

LETTER FROM LES WHITE



“Our “total care” philosophy depends on the outstanding service of the Recreation and Play Therapy Department.”

Dear Friends and Supporters,

We at Sydney Children's Hospital are particularly proud of our comprehensive approach to care for children and families. This involves a number of health professionals from a variety of disciplines and specialties as well as a child friendly hospital environment. Key participants in the total team are the members of the Recreation and Play Therapy Department.

The spectrum of interventions by these colleagues encompass preparation prior to and support/diversion during frightening and painful procedures, as well as a range of measures and techniques to enhance the hospital experience. The aim is to minimise pain, anxiety and fear while also reducing potential long term consequences of discomfort and disruption.

The Recreation and Play Therapists require a range of skills and expertise, from an understanding of human behaviour and child psychology, through to capabilities in education, entertainment, diversion and the engagement of children under often difficult circumstances. The Service incorporates the specific skills of music therapy and therapeutic play. The Department also coordinates valuable input from other organisations who participate in diversional activities.

Our “total care” philosophy depends on the outstanding service of the Recreation and Play Therapy Department. We are constantly exploring ways to expand their reach and further enhance their contribution. There is no doubt that your support will make a real difference in the lives of an ever-increasing number of children.

Thank you and best wishes,

Professor Les White

Executive Director, Sydney Children's Hospital

Gold Week 2-8 June, 2008

Strike Gold for Sick Kids!



**SYDNEY
CHILDREN'S
HOSPITAL
FOUNDATION**

During the month of June we encourage everyone in NSW to help raise money for Gold Week. Every cent you raise will help make a real difference to the lives of seriously ill children from NSW and beyond, treated at Sydney Children's Hospital, Randwick.



Host your own Gold Tiara or Crown Lunch – Get your friends and colleagues together and transform your dining, board or class room into a gold wonderland. From the CBD to country towns we encourage all of our supporters to don a gold tiara or crown and register to receive a 'how to' kit to host your very own Gold Lunch!

For more information please go to our website www.goldweek.org.au or call 1800 644 336.

Start planning your Gold Lunch today!

Kaitlyn Keeps Smiling

When six year old Kaitlyn was born, she was unable to breathe or feed. She was rushed to the Intensive Care Unit at Sydney Children's Hospital, Randwick where she spent 12 weeks on life support before she stabilised. During this agonising time, Kaitlyn's parents, Lisa and Selwyn were advised that Kaitlyn had Pierre Robin and Stickler Syndrome, rare genetic conditions which affect her airways and her ability to feed. Kaitlyn would have to be fed directly into her digestive system through a gastrostomy button in her abdomen for the rest of her life. For the next three and a half years, Kaitlyn's condition was so severe and complex that she remained in Hospital, receiving the specialist medical care she needed around the clock.

It takes a team of professionals to care for a sick child and one aspect of Kaitlyn's care was play and music therapy. The Recreation and Play Therapy Department worked with her to make hospitalisation and the painful procedures she faced daily less traumatic and as positive as possible.

"The play therapists helped Kaitlyn understand her condition by giving her beloved teddy bear a gastrostomy button to show how the bear was fed by a machine," said Lisa. "They attended medical procedures to distract and comfort her. She can now have her gastrostomy buttons changed without the need for general anaesthetic, which is testament to the amazing work of the play therapists."

Lisa noticed that over the years Kaitlyn's love of music developed from the regular music therapy that she enjoyed in Hospital. By participating in group and individual sessions, she learnt skills to distract and entertain herself during long periods of time when she was unable to leave her bed.

Kaitlyn is now enjoying a more normal family routine at home and school, although she continues to be fed nightly through a machine and still visits the Hospital regularly for checkups.

"Looking back on those years in hospital, despite the hard times, there were many special moments and the



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positive attitude of all the staff made it a happy positive place. Whenever we go to Hospital now, Kaitlyn feels very comfortable. It is her second home and considering all she has been through it is remarkable," said Lisa.

"I can't thank the team of music and play therapists enough. They have been instrumental in helping Kaitlyn and our whole family deal with the challenges of her condition and giving Kaitlyn the best techniques to independently face her medical battles. They are an inspiration," said Lisa.

? Did you know...

TIPS FROM rEcReaTion & PLay thEraPy To HElp YoUR CHILd DEaL WiTH pain

It is never easy to see a child you know and love in pain, be it a scraped knee or a serious illness. But you are not powerless to help. Here are some tips for helping children of all ages get through pain they are experiencing and focus on getting better.

- **Babies and toddlers:** Give them contact with familiar objects, toys or routines whenever possible. Use a soothing tone of voice, maintain friendly eye contact and use physical touch like gentle stroking to comfort them.
- **Preschoolers:** Use pictures or toys to explain what is going on. Tell them how the experience is likely to feel, smell, taste, sound and look like. This helps them know what to expect so they won't be caught by surprise.
- **Primary aged children:** Use their language to explain what is going on, so they can have an accurate understanding of what will happen and how it is likely to feel.
- **Teenagers:** Give them space to ask their own questions. They may need some privacy when it comes to discussing procedures with doctors, but they still want to know that you are there for them.

More Handy Tips:

- Answer your child's questions honestly. If something is going to hurt don't lie and say that it won't. This will only make the child distrustful and hesitant to co-operate with any future procedures.
- Most children benefit from being distracted and engaging in fun activities appropriate for their age such as drawing or colouring in, blowing bubbles, singing familiar songs, reading stories, listening to music, watching a favourite television show or movie.
- Stroke or hug your child, but try to avoid the painful area.
- Praise your child for their efforts in coping with the painful experience.
- Talk with your child, encourage them to draw or write about the experience afterwards to help make sense of it.

All information provided by this article is intended for your general knowledge only and is not a substitute for medical advice. Please seek the advice of a doctor if your child is experiencing any serious pain.

YES!

i would like to help sick kids

Please find enclosed my donation of: (please circle)

\$50 \$75 \$125 \$500 or \$ _____

Enclosed is my cheque or money order made payable to Sydney Children's Hospital Foundation, or please debit my credit card details below.

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We respect your privacy and do not give your name and address to any other charity or business. Donations are tax deductible. Please return this coupon and your donation to Sydney Children's Hospital Foundation, Locked Bag 5, Randwick, NSW 2031 and we will forward a receipt. Sydney Children's Hospital Foundation ABN 72 003 073 185. Telephone (02) 9382 1188 email schfoundation@sesiahs.health.nsw.gov.au website www.sch.edu.au. Sydney Children's Hospital Foundation would like to thank those companies who made the production of this newsletter possible. Your generosity and commitment is greatly appreciated. Your name will be placed on our mailing list and you will, from time to time, be mailed fundraising and health information such as this newsletter, invitations to events, Christmas card catalogues, etc. If you do not wish to receive this information or do not want your name to be placed on this list, please tick this box