24/7. I then had some minor corrective surgery on my heart to help things, which stopped the decline in my breathing to a degree. My specialist was still unhappy with the progress after the surgery so I had an iron infusion which helped a bit too and my oxygen usage was cut down.

After all that I was feeling a tiny bit better and going to physio which was totally fully of old timers. My life seemed to be going on track again so I decided it was time to try to move out. I had tried to move out with my twin a few years ago but I was too sick at the time, and I was just getting used to the idea of using a wheelchair that I didn't want because I thought I'd take the last of my independence. So it was time to try again.

My big sister Emmalene was moving out of her old house and needed a roommate so I decided to move out with her. I have always wanted to move out of home before I was 25 to try out having as much independence as I can and to see if I could live out of home and essentially look after myself in full capacity. I still have my wheelchair for going out with people which is frustrating because I feel like I shouldn't use it because I can walk, even though it does make things easier. So we needed to have room to keep and somewhere close to public transport to make it easier for me when I did go out without my wheelchair alone. We looked for about six months which was a lot of work and early morning weekends to see houses that we sometimes didn't even get to see due to agents not showing up or being late. Then on Georgina and I's birthday we got a call that said we got a house, so for the next week it was working out money and last minute packing. It was a pretty exciting and stressful time, I felt like I was finally moving forward for the first time in a long time.

Before I moved I felt like I hadn't achieved much in the past few years. However that is not true, I have participated in two run 4 the kids, made a documentary with my best friend, created a YouTube channel, done countless things for Chips and now have moved out of home. Moving out has given me a new lease on life, hope for the future and shown me that I can do adult things like pay my own bills and look after the house. I still use my wheelchair at times but have been walking more when I have time to rest and recuperate. I now have a routine on days where I'm not up to anything emotionally or physically, and new things to do and place to go. I may not know where I'm going yet but now I know I'm going somewhere. Sometimes you just need another perspective, look at something at a whole new angle and everything seems a little better or at least feels like you have room to breathe.

**ChIPS would like to acknowledge and extend very grateful thanks
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