'In the end, only kindness matters’ Jewel
Your support will make a difference

All donations to the Neonatal Unit at The Royal Children’s Hospital are greatly appreciated. Donations over $2 are fully tax deductible.

ONLINE DONATIONS
To make a secure online donation to the Neonatal Unit at The Royal Children’s Hospital Melbourne please follow these easy instructions:

2. Select the DONATE NOW button located in the top right hand side of the screen
3. Complete registration information and click CONTINUE
4. Nominate Donation Amount
5. Designate your donation to the NEONATAL SUPPORT option from Drop Down Box.
6. Complete Payment Details

DONATION FORM
If you'd like to make a donation to the NN1, please fill out this form and post or fax your details, thank you!

The dedicated NN1 team, parents and supporters are working together to maintain this world class facility by helping to provide:

- Additional intensive care beds
- Maintenance and purchase of vital and life saving equipment
- Additional ventilators
- Research facilities to enhance and improve methods of treatment

You can make a BIG difference to a lot of small people. We wish your family well, and hope to hear from you soon.

Your donation to The Royal Children’s Hospital Neonatal Unit is greatly appreciated

Method of payment (please tick)
- Cheque
- Credit Card

Credit Card details
- Visa
- Mastercard
- Amex

Expiry date

Credit Card holder name

Personal details for Tax Receipt (please print)

Name:

Postal Address

Phone

Please forward to
C/-Royal Children’s Hospital Foundation
Flemington Rd, Parkville, Vic. 3052
Phone 9345 4510 Email donna.asuny@rch.org.au Fax 9345 6900

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A Celebration of Life was created in 2002 by parents Chris and Sophie Clarke. Their daughter, Madeleine, was born with a severe case of Strep B and given only a 1% chance of survival when admitted to the Neonatal Unit (NNU) at The Royal Children’s Hospital, Melbourne. Maddie defied the odds, thanks to the skill and dedication of the Neonatal Medical Team and is now a beautiful and happy big sister to brother James.

In honour of their gratitude to the NNU, A Celebration of Life was created by Chris and Sophie to assist specifically with the fundraising requirements of the NNU and hopefully make possible the equipment, resources and research that helps to make it one of the premier NNU's in Australia, if not the world.

The major fundraising event for the NNU is the Annual Celebration of Life Gala Ball. Now in its fifth year, this event has helped to raise thousands of the saving dollars for the NNU.

A Celebration of Life is recognized as a fundraising entity for the NNU at The Royal Children’s Hospital, Melbourne and is coordinated by the RCH Foundation and a Management Committee comprising NNU & RCH staff, parents and supporters. The NNU is deeply grateful to the Clarke Family for their commitment, dedication and invaluable support.

A Celebration of Life is more than just a name sake – it is a statement of truth shared by the NNU team and all those it exists to support today and in the future.

HOW WE ARE DIFFERENT FROM OTHER NEONATAL INTENSIVE CARE UNITS

The Royal Children’s Hospital Neonatal Unit provides highly specialised care for the sickest newborn infants from all over Australia and the Pacific Islands.

It supports and treats a UNIQUE group of babies with UNIQUE needs and is the only Unit of its kind that can assist babies who require treatments not available at other Neonatal Units in Victoria and in some cases, Australia.

Each year
- Over 600 babies are transferred to the NNU by the Newborn Emergency Transport Service (NETS).
- Over 40% of the babies undergo major surgery.
- Over 350 babies require artificial ventilation via mechanical respirators.
- Most of the babies are seen by specialist doctors from the many medical disciplines available only at The Royal Children’s Hospital, Melbourne.
- The highly complex paediatric investigative services including MRI, CT scans, digital angiography, fluoroscopy, endoscopy, electromyography, metabolic and laboratory tests, echocardiography and cardiac catheter are not available at other hospitals.

OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

In the last decade there have been many achievements in the care given to babies in the Royal Children’s Hospital Neonatal Unit.

Some of the highlights are:
- High frequency oscillatory ventilation (HFOV) is a highly sophisticated form of artificial respiration in which very sick babies are ventilated at breathing rates of up to 600 breaths per minute. The Neonatal Unit was the first Intensive Care Unit in Australia to introduce this technology in 1992 and this was the result of a careful and strategic research and training program. We now run training courses for other intensive care units around the country.
- We are the only intensive care unit in the country that employs High Frequency Jet Ventilation. This technology is a life saver for babies with the most severe forms of lung disease.
- Together with our colleagues at the Royal Melbourne Hospital we have led the way in the management of a rare form of cerebral aneurysm (an abnormality of arteries and veins in and surrounding the brain) by interventional radiology thus providing both survival and favourable outcomes to many babies who in other centres would have died.
- Our craniofacial surgeons have pioneered a form of bone lengthening operations for babies born with facial abnormalities such as Pierre Robin Sequence. This surgery has produced stunningly successful outcomes and revolutionized the care of these conditions.
- Together with our Neurology colleagues we are investigating ways to improve the outcomes for the sickest babies (including those with Post-Haemorrhagic Ventriculomegaly (commonly occurring in very premature babies) and have pioneered the use of MRI technology and bedside EEG monitoring in a neonatal environment.
- We provide the best outcomes in the country for a condition called Congenital Diaphragmatic Hemia. This is where a baby is born with a large hole in the diaphragm resulting in the intestines being present in the chest thus compressing the lungs. The condition requires the combined skills of neonatologists, nurses, cardiacists and surgeons. Our outcomes for this previously lethal condition are second to none in the world. Survival of this condition provides a normal life for these babies.
- Our nursing staff has pioneered the management and prevention of pain in sick babies and has led the way in surgical wound care. The nursing staff is continuing to provide the best care to sick infants round the clock every day of the year.
- We have recently appointed the first Professor of Neonatal Nursing Research in Australia. Our Music Therapist is looking at ways to improve the quality of life on the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit for the sick babies. We provide a home apnea monitoring service for babies who are at risk of and for their parents who are worried about Sudden Infant Death Syndrome.

Most of the advances over the years have been made possible by the very strong commitment to research and education by all members of the Neonatal Unit. The best care of the sickest infants cannot occur without the valuable achievements provided through research and education.

ROYAL CHILDREN’S HOSPITAL NEONATAL UNIT VISION

The Neonatal Unit will become the benchmark of the world’s best practice for the care of the sickest newborn babies and their families.

ROYAL CHILDREN’S HOSPITAL NEONATAL UNIT MISSION

The Neonatal Unit will improve the health outcomes for newborn babies by:
- Providing the best and full range of tertiary and quaternary specialist care for the sickest babies in Australia and internationally.
- Providing undergraduate and postgraduate education in medical, nursing and allied health disciplines.
- Initiating and conducting research to enhance the clinical care of our patients.
- Providing information, health promotion, resources, education and advocacy for the families of our patients.

In order to maintain our mission and achieve our vision we need to:
- Attract and retain the best medical nursing and allied health professional staff.
- Establish world’s best practice medical and nursing care of sick newborn infants.
- Acquire and maintain essential and cutting edge equipment.
- Improve access to and availability of newborn intensive care beds.
- Improve the space and the environment in the clinical areas.
- Improve the facilities for the families of the babies.
- Improve and maintain the infrastructure and facilities for research.
- Improve and maintain the infrastructure and facilities for education.
- Update and improve the Neonatal Unit website.

Funds raised are used by The Royal Children’s Hospital Neonatal Unit to:
1. Purchase and maintain essential and cutting edge equipment in order to provide the best possible care for the babies.
2. Improve the bed availability in the Neonatal Unit by providing and equipping additional intensive care cots.
3. Assist in building a brand new Neonatal Unit which will provide world’s best facilities and environment for the sickest babies and their families.
4. Support ongoing research and education in the Neonatal Unit.
It has been a very exciting year with the big move of the Neonatal Unit from the 2nd to the 3rd floor of The Royal Children’s Hospital. It has been wonderful for staff to now be working in an environment which is state of the art. The facilities for families in the family retreat area are second to none. The Unit itself was opened by the former Premier of Victoria, Ms Bronwyn Pike on the 26th June 2007. This was a very important reminder to all staff of the importance of the work we do for the hospital and the community.

The Celebration of Life Gala Ball was held on Thursday, 6th September. The evening was an outstanding success with over 500 people attending. The night was hosted by Paul Mercurio from Dancing with the Stars. Paul donated his time for the night and was an excellent master of ceremonies. Donna Aranyi provided a spectacular night which was both enjoyable for all who attended but also a very important fundraiser.

This year’s Gala Ball was yet again another great success but would not have achieved this without the dedicated efforts of our generous sponsors and donors. Parents who have a special part to play not only attending this annual event but also donating suitable items for our charity auctions; one of the most difficult aspects to manage of charity events such as this. Over $60,000 was raised at the Silent Auction alone this year which is a testament to the great selection of prizes that were on offer and the donors and parents that made them possible – special thanks to you all!

You will read many articles in this edition of NNU News about other fundraising events and activities held in support of the NNU since our last edition – I hope you find them inspiring and motivating. We are deeply grateful to our NNU families for their amazing fundraising efforts and hope they might encourage others to get involved and do the same!

Please know that we are here to help and support those donors interested in raising funds for the NNU. If you have an idea for an event or would like to use your hand at raising some funds for the NNU, please feel free to contact me anytime. Every single dollar helps to make a difference and every single dollar is greatly appreciated.

Congratulations, Birthday Wishes and our heartfelt thanks to all those babies and families that nominated the NNU to receive donations in lieu of gifts when celebrating special occasions recently – we are honoured by your kind words. The monies donated from special occasion events such as these are used to purchase much needed equipment for the ICU or neonatal isolette, which is a rare luxury for a hospital department – we feel so grateful for this privileged support.

As another year draws to a close, I would like to thank every individual and company that made a contribution in support of the NNU throughout 2007. I cannot adequately convey the value and significance of these funds and the impact that they make on the lives of the babies and families that we care for – you are so vital to us and why we continue “to spread the word” of all the amazing work and achievements in 2008 and beyond. If you are interested in getting involved or trying your hand at running a fundraising event, 2008 is the year to give it a go!

I hope you enjoy reading this final edition of NNU News for 2007 – I thank all those who made contributions for sharing your personal stories with the extended NNU Family, much appreciated always.

If you would like to share your NNU experience with us, please contact me on 9345 4510 or via email donna.aranyi@rch.org.au or (03) 9345 4510.

Finally, special thanks to DNA Artworks and Eagle Print for their generous sponsorship of this newsletter and all NNU graphics and printing requirements – there would be no NNU News without their amazing support.

Wishing you all a safe and happy holiday season!
A CELEBRATION OF LITTLE FEET AND BIG HEARTS
Cocktail Evening & Auction

Our son Finley spent the first five months of his life in the Neonatal Unit at The Royal Children’s Hospital. He was born with a condition known as Long Gap Oesophageal Atresia. During this time the Unit became our home and the people within it, our family.

As a mark of our gratitude to the Neonatal Unit, we organised ‘A Celebration of Little Feet and Big Hearts’ Cocktail Evening & Auction. The event was held on Saturday 15th May at a country mansion, near Sale, with approximately 100 people in attendance.

The evening commenced with a comedy spot by our Master of Ceremonies, Comedian, Justin Hamilton. The introduction was followed by a brief speech made by the Chief Surgical Registrar from The Royal Children’s Hospital, Dr Craig McArdle and us, the parents of a Neonatal Baby. I shared some of our thoughts and experiences about our son, Finley, who spent time in the Neonatal Unit and for supporting our goals with practical and helpful advice. Support such as this is invaluable when conducting a fundraising event, especially for those of us “new” to event management!

We would like to thank The Royal Children’s Hospital Foundation, especially Donna Aranyi for helping us to raise much needed funds for the Neonatal Unit and for supporting our goals with practical and helpful advice. Support such as this is invaluable when conducting a fundraising event, especially for those of us “new” to event management!

We feel very privileged to be able to donate the total of $21,329.92 on behalf of the Sale, Maffra and surrounding communities.

Our recent fundraising efforts are just a small token of our appreciation to the Neonatal Unit for ensuring the health and wellbeing of our son, Finley. Thank you for helping make fundraising for The Royal Children’s Hospital such an enjoyable and worthwhile experience – we can assure other NNU families or anyone thinking about doing something like this that, despite the hard work, it is an experience that is extremely worthwhile and rewarding.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to the Team at Michael’s IGA who demonstrated by Safeway to the RCH, is already demonstrated by Safeway to the RCH, is an addition to the outstanding and ongoing support for the NNU and would not have enjoyed such success without the generous support of many hundreds of sponsors, supporters and guests – a heartfelt thanks to you all. Special thanks also to IGA Mum George Kirby, who managed to secure $20,000 worth of prizes for our charity auctions – you go girl!

This year’s event raised just over $90,000 for the NNU and would not have enjoyed such success without the generous support of many hundreds of sponsors, supporters and guests – a heartfelt thanks to you all. Special thanks also to IGA Mum George Kirby, who managed to secure $20,000 worth of prizes for our charity auctions – you go girl!

A lovely surprise event for those who attended was the auction in excess of $10,110.

A raffle that had been running for four weeks in the lead-up to the Cocktail Evening was drawn on the night following the auction. The evening concluded with live music, a local acoustic guitarist, while our guests enjoyed some delicious local beverages, in a warm and relaxed setting.

The level of support and generosity we received made the organization of the Cocktail Evening & Auction a real pleasure. The support from all of those involved ensured our fundraising efforts were extremely worthwhile and for that, we are truly grateful. We believe the success of our event is certainly a reflection of our generous and supportive community.

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Our son, Finley, now a healthy, thriving ten-year-old, serves as an apt example of what happens when a baby receives “the best chance – first chance at life”.

Special thanks to John, Karen, Nathan and family for sharing your lives with us at that time.

Main Auction time and our special guest auctioneer Gay St Leger from Beggan & Scott Real Estate – took to the stage with Paul McDougall to offer a great range of prizes and “money can’t buy” experiences which included private tours courtesy Crown Limited, Carbone Master Tailors, Yering Station, Ellen John, Sport 3, Flight Centre, Papillon Furniture, Investing & You Magazine, Sasson Jewellers, Artists Nick Morris and Dawn Bowers and James Hend and Kevin Sheedy to name a few.

With formalities out of the way and fundraising activities over for another year, it was soon time for Kate Ceberano and her band to take to the stage to wow guests with a repertoire of classic 80’s hits as heard on her latest album “Mike Lime Avenue”.

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In all it was a spectacular evening with all guests enjoying everything of offer and enthusiastically supporting the work of the NNU.

Happy Buns! Saladway Manager and NNU Dad, Con Sakalis, helped to raise funds for the NNU during this year’s Saladway Easter Hot Cross Buns stores promotion.

Over $500 was raised as a result and presented to the NNU in the form of Saladway Wish Gift Cards which would be spent to purchase important items as required by the Unit.

Special thanks to Con and all those Managers that agreed to support the NNU in this way. This, in addition to the outstanding and ongoing support already demonstrated by Saladway to the RCH, is precious and invaluable to us.

Michael’s visit to IGA

Our heartfelt thanks to the Team at Michael’s IGA who presented cheques for two Cot Sponsorships to the Neonatal Unit at The Royal Children’s Hospital. We have been an ongoing NNU supporter for some time, meeting with Dr Peter McDougall and Company Owner Michael Lorenz to meet with Dr Peter McDougall and to present cheques for two Cot Sponsorships to the Neonatal Unit at The Royal Children’s Hospital. The introduction was followed by a brief speech made by the Chief Surgical Registrar from The Royal Children’s Hospital, Dr Craig McArdle and us, the parents of a Neonatal Baby. I shared some of our thoughts and experiences about our son, Finley, who spent time in the Neonatal Unit and for supporting our goals with practical and helpful advice. Support such as this is invaluable when conducting a fundraising event, especially for those of us “new” to event management!

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A CELEBRATION OF LIFE
Annual Gala Ball 2007

Special Thanks to
A Celebration of Life Auxiliary
A Celebration of Life Committee of Management
A Celebration of Life Volunteers

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Andrew & Louise Raper
Anita Ivankovic
Anna Nowak
Ann Peacock
Ann Rathbone
Annette Cestin
Anthony Koutoulides
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Bonds
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Cathlyn Irving
Camp Australia
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Catherine Adi
Cathy Heycock
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Cecilia Chang
Chefs On the Run
Coca Cola Amatil
Coschico
Corporate Grape
Countdown Merchandise & Sales
Craig Douglas
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Crown Limited
Crown Promenade
Crown Towers
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Darryl Consolidated
David Bowen
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Deborah Carter
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Galway
Gaye Family
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Hassell
Helen Carroll
Helen & Tony Barr
Highlight
Hilt Family
Hubbard Family
Inspiring Talismans Project
Interlink Suicide

Irene Briggs
Ivan & Priscilla Mellado
Jane Stumpf
Jason Tombrige
John & Lyn Connah
Jowett & Moulin Chiropodists
Judy Aussens
Judy Sprats
Julie Webster
Kate Czaban
Kathryn Hill
Kelly & Glen Warren
Kevin Price
Kimberley Munnix
Kim Willshire
Kirby & Kirby
Knights Memorial Candles
Koonring Golf Club
Krispy Kreme
La Lina
Lappin Family
Laura Grace
Lea Mood
Lea Delalio
Lush Homewares
Magpie Beer
Melinda Martin
Marina Spanos
Mark & Kim Pearce
Mary McIvor
Massone Family
Mia Mora
Melbourne Symphony Orchestra
Melbourne Ventures
Henry Justice

Michellon Winery
Michael & Barbara Smith
Michelle & Phil Lavranus
Michelle Olliver
Moonee Valley Racing Club
Mosue
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Mullan Family
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National Storage
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NETS
Nick Morris
NRL
Pacific Brands
Papilion Furniture
Party Life
Paul Mercutio
Peninsula Hot Springs
Peter Lane & Family
Phillip & Joelle Grant
Port Art Gallery
Port Melbourne Photography
Poter Family
Practical Parenting Magazine
Prime Promotional Products
Pumplin Patch
Pure Spa
Ralph Carr Management

Ravenswood B&B
Raymond Yao
RCH Auxiliaries Office
RCH ERIC Dept
RCH Foundation
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Richmond Football Club
Rick Massace
rita Galea
Rob Grant
Robert Frost
Royal Doulton
Royal Melbourne Hotel
Russ
Savina Jewellers
Nicole Hadwin
NRL
Pacific Brands
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Ralph Carr Management

Stewart Family
Sue Falcon
Sue Manan
Sunrise Plastics
Sue Jones
Sunris Australia
Tony & Helen Barr
Tracey Pickard
Trish & John Cerus
The Gables
UCL
Vital Health Recruitment
Voice of the Vine Winery
Walter Wagner
Warner Music
Watercooler Management
Waterford Wedgewood
Windmill Educational
Wines By Design
Wylie Dalziel
Yering Station Winery

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SPEECH MADE BY NUNA PARENTS JOHN & KAREN GAUWE 2007 Celebration of Life Gala Ball

Karen

“Every parent wants a healthy baby.” Although this should never be taken for granted, John and I hope not to be the only parents who face the reality of having a baby who is seriously ill at birth.

Nathan was born with a condition called oesophageal atresia – or in layman’s terms he was born with an abnormality which occurs in 1:3000 of all births. It is a congenital abnormality which occurs in 1:3000 of all births and the potential realities of what it could mean. I was completely overcome with emotion and totally devastated. I was wondering how Nathan the baby could exist without an oesophagus, and whether he could ever have a normal life. I remember sitting outside the NNU totally inconsolable. While waiting the nursing staff had organised a social worker and one of Alex Audits’s secretaries to see me. Nathan was in the hospital, I felt the unit feeling totally overwhelmed and worried about what the future held for Nathan.

The phone rang about 9:30 PM that night. It was Nathan’s surgeon Alex Audit’s father in law, he immediately met me in person earlier in the day and secondly to reassure me that if he could not repair Nathan’s oesophagus, he would find a new alternative oesophagus for him, and I would be taking him home. He reassured me that we would eat and have a functioning oesophagus in the future.

To have one of the world’s leading surgeons take time out from a busy day and give a mother such hope in the sort of action that makes the NNU so special. Alex understood the desperation many mothers feel, and would have been unable to tell us what he had told me.

Annually he has to have serious surgery and is closely monitored.

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John

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The excellent care was also delivered constantly by the nursing staff. The care towards Nathan was always such that made him feel comfortable and cared for as if he was the only patient in the hospital. This fact has remained my secret for the last ten years so please do not tell anyone. I was completely overcome with emotion and totally devastated. I was wondering how Nathan the baby could exist without an oesophagus, and whether he could ever have a normal life. I remember sitting outside the NNU totally inconsolable. While waiting the nursing staff had organised a social worker and one of Alex Audits’s secretaries to see me. Nathan was in the hospital, I felt the unit feeling totally overwhelmed and worried about what the future held for Nathan.

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To have one of the world’s leading surgeons take time out from a busy day and give a mother such hope in the sort of action that makes the NNU so special. Alex understood the desperation many mothers feel, and would have been unable to tell us what he had told me.
Another great day was enjoyed by families attending the 2nd Annual AFL Grand Final Family Day presented by The Elise Sneddon Foundation.

This Foundation, which was formed by Kerryn and Robert Sneddon in loving memory of their daughter Elise who passed away in the unit in March 2005, aims to raise money for the purchase of life saving equipment for the NNU.

Although the weather remained threatening all day, hundreds of kids and adults alike had a fantastic time running around and trying out all the activities that were on offer.

The huge jumping castles were a hit, as were the CAMP AUSTRALIA activities and the fun filled CRAYOLA tent. There was plenty of glitter and glamour with spectacular activities and the fun filled CRAYOLA tent.

Another highlight of the day was a special appearance by Chris Moran and his Fire, Circus and Magic show. Super Dooper flew in for an interactive show and Captain Spalding also performed.

A stack of freebies were given away including a show bag upon entry and an unbelievable CRAYOLA show bag for the kids filled with art supplies.

There was plenty of glitter and glamour with spectacular equipment for the NNU.

A man to say many people, especially the babies whose lives will be saved by the equipment purchased with the profits.

Make sure you mark the 2008 Grand Final Day on your calendar and come along and support this great event!

A special appearance was made by Sergeant Pete who made another special appearance and brought along some normal and miniature police cars for the kids to explore.

More to the day was a special appearance by Chris Moran and his Fire, Circus and Magic show. Super Dooper flew in for an interactive show and Captain Spalding also performed.

Through generous sponsorship, silent auctions, raffles and entry passes over $25,000 was raised on the day.

Visit our website at www.elisefoundation.org.au
elisefoundation@optusnet.com.au
or email get involved contact
For further information about the event and how you can get involved contact: Kerryn or Robert on 9038 8322

Family Activity Day

WNU’s Memory Dinner organizer and NNU Mum – Michelle Ferguson & Friends invite all NNU families and supporters to attend a proposed Family Activity Day at Luna Park in March 2008.

Please contact Michelle directly via email for further information:

willsmemory@hotmail.com

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willsmemory@hotmail.com

Busywoman.com.au is extremely excited and proud to announce its involvement and support of the Neonatal Unit in 2008.

Director, Melanie Carson, has recently experienced the great work that the NNU does first hand.

“A friend’s little boy decided to enter the world very early and had a few hurdles to get through before he was finally able to go home with his Mum and Dad. For a single woman like myself, who has not yet considered having a family, I was not aware until recently – because of this experience – of the great work that the NNU does on a daily basis. The challenges some little ones and their families face are extremely tough to say the least. It was reassuring to know what good care the children were in”, she said.

Busywoman.com.au, the kids the kids the kids the kids the kids

Supporters for their ongoing commitment to our cause.

Many thanks to all of our wonderful and generous supporters for their ongoing commitment to our cause.

It means a lot to so many people, especially the babies whose lives will be saved by the equipment purchased with the profits.

For further information about the event and how you can get involved contact: Kerryn or Robert on 9038 8322

Upcoming Events

“Put your glad rags on and join me hon… we’ll have some fun when the clock strikes one”...

Yep, she’s at it again! Following the success of last year’s Barn Dance, NNU fundraiser and proud supporter, Sue Falzon in conjunction with Paul Grixti, invites all NNU families, friends and readers to attend an upcoming ‘Rock’N’Roll Night in support of the NNU on 1st March 2008.

Please contact Michelle directly via email for further information:

willsmemory@hotmail.com

Busywoman.com.au

Calling all busy women! Please register your interest in participating/supporting an upcoming Busywoman.com.au “Never too busy to make a difference”... all women events in 2008 via email meli@busywoman.com.au All funds raised from Busywoman.com.au events will be proudly donated to the NNU to assist Mothers of newborn babies.

Busywoman.com.au is extremely excited and proud to announce its involvement and support of the Neonatal Unit in 2008.

Director, Melanie Carson, has recently experienced the great work that the NNU does first hand...
We’d like to make 2008 a “Great” fundraising year for the NNU and invite you to join us and get involved!

Many parents and their family/friends express an urge to “give something back” when their little ones have received treatment in the NNU at the RCH.

This is a common response and we welcome and appreciate gestures of this nature.

Usually, the first question parents/family/friends ask is, “How can we help?”

Well, here are a few examples of ways in which NNU supporters have chosen to get involved with our great cause:-

• Support by selling RCH Merchandise for the NNU Auxiliary “Neonate Mates”. Merchandise can be collected or posted from the RCH Auxiliary Office on a sale or return basis. Just make sure you INFORM THE Neonate Mate Auxiliary as the beneficiary of your sales achievements. Over $14,000 was raised for this Auxiliary in the 2006 – 2007 financial year, a result of many NNU supporters who have accepted the challenge and sold to friends, workmates. Many friends of the NNU have also been very creative in the way that they have raised funds for the Unit. Some of these events have included:-

  - Trivia Night
  - Sportsman’s Night
  - Shopping Tour
  - Jewelry/Clothing/Fragrance/Homewares Parties
  - Formal Dinner Dance
  - Family Activity Day
  - Gold Coin Donation BBQ or Dinner Party
  - Fashion Parade
  - Movie Night
  - Bike Ride
  - Golf Day
  - Fishing Competition
  - Mother’s/Play Group Morning Tea
  - Dance-a-thon
  - Themed Parties i.e. Bush Dance
  - Car Wash
  - Ongoing Workplace Giving
  - Casual Dress Day
  - Art/Craft Exhibition
  - Garage/Trash ‘N’ Treasure Sale... etc.

Our service, knowledge, and experience is second to none which is evident with the number of Charities, Sporting Clubs, Associations and Corporate/Private fundraising events that we participate in Australia wide.

Auxiliary Update

Over the past 12 months, AustHeals at the Royal Children’s Hospital has introduced many new items to their extensive merchandise range. If you are looking for items that are simple to sell or goods, this range of merchandise is available for you to sell on site. Proceeds from all sales will directly support the NNU. The Auxiliary is available on a consignment basis.

• Support by nominating the Neonate Mates Auxiliary on (03) 9745 7051 or Dawn Aranyi - President of the Neonate Mates Auxiliary, if you would like to become a Member, Volunteer to run a Stall here at the RCH or donate suitable items for sale on a Stall.

• Nominate the Auxiliary to receive donations in lieu of gifts when celebrating your next special occasion; Birthdays, Anniversary’s, Christenings, Engagements, Bar/Bat Mitzvah’s, Weddings – whatever the occasion.

• Ongoing Workplace Giving – a simple and easy way to raise funds, the range of Auxiliary merchandise is available for you to sell on site. Proceeds from all sales will directly support the Neonate Mates Auxiliary.

• Use your imagination; these suggestions serve as guidelines only. We welcome any new ideas you might have to inspire and motivate supporters to get involved.

• Memorial Trusts/Funds – if you would like to nominate the Auxiliary to receive donations in lieu of gifts when celebrating your next special occasion; Birthdays, Anniversary’s, Christenings, Engagements, Bar/Bat Mitzvah’s, Weddings – whatever the occasion.

• Attend a NNU Fundraising Event - this is a common response and we welcome and appreciate gestures of this nature.

Other events may require more of a time commitment than others, but if you have a group of friends or a network of people who are ready and willing to promote and attend your event, sell-flyer tickets and help with prizes and the overall organization of the event, you are sure to get All fundraising events being held in the name of the RCH MUST BE REGISTERED with the RCH Foundation. There are also specific laws that relate to fundraising events and raffles held in the state of Victoria – please contact Donna Aranyi for further information and to provide the RCH with a DATED of the event for inclusion in the NNU Newsletter (subject to print deadlines).

• Attend an Annual Gala Ball - bring the family along to an upcoming Activity Day or event.

• Trusts and Foundations - if you would like to nominate the Auxiliary to receive donations in lieu of gifts when celebrating your next special occasion; Birthdays, Anniversary’s, Christenings, Engagements, Bar/Bat Mitzvah’s, Weddings – whatever the occasion.

• Memorial Trusts/Funds – if you would like to nominate the Auxiliary to receive donations in lieu of gifts when celebrating your next special occasion; Birthdays, Anniversary’s, Christenings, Engagements, Bar/Bat Mitzvah’s, Weddings – whatever the occasion.

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• Use your imagination; these suggestions serve as guidelines only. We welcome any new ideas you might have to inspire and motivate supporters to get involved.

Please meet our newest member Dopher Heal.

This range includes:-

  - Dopher Heal Plush $25
  - Real Heal Sock Bags $3

And don’t forget the propoganda; Lux a Bub range, new items include the latest knitwear range featuring knitted jackets, beanies and booties.

Features: Blankets, socks, wraps, gro-suits, dragon singles (features a badge) $3

**Items include:**

  - Tote Bags $2
  - Art Smocks (sml, med, lrg) $15
  - Children’s Cups $12
  - Gardening Gloves Adult $5
  - Aprons Adult $15
  - Umbrellas Adult $20
  - Socks (available stars or stripes) 6 pairs $20
  - Dragon Singles set of 2 $15

• Ongoing Workplace Giving – a simple and easy way to raise funds, the range of Auxiliary merchandise is available for you to sell on site. Proceeds from all sales will directly support the Neonate Mates Auxiliary.

• Support by nominating the Auxiliary to receive donations in lieu of gifts when celebrating your next special occasion; Birthdays, Anniversary’s, Christenings, Engagements, Bar/Bat Mitzvah’s, Weddings – whatever the occasion.

• Use your imagination; these suggestions serve as guidelines only. We welcome any new ideas you might have to inspire and motivate supporters to get involved.

Some events may require more of a time commitment than others, but if you have a group of friends or a network of people who are ready and willing to promote and attend your event, sell-flyer tickets and help with prizes and the overall organization of the event, you are sure to get...
It was twelve months ago when our three week old baby Oscar, became very ill after being transported to our unit via the NETS team and spending 3 weeks in your care, he has made a full recovery and is now fifteen months old!

It is an unimaginable thought for a parent, not knowing if your newborn baby is going to pull through or not. As Oscar was our third baby and I had enjoyed a perfect pregnancy, easy natural birth and an amazing first three weeks enjoying our little boy at home, we never imagined the journey we were about to experience.

Mother’s instinct is an amazing thing. After Oscar was diagnosed with a medical condition known as Long Gap Oesophageal Atresia his age measured 5 days. Basically this meant that Ben’s oesophagus did not join his stomach in order for Ben to feed. He had to undergo surgery to insert a feeding tube known as a gastrostomy through his abdomen into his stomach.

Not long after this had been done, we met with surgeon Dr Joe Crameri who explained to us that further surgery would be done some weeks later. We would have to be patient and wait for Ben to put on weight and for his stomach to grow before we could move through to the next phase of our challenge. We needed the gap in his oesophagus to increase in length to have the best chance of a successful surgery and long-term outcome.

During this time, I took things on a day-to-day basis, believing that each new day brought us one step closer to seeing this experience through. The nursing staff loved Ben, especially his easy going nature and the obvious joy he shared with every interaction.

Anyway the rest is history and thanks to the amazing team of Doctors and Nurses in the NNU at the RCH, he is now doing really well! He is still on his daily Atenolol but is being weaned off and he has his Cardiology review next month, in the hope he can stop the medication all together.

The last 12 months has been a whirlwind but a day has not gone by when I have not thought of how grateful we are for the sensational care Oscar received while in the NNU.

The love & kindness that are experienced (especially Oscar) from all of the staff at the RCH words cannot express! We greatly appreciate the support each individual, offered us and feel truly blessed, express! We greatly appreciate the support each individual offered us and feel truly blessed, THANK YOU SO MUCH!!!

Thank you again, I think the RCH & NETS offers an amazing service to the families of Victoria and beyond, so never forget the wonderful contribution and difference you make to people’s lives everyday.

James & Georgie Kirby

Ben came into the world at 37 weeks of gestation in March 2006 at 2.59am weighing 2.1 Kgs, a very tiny baby.

Following his birth, Ben was transported to the Neonatal Unit at The Royal Children’s Hospital, Melbourne whilst I stayed behind to recover. It was not easy seeing him alone and even harder knowing I couldn’t be with him so soon after his arrival.

Once at the NNU, Ben was diagnosed with a medical condition known as Long Gap Oesophageal Atresia his age measured 5 days. Basically, this meant that Ben’s oesophagus did not join his stomach. In order for Ben to feed, he had to undergo surgery to insert a feeding tube known as a gastrostomy through his abdomen into his stomach.

Not long after this had been done, we met with surgeon Dr Joe Crameri who explained to us that further surgery would be done some weeks later. We would have to be patient and wait for Ben to put on weight and for his stomach to grow before we could move through to the next phase of our challenge. We needed the gap in his oesophagus to increase in length to have the best chance of a successful surgery and long-term outcome.

During this time, I took things on a day-to-day basis, believing that each new day brought us one step closer to seeing this experience through. The nursing staff loved Ben, especially his easy going nature and the obvious joy he shared with every interaction.

After three very long months in the NNU, Ben’s gap had increased by 2cm and he was finally in a good position to have surgery. The surgery took six hours and the relief I felt meeting with Dr Crameri afterwards was overwhelming. We had successfully joined Ben’s oesophagus with the tubing in his stomach so that food could naturally reach it, at last. Ben’s stomach would be a bit smaller than normal a normal but a week after his surgery, he was back to his old smiling and happy self.

At four months of age and after four months of outstanding care in the NNU we were moved to 4 Main to begin the final leg of our journey that would take us home at last. It was very difficult saying goodbye to our friends in the NNU after such a long time but after only two weeks in 4 Main Ben was finally able to leave the RCH. I cannot adequately describe in words what it felt like to walk out of the hospital and walk in through our front door at home with our baby in our arms. We were all so happy at last.

Ben is now 16 months old and walking and talking. He experienced an initial slight delay in development but after a few months of patience, we were well and truly caught up with his peers. He still visits the RCH every two weeks for Oesophageal dilatation but overall he is doing extremely well.

We would like to thank Ben’s team of doctors – especially Dr Joe Crameri, his nurses and all of the other parents who had babies in the NNU at the same time as Ben. For their amazing support, especially during the hard times. There’s an almost unbreakable bond in the NNU that although we are all there as individual families, a bond forms naturally between all of us, which means that we share in each others triumphs and also the sad times. It is a very special place for which our family will always owe a great debt of gratitude.

Thank you.

Pauline, Paul, Claire, Erick and Baby Ben.

You can read more about Ben’s progress at www.benjourney.blogspot.com
I was born last century and the RCH has seemingly always been a part of my life. My father worked here as a medical specialist in childhood cancer for many years, and my sisters and I spent a lot of time on weekends, playing in the hospital, whilst my father was on call. I think I always wanted to do medicine, especially as I was not good enough to make it as a professional sportsperson for long.

I did my paediatric training at RCH, and during this time was exposed to Neonatology. The first night on the unit I saw a baby with severe sickle cell disease, and I was scared witless. But I came back for more, meaning I either like a challenge or I am a fool. I never forget. I was scared witless! But I came back for sick babies on my own, was an experience I will never forget, I was scared witless! But I came back for more, meaning I either like a challenge or I am a fool. I never forget. I was scared witless! But I came back for sick babies on my own, was an experience I will never forget, I was scared witless! But I came back for more, meaning I either like a challenge or I am a fool. I never forget. I was scared witless! But I came back for sick babies on my own, was an experience I will never forget, I was scared witless! But I came back for more, meaning I either like a challenge or I am a fool.

Once I had decided to stick with Neonatology, I dropped my family off to the Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto, Canada, where I worked for three-and-a-half years. This was a formative time as I was here that I started to do research in a serious way and got involved in working in basic science laboratory. This became so important to me that when I got back from Toronto, I worked part time in the Neonatology Unit at RCH but spent most of my time doing my PhD at the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute with Professor David Vaux.

Now I run my own laboratory here at the Murdoch Children’s Research Institute, in the Children’s Cancer Centre at the RCH. We study the molecular mechanisms of how cells live and die, and how their survival is regulated by chemicals known as growth factors. When I start to talk about all this to my colleagues, understandably their eyes begin to glaze over and their eyelids droop slightly. Nevertheless, they have always supported me in my pursuit of a molecular biologist who also loves working in the Neonatal Unit.

The Neonatal Unit is sometimes a tough place to work, at other times incredibly rewarding. At all times, I have to admire the courage of the parents and babies who find themselves in a place and in a situation they could scarcely have imagined.

My life at home, like most people, is busy, sometimes chaotic but my favourite place to be! Neither, my wife, works full time running her general practice. We have two children, Henry, who is 18 and doing VCE this year (I thought my first night in Neonatology was stressful). Georgia is 16 and going into year 11 next year. They are both wonderful children of whom I am extremely proud, although they both suffer from a condition that prevents them from doing any sort of domestic task or helping around the house! They probably get it from me.

When we can, which is all too infrequent, Neither and I like to go down to the beach. I will pack my way around the golf course or we will go for a run along the beach with our dog of uncertain breeding, Chloe. I am pathetically slow, but I try. A glass of red or a beer finishes the evening off nicely.

Thank you for your care, support, thoughtfulness, commitment, professionalism and expertise – it’s been amazing and is greatly appreciated.

Tamsin, Jamie & Stephanie

Thank you all so much for the great care you gave Leif in these super important days of his life. Thanks to you guys (and the surgery team), Leif will be able to come along to any a soccer game with us! Thanks too for treating us like friends and not patients. God Bless

Chad, Erika & Leif

To the staff of the NNU – what more can we say but “thank you” for getting our beautiful boy through the ups and downs of his little life so far.

Phil & Lesley

We would like to say thank you to all those that cared for our baby son Samuel – there are not enough words, however we will try. Thank you to Tom Clarnette and his team who were brilliant and kept us completely informed at every step. The follow up care also, was thorough and genuine. We always felt your concern for Samuel was real – we never felt that you thought of him as just another patient. Thank you to Lisa Hewley for your management of Samuel’s care and coordination of his hospital and follow up appointments. Thank you to all of the Neonatologists who oversaw Samuel’s daily care and kept his best interests at heart. Most of all, we would like to thank the Neonatal nursing team. To you, we gave the ones that cared for Samuel in every way possible.

You are all an inspiration and we would be very surprised if a better team existed anywhere else in the world. Thank you for being kind and caring; for tending him when he was upset, for feeding him when we couldn’t and for taking the time every day and night to fill us in on what we might have missed. Thank you for being more than nurses; for providing a listening ear; a shoulder to cry on and “stand in”. You guys were everything to Samuel for six weeks and also to us.

We had a hard journey ahead but you made it easier with your reassurance, support and love. Samuel is such a happy little soul and we are so grateful to have him home and growing healthier by the day. We know he may face setbacks ahead but we trust him that he can be anything and treat him as a normal child. He is surrounded by family and friends who love him and will be there for him and we know how much the care and dedication of the Neonatal Unit has helped him to grow.

Our love and thanks, Samuel and Family.

A big thank you for all your hard work, dedication and care. Lots of love and thanks.

Adrian

Thank you so much for the love and care you have given me and William over the past few days. I’m so happy William is almost back to his best and it’s all because of you guys! Lots of love

Amanda & Matthew

We would like to thank all the staff of the NNU for the care you have given Kayden over the past 4 months. She had some tough times but you always had faith in her recovery. You gave us the most wonderful support that helped us to get through this experience. We also know that Kayden’s future success will be due to your hard work and dedication to her care.

We will keep in touch, thanks again.

Laura, David & Kaylee

To the Neonatal ICU Team of Doctors, Surgeons and Nurses – thank you very much for all your care and support throughout our stressful time. Words cannot express how thankful we are – Ethan’s stay here was very much appreciated by all family concerned. Thanks again

Rebecca, Troy & Ethan

It has been almost 7 weeks and Olivia is now ready to go home – yay! She has done a remarkable job and we couldn’t have done this without you. First and foremost, we would like to thank the Neonatal nursing team. To you, we gave the ones that cared for Samuel in every way possible.

You are all an inspiration and we would be very surprised if a better team existed anywhere else in the world. Thank you for being kind and caring; for tending him when he was upset, for feeding him when we couldn’t and for taking the time every day and night to fill us in on what we might have missed. Thank you for being more than nurses; for providing a listening ear; a shoulder to cry on and “stand in”. You guys were everything to Samuel for six weeks and also to us.

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Our love and thanks, Samuel and Family.

A big thank you for all the care and support you have given to us and for supporting us during such a traumatic time. Your kindness was very much appreciated and will not be forgotten. With sincere thanks

Dean, Candice & Blake

Thank you for looking after my baby boy! We would like to thank all of the staff that looked after him. Please know how grateful we are for your care and for keeping us updated on his progress and wellbeing. As Ben has grown, his smile, his laughter and kind nature have all been aspects that have developed with your care – words can’t express our joy and gratitude. You should all feel very proud of yourselves and give yourselves a big pat on the back for the wonderful work and care you gave our son Ben. We are going to miss everyone in the NNU who have become like ‘family’ to us and we hope to visit soon.

Once again, a big thank you.

Pauline, Paul, Claire, Eric & Ben

We would like to say a very big thank you to all those that cared for our beautiful little boy Brooklyn during his illness. Your kindness, patience and support have been much appreciated. Kind regards

Rebecca, Shannon & Brooklyn

Please accept this special thanks as a small token of appreciation for looking after our little man – Thomas.

Thank you so much, Grant, Joanne & Thomas

Dear NNU Staff, we would like to say thank you for helping our little boy Layne. We can’t thank you enough, you have been an absolutely love love

Tammy, Daniel & Jay