



**14 September 2009**

Established in 2001, **Cure Our Kids** is a non-profit charity dedicated to supporting the cancer unit at The Children's Hospital at Westmead. Our mission is to improve quality of life for children with cancer and the families who love them.

The children's cancer unit at Westmead receives around 150 newly diagnosed children each year, with the largest proportion hailing from socio-economically disadvantaged areas of NSW. Many are unemployed, low wage earners or one-income families – and their situation is worsened by the necessity for parents to take time off work and added costs such as hospital car park and meals. Add to this the immense emotional strain, and many families collapse under the stress.

Childhood cancer knows no class barriers; it is equally destructive towards those with means as those without. **Cure Our Kids** works hard to ensure that NSW families affected by childhood cancer who are at the lower end of the socio-economic scale have the very highest level of support.

**Cure Our Kids** knows, firsthand, what childhood cancer means to families: three members of management, including our CEO, have all had a child bear this terrible diagnosis. This personal insight informs our service philosophy, allowing us to provide one-to-one support to families from a place of genuine understanding.

**Cure Our Kids** delivers a range of support services to children and their families to cope with the many painful challenges that childhood cancer presents. This ensures that families, in turn, have the strength and resilience to give their sick child the emotional support they need. Children are provided with life-affirming experiences that promote their emotional and psychological wellbeing, and develop their self-confidence.

Some of these include:

- **Family Groups.** Social gatherings for families of children with cancer which grant them the opportunity to interact with, and gain support from others who can identify with their struggle.
- **Survival Kits.** Containing practical items including parking and cafe vouchers, toiletries and stationery, Survival Kits help newly diagnosed families survive their first few shell-shocked days in hospital.
- **Bravery Bead Program** to reward children for their courage and to help them take pride in their triumphs over cancer.
- **Play Therapy & Music Therapy** to brighten the children's day and provide some relief from their treatment.
- **Inpatient Activity Program.** Weekly afternoon tea, craft and music sessions for parents - providing informal support groups for families staying at the hospital.
- **Grocery Delivery for the Parents' Room.** Cure Our Kids provides free frozen meals and snacks to help relieve the financial pressure on families staying at the hospital.
- **Hospital Upgrades** including renovating the Parents' Room, Playroom and Clinic and establishing a Computer Resource Centre.
- **Publications** such as the Family handbook for Children with Cancer and The Chemo Chronicle – a regular newsletter for children with cancer and their families.

**In 2010, Cure Our Kids in partnership with The Children's Hospital at Westmead will launch a capital campaign of \$60m to build a new Centre for Children with Cancer in NSW. This stand alone building will provide kids with cancer and their families a facility that offers the highest level of cutting-edge treatment, aligning clinical care with world class research.**

Our vision is to be the leading charity providing practical support to children and families in NSW confronted with childhood cancer. Medical advances promise us a future where childhood cancer will be nothing more than a painful memory, but until that dream is realised **Cure Our Kids** will remain a steadfast support for children and families facing the challenge.

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