

special lives



Special Memories For Mother's Day

When Belinda and Craig Mullan were preparing for the birth of their first child, they had a picture in their mind about how they would celebrate Mother's Day with their new baby boy.

However, Belinda explains that the day didn't turn out how they had planned. "Jack was born in the lead up to Mother's Day on 24 April, but my first Mother's Day was not at all like I expected it would be. He was only three weeks old and he was still in palliative care. We were unsure about whether he was going to make it." "Jack had a brain hemorrhage while

in-utero and his brain fluid wasn't circulating the way it should have been, which meant his head circumference was getting bigger and bigger. He needed surgery to have a shunt placed in his brain to improve the flow of fluid. I remember the pediatrician suggested we take him home from hospital for Mother's Day and then have the operation after that."

Welcome to our April newsletter!

VERY SPECIAL 
kids
Children's hospice and family support

Diary Dates

-  24 April
Coffee Morning - Kew

-  3 May
Pamper Day - Warragul

-  14 May
Pamper Day - Korumburra

-  24 April
Coffee Morning - Kew

-  21 May
Coffee Morning - Peninsula

-  31 May
Pamper Day - Traralgon

-  6 June
Coffee Morning - North West

-  11 June
Pamper Day - Bairnsdale

-  18 June
Coffee Morning - Peninsula

-  19 June
Coffee Morning - Kew

-  23 June
Family Lunch - Bendigo

-  3 July
Sibling Day - Malvern

-  10 July
Sibling Day - Malvern

-  16 July
Dad's Dinner - Ballarat

-  16 July
Coffee Morning - Peninsula

Adventure Park Family Day

Families from the Barwon, Central Victoria and South West regions came together to share a very happy day at the Adventure Park near Geelong.

There was something for everyone – splashing about in water, hurtling down massive slides, playing mini-golf, riding on the fabulous carousel and heaps more.

The massages delivered by expert hands were a big hit, while the arts and craft corner and face-painting proved to be very popular. The sun shone, the birds sang, the food was delicious and the kids all had a wonderful time. Our team of

volunteers helped out families who needed some support on the day.

A special thanks to the team from Golden Farms, part of Turi Foods company, who generously sponsored the event and provided 10 volunteers to help out with the activities on the day. Thank you to all who attended for making this annual event such a great day.



Lord Somers Camp

A great weekend at Lord Somers Camp was enjoyed by 17 families in February.

The children took advantage of the perfect weather by spending time at the beach and riding standing paddle boards. There was a whole heap of other entertainment as well, such as a visit from the fire brigade, paintball and making costumes to wear at the Saturday night "Hollywood/Bollywood" themed dinner. The Lord Somers Camp volunteers performed some crazy comedy sketches, including the human 10 pin bowling game. Relaxation and pampering was more popular for the parents, who enjoyed massages, facials, manicures and pedicures. Parents enjoyed a couple of

outings to the Emu Plains Market and the high tea put on at Swannies was a very elegant affair.

The HOGS – Harley Owners Group – were again the hit of Sunday and offered motorcycle rides to some very excited children and parents. Very Special Kids would like to extend our great appreciation to the Committee and volunteers from Lord Somers Camp and Powerhouse for providing a truly nurturing and fun experience for our families.



Very Special Kids House

We are pleased to announce that four of our casual bank staff have now been upgraded to permanent staff members, which is great news as the children already know and love Justin, Lauren, Lilly and Nat.

A reminder to parents that all children need to have a signed medication chart when they are admitted, with the only exceptions being an emergency or short notice admission. The safety of your children is very important to us, so if your child arrives without the correct paperwork they may be asked to leave and return with a completed chart.

Lastly, we are looking at an easier system of booking in your children for respite at the House. Hopefully we can reduce the waiting periods and make it a little more flexible for families. There will be more information on that soon, but please feel free to contact us if you have any queries.

Kind regards, Sue and Philippa



Remembering Our Children

Children touch the lives of the people around them in a very special way. Our love and prayers go out to the family and friends of:

Tasha Chaplin

Brennan Houghton

Grace Howard

Nondas Konstantinou

Jax Lynch

Gus Mainwaring

Marco Viero

2014 Very Special Dates

24 Hour Treadmill Challenge
 Fri 23 to Sat 24 May, 9am to 9am
 Very Special Kids,
 321 Glenferrie Road, Malvern

Fashion Sale
 Sat 28 June, 9am to 3pm
 Malvern Town Hall, Corner
 Glenferrie Road and High Street,
 Malvern

Piggy Bank Appeal
 Mon 1 to Tues 30 September
 Visiting local communities all
 around Victoria

Footy Fever Debate
 Fri 5 September, 7am to 9am
 MCC Members Dining Room,
 Melbourne Cricket Ground

Very Special Kids Fair
 Sat 22 November, 9am to 4pm
 Very Special Kids, 321 Glenferrie
 Road, Malvern

Fashion Sale
 Sat 22 November, 9am to 3pm
 Malvern Town Hall, Corner
 Glenferrie Road and High Street,
 Malvern

Feel-Good Fashion Sale

The Very Special Kids Fashion Sale is a feel-good shopping experience supporting a great cause. You can snap up a bargain while raising funds for children with life-threatening conditions.

Thousands of quality female, male and childrenswear, shoes and accessories will be available at up to 90% off retail price. Brands are too hot to mention and items start from \$5.

The Fashion Sale is a must attend event for those who love their fashion at bargain prices. The event will feature a pop-up café, massages and gifts for all our

shoppers. 90% of shoppers who attended our last event said they would be back again for more bargains.

Entry to the Fashion Sale is a gold coin donation and 100% of the proceeds go to Very Special Kids.

Visit vsk.org.au or our Facebook page for regular updates.



Saturday 28 June,
 9am to 3pm
 Malvern Town
 Hall, Corner
 Glenferrie Road
 and High Street,
 Malvern



Friday 23 to
 Saturday 24 May,
 9am to 9am
 Very Special Kids,
 321 Glenferrie
 Road, Malvern



treadmill
 CHALLENGE

Team Challenge For Children In 24 Hour Care

The 24 Hour Treadmill Challenge is a battle of team camaraderie and personal endurance with treadmills and spin bikes in motion for 24 hours.

While participating teams work and sweat together to reach their ultimate target of completing the 24 hour challenge, only metres away children will receive 24 hour specialised care at Very Special Kids House. Celebrities, DJ's and a massage team will motivate and entertain teams on and off the treadmill.

The Treadmill Challenge is the biggest corporate event of its kind, with more than 800 participants taking part from organisations such as ALH Group, Essendon Football Club, Commonwealth Bank, Guild Group, APHS, Vital Office, SureCare, Ernst & Young, QBE, Whitbread and Emergency Services.

Families will also take to the treadmills to run or walk in honour of their very special child, including Team Avah, Brayden's Heroes and

the Heartfelt Team. Participants seek sponsorship and donations from co-workers, clients, friends and family with 100% of donations going directly to fund the House.

The Very Special Kids team consisting of nurses, carers, family support workers, corporate and admin staff are all getting sweaty for this special event. We welcome our supporters and

families to join us as an individual or small group. There are day time and overnight spots still available, ranging from 30 minutes to 3 hours. It doesn't matter whether you walk, run or sprint – together we can make a difference.

For more information, call Amber Skehan, Fundraising Events Manager on 03 9804 6240, email askehan@vsk.org.au or visit vsktreadmill.org.au





Special Snippets



Painting, Putting And Cycling For Charity

Very Special Kids relies heavily on the support of corporate and community partners to raise funds to provide services to our families - thank you to these fantastic fundraisers.

The Friends Gallery returned to grace the walls of Very Special Kids and raised \$20,000 for our families. A sub-committee of volunteers, led by renowned local artist Regina Hona, worked hard to curate 43 professional and emerging artists to produce an exhibition that showcased some magnificent and exciting abstract, realist and modern work, including oils, watercolours, pastels, ink, acrylic, linocut and mix media subjects.

Malvern-based accounting and business advisory firm OHM Australia held its annual Charity Dinner and Golf Day in March. The event at the Woodlands Golf Club was hosted by Australian Football Hall of Fame legend Kevin Bartlett and raised

\$24,000 for Very Special Kids. Over the past 2 years, OHM Australia and their network has donated over \$80,000 to Very Special Kids.

The Chain Reaction Challenge Victoria 2014 involved 48 senior business executives who cycled more than 1,000 kilometres in seven days to raise over \$1million, which will be shared between charity partners Very Special Kids and the Starlight Children's Foundation, as well as other charities. The brave cyclists took on the challenge to help raise money for extensive renovations to Very Special Kids House and the family accommodation, which will enable three families to stay at the House at any one time.



Welcomes & Farewells

After 13 years of service at Very Special Kids, Gail Hessell has retired to spend more time with family. In her role as head of the hospice, Gail was extremely successful in integrating our services both internally and with our partner services at Monash, the Royal Children's Hospital and with the Victorian Paediatric Palliative Care Partnership. We wish Gail the very best for the future.

Our Deputy Hospice Managers Sue Kearney and Philippa Spicer are now the first point of contact at Very Special Kids House. We also welcome Rachel Ficinus as the Deputy Manager of the Family Support Team, while in the Fundraising Team Megan Potter has been appointed as the Corporate Development Manager and Jessica Wallis has joined us as the Trusts and Foundations Fundraiser.