

11 May 2009

**MEDIA RELEASE**

## **BUTTERFLY BALL GIVES WINGS TO RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP**

*At Sydney Children's Hospital, Randwick*

### **The Touched by Olivia Foundation Vascular Malformations Research Fellowship at Sydney Children's Hospital, Randwick**

The 3rd annual Butterfly Ball held recently at the prestigious Parkside Ballroom, Convention Centre, Darling Harbour raised a record \$150,000 to fund the Touched by Olivia Foundation Vascular Malformations Research Fellowship at Sydney Children's Hospital, Randwick.

More than 600 special guests were treated to an evening of enchantment and asked to dig deep to help turn medical research into medical miracles for seriously ill children.

Guests included Sydney Children's Hospital Foundation Chairman, Jack Ford, Jay Laga'aia (Master of Ceremonies) Alicia Malone and Catherine Cox were entertained by Brent Street Kids, "So You Think You Can Dance" Dancers, The John Field Band and with a special solo appearance by Cirque Du Soleil Aerialist Christy Shelper.

Speakers included Alice Peacock who spoke about her personal experience with lymphangioma, John Perkins Founder of the Touched by Olivia Foundation and Dr Michael Brydon, Director of Clinical Operations, Sydney Children's Hospital, Randwick who announced the Fellowship.

"Sydney Children's Hospital depends on the support from dedicated organisations like the Touched by Olivia Foundation to ensure our patients, families and staff have access to the best equipment, facilities and services. The Butterfly Ball was a wonderful event which raised much needed funds for the Hospital's Fellowship program. This positive investment in the health and well being of children from all over New South Wales and beyond is extraordinarily commendable and appreciated," said Michael Brydon, Director of Clinical Operations, Sydney Children's Hospital.

John Perkins praised the efforts of everyone who made the evening an enormous success, saying, "We were delighted to have had the support of so many people and organisations who donated their time, goods, services and prizes for the Ball, making it not only a memorable night of glamour, fine food and music, but one that has enabled this important research to commence. Thanks to this support, the Touched by Olivia Foundation is now able to take the first major step in our aim to discover treatments and cures for diseases like lymphangioma, the disease that took the life of our baby, Olivia."

Vascular Malformations Research Fellowship is a 3 year research program that will investigate therapies which modify and/or prevent the growth of vascular malformations, including infantile haemangioma as well as develop educational and support materials for families like the Perkins who are afflicted by these malformations.

"1 in 10 children are born with a vascular malformation, ranging from haemangioma to the more rare form lymphangioma. If through the ball and our other fundraising activities we can initiate

research and education programs that will have an impact on this disease, we will have fulfilled a dream to help other families and save them the heartache we have known," Mr Perkins said.

'By bringing Olivia's Touch to others in need, we aim to create a positive change in the future of all our children,' Mr Perkins said.

Chief Executive of Sydney Children's Hospital Foundation, Adam Check said, "We are extremely grateful for the generosity of all who supported the Butterfly Ball and helped make it such a success. It is thanks to the Touched by Olivia Foundation that this exciting new research fellowship position can be established to make a difference to so many seriously ill children. The Butterfly Ball was an inspiring example of the valued partnership with the community and we thank the Touched by Olivia Foundation wholeheartedly."

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**Touched by Olivia Foundation  
Vascular Malformations Research Fellowship  
Sydney Children's Hospital, Randwick**

The Touched by Olivia Foundation is proud to be the principal supporter of the Vascular Malformations Research Fellowship at Sydney Children's Hospital, Randwick.

1 in 10 children are born with a haemangioma. Until recent years there has been limited research into vascular birthmarks which are a very rare group of disorders varying from the more common lesions (infantile haemangiomas) to some of the rarest (lymphangiomas) which can be life threatening to infants if located near a vital structure such as the airway.

This collaborative project between Sydney Children's Hospital, Randwick and the Centre for Vascular Research at the University of New South Wales will be lead by Chief Investigator Associate Professor Orli Wargon and conducted over three years commencing with the appointment of a Fellow in the Vascular Birthmark Clinic and a dedicated post-doctoral researcher.

In the investigation and treatment of vascular malformations and tumours including haemangiomas and lymphangiomas, the research group will investigate therapies which modify and/or prevent the growth of the infantile haemangioma as well as develop educational and support materials for families afflicted by these malformations.

It is our aim that this program will position Sydney Children's Hospital as a Centre of Excellence in the research and treatment of vascular malformations and tumours in children from Australia and beyond.

**To find out more about Touched by Olivia Foundation  
Vascular Malformations Research Fellowship  
Sydney Children's Hospital, Randwick**

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# **Touched By Olivia Foundation – Background**

*Touched by Olivia Foundation raises vital funds for healthier, happier kids*

“Creating the Foundation is our way of finding a positive meaning arising from the immeasurable pain of losing our little girl Olivia, at only 8 months old to a rare disease called Lymphangioma. Creating the Foundation is our way of bringing Olivia’s touch to others by creating a positive change in the future of other children.” (John and Justine Perkins – Founders)

## **Our initiatives are simple:**

1. Supporting the Sydney Children’s Hospital, Randwick in funding medical advancement through research and the purchase of much needed equipment;
2. Working with local councils and communities to raise funds to upgrade playgrounds to an all abilities standard, giving children of all abilities the opportunity to play together. We will call these playgrounds “Livvi’s Place”; and
3. Partnering with other children’s charities, such as Good Beginnings Australia, to produce and deliver parenting programs aimed at nurturing and improving the well-being of children and family life.

We are a registered health promotion charity with deductible gift recipient status and all donations \$2 and over are tax deductible. Our Foundation operates at zero overheads which means your support will make a difference with 100% of donations going to our cause.

## **For healthier, happier kids**

Touched by Olivia aims to raise vital funds for healthier, happier children.

Did you know that:

- 24% of Australian children are obese
- 62% of Australian families have both parents working
- Australians have experienced a 45% increase in high density living over the last 20 years
- 25% + of Australian kids spend 4+ hrs per day in front of TV
- NSW has the lowest spend per capita on parks and playgrounds
- Heart disease is now one of the leading causes of death in 4-14 year olds?

The statistics above, if allowed to continue without the appropriate support and facilities needed, equate to an horrific outcome – that this generation of children will have a shorter life span than their parents. This would be a first in the history of mankind!

Touched by Olivia is committed to ensuring that this does not eventuate. Recognising that every dollar spent on a child in their early years is worth up to \$14 in their later years, our Foundation is committed to generating funds to invest in our children before it becomes either too late or too expensive.

## **Contacts**

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