

NEWS – May - June 2009

Sammy D Foundation

As usual it has been a busy time since we posted news 6 weeks ago. We will do our best to fill you in on all that has happened.

May 4th we held our **Walk for Sam** at Pt. Noarlunga Jetty to mark the anniversary of the loss of Sam from our lives. We had a wonderful day, lunch with close friends and family before heading to the jetty. Between 200 and 300 people joined us on a cool cloudy afternoon with many of them bringing balloons that carried written messages. The wind was blowing inland and we wonder if any balloons arrived on your doorstep? The gathering provided a good opportunity to talk about what the loss of Sam has meant to us and what we, as a foundation, are doing about preventing tragedies such as this from occurring in the future. Check the photos out and tag yourself!

Our website is getting a makeover! Thanks to Michelle Kennedy from Little Hero Hosting for all her work over the last 12 months in getting the site up and running. We have really appreciated it. We have a new webmaster making some changes to the appearance and running of the site so stay tuned!

Our revised constitution has been accepted and meets the guidelines set by the Office of Consumer and Business Affairs so we have now lodged our reapplication to become a Charitable Institution. This will now take a couple of months. So many steps to the process but they will be well worth it. We are currently establishing a public trust board and setting up formal processes by which we will operate. We are looking for responsible people with

experience in charities or who hold positions of responsibility in the community to become involved so if you know anyone that would be interested and would support our aims tell them to get in touch!

We have been researching the supports available in South Australia for people wishing to host young people's parties in their homes. There isn't a lot out there! Sturt police have a 'Party Wise' program which has been set up for a few years. This includes tips on safe parties and how to register with the police. Having met with some interested officers from Sturt we all agree that this is a good base to build on but much work is needed. We have made contact with police in other states who have a much more proactive program and we will use some of these ideas as we put a proposal to government bodies here in SA. More meetings are in the pipeline!

We were invited to speak to a group of year 5 students at Immanuel College as part of their Health and Physical Education program. Together with Mitchell Reed, a young family friend who was close to Sam, we gave a 45 min presentation to about 60 fantastic young people. We talked about what happened to Sam and how we can prevent this from happening by making good life choices, educating our community about bullying, violence and at-risk behaviors. We also talked about taking opportunities that are offered to us and living life to its fullest. Mateship and communicating with parents openly were strong themes in our talk. A huge thank-you to Year 5 teacher Andrew Marks for giving us this

opportunity and a massive hello to all the year 5 students who made us feel so welcome, were impeccably behaved and asked such fantastic questions. We look forward to doing many more of these talks at other schools and community groups.

Last month we sent out a request to most of our members and contacts asking for their thoughts, attitudes, memories and hopes for the future as a result of the loss of Sam. We have received some really lovely and positive contributions. Keep these coming!

Sunday, June 14th a group of 20 of us attended the Organ and Tissue Donor Thanksgiving Service hosted by The SA Organ Donation Agency. At this service more than 110 donors from 2008 were honored for their gift. The event was hosted by Channel 10 personality Jane Reilly and we were inspired by talks given by family members of donors and by a recipient of a lung transplant who now is living a fulfilling life because of the gift she was given a few years ago.

We encourage all of you to talk about organ donation and consider registering your intent to be a donor if that is what you believe in. Becoming a donor is a very personal choice and you can get information to help you decide at www.organdonation.sa.gov.au

We are very excited to announce our association with 2 outstanding South Australians in Darren Lehmann and Wayne Phillips. Darren and Wayne have experienced the anguish of losing a friend to violence. They lost their best friend David Hookes on January 18th 2004 outside a bar in Melbourne following an altercation. Both of these wonderful ambassadors have made a commitment to

support the work of the Sammy D Foundation and we are looking forward to our association.

As you can see – extremely busy! Our Facebook group is growing every day and now has over 1200 members. Invite all of your friends to join and help us grow even faster.

With the trial starting July 6th our thoughts are with all of the young people who will have to relive the events that changed their lives forever. If you know any of them offer them your support in this really difficult time.

Thanks for your ongoing support.

Huggzzzzzzz

Nat and Neil