

**8th International Conference on Grief and
Bereavement in Contemporary Society
July 15-18 2008**

Abstract for Individual Paper session:

Remembering our children garden:

Very Special Kids engages the community in a celebration of life

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(Very Special Kids)

A special tribute garden was designed for Very Special Kids by leading landscape and horticultural specialists as part of the 2007 Melbourne International Flower and Garden Show. The display garden, entitled 'Remembering our Children' was a gentle celebration for families registered with Very Special Kids of their children who had died. This unique garden was designed to embrace the powerful memories of these children and acknowledge all those who love them.

Incorporating the use of handpicked river stones of varying colours and sizes, individual children's names were etched into stones for those families who wished to participate. Recognising the powerful meaning the stones held, families were invited to attend the garden show. Very Special Kids then hosted functions in May inviting families to come together, meet those involved in the creation of the garden, honour its purpose and collect their child's memory stone.

The overwhelming response from families was testament to the therapeutic benefit of this public tribute, combining symbolic elements with the very real gift of personalised river stones. This unique project reinforces the importance of creating opportunities for families to remember their children and have their children acknowledged by others publicly irrespective of how many years have passed.