

HAPPENINGS

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Amalia's story

Every victory counts, no matter how small

At five months old Amalia was diagnosed with dystonic cerebral palsy, a condition which prevents her muscles from responding accurately to the messages her brain sends. Amalia has the most severe form of cerebral palsy, causing quadriplegia, which means that her arms and legs are affected, as well as the muscles of her trunk, face and mouth. This impacts all aspects of Amalia's daily life, including her mobility, her ability to eat, drink and swallow, her speech and her fine motor skills. Each week she participates in physiotherapy, speech therapy, occupational therapy and daily life skills education classes at The Infants' Home and with her external therapists.

Despite the physical challenges she faces, Amalia functions at a normal cognitive level, and she's keen to do everything other preschoolers do – play, learn and socialise. She's very outgoing and loves being with children her own age, although sometimes it can be difficult for her to physically keep up with their pace.

“The Infants' Home provides Amalia with such a nurturing and safe environment where she can learn, play and make friends just like any other child.”

KATARINA, AMALIA'S MOTHER



Amalia participating in a small group music activity supported by Educator Sabreena (left) and Occupational Therapist Justine.

Before coming to The Infants' Home at two and a half years of age, Amalia attended her local child care centre, but was only able to go there for five hours a day, when an additional staff member was there to support her. Amalia's mum Katarina wanted to find a more inclusive child care setting for Amalia, but this wasn't easy given the high level of support she requires. After contacting 10 local centres, Katarina learned about The Infants' Home. Our Health and Early Childhood Consultant Meryl Burn immediately reassured Katarina that we could meet Amalia's needs.

Katarina says that the team at The Infants' Home has been instrumental in helping Amalia to achieve some life-changing milestones, not the least of which was helping Amalia to learn to drink independently from a cup. Katarina says that Johnson House Preschool's Director and the Allied Health team were determined to help Amalia achieve this small but very significant victory. After much trial, error and practice, Amalia now easily uses a two handled cup with a straw. Katarina is thrilled with the new level of independence that Amalia has gained with the acquisition of this everyday skill, and it is also a great relief as she

no longer has to constantly offer Amalia water because Amalia is unable to communicate that she's thirsty. Her Educators and the Allied Health team also played a vital role in helping Amalia learn to use the bathroom on her own, which was a huge achievement given the

challenges of managing this skill while also using a walker for mobility.

Amalia is getting ready to start primary school next year, and she's extremely excited about this next big step. Johnson House Preschool director Amy and Allied Health professionals Justine (Occupational Therapist), Simone (Speech Pathologist) are meeting with the mainstream schools that Katarina is considering to plan for Amalia's transition. They will help the schools to begin preparing to meet Amalia's needs within the primary school setting.

You can help

ensure the continuation of our programs for vulnerable children and families.

To donate, please use the form on the back of this newsletter, visit theinfantshome.org.au or call 02 9799 4844.

Thank you.

Radisson Blu Sydney Hotel hosts a Gala Fundraising Evening for The Infants' Home!

This year we have been delighted to partner with Radisson Blu Plaza Hotel Sydney as the beneficiary of their annual Gala Fundraising Evening. The event, held in September, was a huge success, with almost \$50,000 raised towards a new bus for our playgroups. The evening included a fabulous 3-course meal, with entertainment by rising star violinist Anastasia Hibbard and singer Catherine Alcorn. Gala guests participated in a range of fundraising games and activities, such as a silent auction, a wheel of fortune, and raffles with prizes including a \$5,000 shopping spree at Robert Cliff Master Jewellers.

The Infants' Home's CEO Elizabeth Robinson and parent Yumi Wong-Pan were interviewed by 2CH radio announcer and event MC Gareth McCray OAM. Elizabeth and Yumi explained The Infants' Home's work and how we have helped Yumi's family and her son Caleb, who has Williams Syndrome.

The Infants' Home thanks Radisson Blu Plaza Hotel Sydney, gala guests and all prize donors, as well as Radisson's team



Radisson Blu Plaza Hotel Sydney staff model their new The Infants' Home shirts to wear in the City2Surf challenge.

of staff volunteers on the night, for their very generous support and for creating a fun-filled and successful evening.

An energetic team from Radisson Blu Plaza Sydney also took part in this year's City2Surf, raising over \$1,000 towards their fundraising total – thanks Team Radisson!



Deutsche Bank volunteers lend a hand at The Infants' Home

Deutsche Bank has been a friend of The Infants' Home for a number of years, regularly participating in our corporate volunteering program to help maintain our grounds and provide general assistance in our centres. Deutsche Bank kindly provides a \$500 donation for each staff member who volunteers at their chosen charity, and we thank them for their participation and their generous contribution to our services and programs for children and families.

Deutsche Bank volunteers do the hard yards to help maintain our grounds.

Learning through play: The inaugural Family Day Care Sydney Wide Educator Conference

In August we held our first annual Educator conference for Family Day Care Sydney Wide. The full-day conference, held at Club Ashfield, was attended by 60 delegates. The conference was themed *Learning through Play*, and included a lineup of amazing guest speakers who spoke about the stages of children's play development, discussed how the environment acts as a 'third teacher' in early childhood, and suggested great ways to use open-ended and recycled materials to extend children's learning. Educator Caroline says, "I really enjoyed the day and how we all learnt something together. I have already started using [some of the] ideas in my service".



Family Day Care Sydney Wide Educators enjoyed catching up at their recent conference.

Family Day Care Sydney Wide wins Family Day Care Excellence Award

Family Day Care Sydney Wide is very proud to have been awarded The Family Day Care Australia Excellence in Family Day Care Perpetual Star Award. We congratulate Manager Janice Francis and her team of educators and coordinators who provide services to over 650 families across more than 120 Sydney suburbs on this wonderful achievement.



Family Day Care Sydney Wide Educator Kristy (left) at the 2018 Excellence in Family Day Care Awards.

Celebrating Book Week at The Infants' Home

The theme for this year's Book Week was 'Find your treasure'. Children at The Infants' Home enjoyed visiting the special reading spaces that were set up each day on our main lawn, as well as engaging in reading storybooks in their centres.

Children in Johnson House Preschool were invited to bring in their favorite book from home to share with their friends, while the children in Murray House's infants' room explored the story 'Not a box' by Antoinette Portis, about a little rabbit who loves to explore the many uses of a simple box for imaginative play.



Children from Murray House with Educator Denise enjoy a story on the sunny lawn during Book Week.

'A celebration of life: The Infants' Home, Ashfield', history talk and exhibition



Sharing our story for History Week 2018.

We were delighted with the positive response we received to our first public exhibition and presentation on our history, and we're looking forward to repeating these as part of our 145th anniversary program in 2019. We also thank the Inner West Council for the grant they provided that made this exhibition possible.

As part of History Week 2018, the Inner West Council featured an exhibition of photographs and artefacts from The Infants' Home. 'A celebration of life: The Infants' Home, Ashfield', was held at Ashfield Library. Our Communications and Development Manager, Anne-Marie Byrne, who oversees our historical records, gave two history presentations (the second due to popular demand).

In memory of our friend Jean Saxon

The passing of Jean Saxon, aged 95, on 18 September marked the end of a full and wonderful life. Jean and her twin sister Marion were brought to The Infants' Home when one month old by their father Lionel in 1923, following their mother's untimely death. Lionel visited the twins regularly, and he even helped to make furniture and paint walls for The Infants' Home. At age six Jean and Marion returned home when their father remarried, and were brought up within a loving family. Both Jean and Marion went on to live successful and fulfilling lives, and to have families of their own. They have had a lifetime association with The Infants' Home, making regular visits and celebrating their 91st birthday here in 2013. We are honoured to have played a part in their wonderful life story, and Jean's memory will live on as a bright light in our organisation's history.



Vale Jean Saxon (1923-2018)



Twins Jean and Marion at The Infants' Home in 1926, aged 3.

Follow us on Facebook

To keep up to date on news and events at The Infants' Home, we invite you to follow us on Facebook here: www.facebook.com/theinfantshome



the infants' home
CHILD & FAMILY SERVICES

The Infants' Home is a leading provider of:

- early childhood education and care,
- early intervention and
- clinical health services for children from birth to school age.

Each year we provide services for over 2,600 children and their families. One third of our onsite services are directed to children and families with additional physical or emotional needs, or those living in vulnerable circumstances. For 142 years The Infants' Home has been a dynamic and innovative organisation, championing the rights of children, women and families.

Our services include:

- Early Childhood Education and Care Centres
- Family Day Care
- Supported playgroups
- Parent education and family support
- Postnatal Clinic

Our programs are funded through Government, Trusts, Foundations, Corporations, local clubs, business and donors.

Donations over \$2.00 are tax deductible.

Please see donations form overleaf.

Established 1874

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Leaving a bequest to The Infants' Home will ensure that each child is given every opportunity to reach their full potential.

How you can help

Every contribution helps a child. If you would like to support us, please send this form with your donation to:

**The Infants' Home, 17 Henry Street, Ashfield NSW 2131
ABN: 71 174 918 661**

Yes, I would like to make a difference to children and families.

Please accept my gift of:

\$50 \$100 \$200 \$500
 Other \$ _____

Please find enclosed my:

cheque/money order OR please debit my Visa Mastercard
Number:

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□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□

Signature _____

You can donate online, visit www.theinfantshome.org.au and click on the 'Donate' button.

Yes, I would like you to debit my credit card \$ _____ per month.

Expiry date /

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Yes, I would like to give a lasting gift. Please send me information on leaving a bequest.

Yes, I would like to know more. Please send me information about your services.

Donations of \$2 and over are tax deductible. A receipt will be issued on all donations. The Infants' Home respects your privacy. We do not disclose personal contact information without permission.

Please remove my name from your mailing list.



ECA Conference Tour of The Infants' Home

In September we welcomed a group of 40 delegates to tour our early childhood education and care centres as part of the 2018 Early Childhood Australia National Conference program. The delegates came to learn about our Hesta Award Winning Integrated Services. They were welcomed by Children's Services Manager—Centre Based Care, Mariam Christodoulos, and given an overview of our history by CEO Elizabeth Robinson. Delegates then toured our five centres in small groups to learn about our inclusive practices. The tour concluded with a morning tea and each delegate received a gift bag with resources to help them reflect on the concept of inclusion, which is central to the delivery of our integrated services.

The Infants' Home's staff enjoyed the opportunity to talk about integrated services to our visitors.

Farewell Meryl Burn

On 10 October we farewellled our Health and Early Childhood Consultant Meryl Burn at a special afternoon tea to mark her retirement after 38 years at The Infants' Home. Past and present staff came together to celebrate the amazing contribution that Meryl has made to The Infants' Home since beginning here in 1980. Over the years Meryl has provided essential expertise in the areas of child health, nutrition and development, and has been an integral part of the evolution of our integrated services for children and families. Meryl remembers on her first day at The Infants' Home "Feeling the ambience of this place, the tranquility—and the sound of happy children." In her time with us Meryl has seen The Infants' Home transition from a residential facility and crisis centre to the thriving integrated child and family services centre it is today. We congratulate Meryl and wish her all the best for a long, healthy and happy retirement.



Meryl was given a framed photograph of some of her favourite places at The Infants' Home.

The Infants' Home will celebrate 145 years in 2019!

We're very excited to be celebrating our 145th anniversary next year, and we're now in the process of planning a calendar of events and activities to commemorate this amazing milestone throughout 2019. We'll let you know more in our next issue!

