

Give a gift this Christmas that will make a real difference in a child's life

We would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your continued support of Calvary Health Care Bethlehem. It is your never-ending commitment to the hospital that enables us to offer the best quality of care to our patients.

Your support of our 2011 Tax Appeal Campaign, to raise funds for patient specialised beds, resulted in the purchase of 16 new specialised beds for our palliative care and progressive neurological patients. It was an overwhelming result and our staff, patients and their family's thank you for your kind generosity.



Calvary Health Care Bethlehem is a not for profit organisation which receives government funding that only covers basic operational costs. It does not assist with the cost of improving the quality of our patient's physical, social or spiritual care. With the complexity of our work, it is the collective expertise and efforts from our medical, nursing, pastoral care and allied health teams that provides for the needs of our patients and their families.

The Creative Connections Program was established in 2008 to support families with children who are preparing for or have experienced the death of someone they love. The program offers children up to the age of 18, ways of expressing and exploring the complex emotions that accompany end of life and bereavement through creative outlets such as music and art therapy. The central philosophy of the program is 'to create we can express, to express we can discuss, to discuss we can heal.'

Patrick was a loving husband and father of two children, who was diagnosed with cancer in December 2005. His wife Caroline and children Joshua (now five years of age) and Natasha (now seven years of age) supported Patrick through his illness over four years, until he died from cancer a year ago. Caroline says "it was an extremely traumatic time for our family."

It was soon after Patrick died that Caroline approached the Creative Connections Program as she wanted to ensure that both Joshua and Natasha were being supported in the best way possible after the death of their dad. "With individualised therapy tailored to my children's needs, Joshua and Natasha explored how and what they were feeling on any particular day and this helped them to understand these emotions. The program has been such a positive part of our lives" reflects Caroline.

The Creative Connections Program is unique in its ability to support children and their families through the grieving process. Through individualised and diverse therapies, the program meets the specific needs of the child. In addition to this, children and parents have the opportunity to interact with other children and families also going through similar experiences. "The Creative Connections Program has been a remarkable source of support for me and my children, which has helped us through this difficult time. We have all benefited from the diverse therapies and the new friendships we have made" states Caroline.

The Creative Connections Program costs \$50,000 per year to run. We need your donation so this program can continue to support children in 2012.



Calvary Health Care Bethlehem has been taking care of the community for over 85 years. In keeping with our Catholic tradition of 'being for others' articulated by our founder Mary Potter, it is an important part of our work to accompany children through the end of life and bereavement process, "finding words to describe how we are feeling can be difficult for any person, let alone if you are a child. Sometimes we need different ways of accessing our thoughts and emotions" states Karen Bolger, Manager of the Creative Connections Program.

The responsive and adaptable nature of the Creative Connections Program provides bereaved children with a fun and engaging environment in which they are guided by music and art therapists to create pieces of art or write songs that capture their memories, thoughts and feelings. Karen states "creating something tangible can give

legitimacy to the unpredictable experience of grief and sharing their works with their family and friends can remind children that they are not alone."

Caroline reflects "the impact of the Creative Connections Program has been a positive experience. Joshua was always passionate about his music, but confused with the death of his dad. To be able to express his feelings through music gave him an opportunity to communicate his feelings and to join the dots between what he was feeling and why he was feeling it. For Natasha she was able to express her feelings through painting what she could not put into words about losing her dad. Natasha comments "sometimes I can't explain how I feel but going to art therapy just helps me feel better."

The depth of emotion and insightful reflection evident in the work the children produce provides a beautifully honest understanding of the preciousness of life and the importance of sharing it with loved ones. The pieces of art and songs that the child creates are a reminder that death ends life, not a relationship, and the connection with those we love will forever remain in our memories, our thoughts and in our hearts. "We are all very thankful to have had the opportunity to participate in such a fabulous program" states Caroline "we have been able to grieve and grow through our grief. The program has been a godsend."

Give a gift this Christmas that will make a real difference in a child's life. Please support our Creative Connections Program which costs \$50,000 per year to run. We appreciate receiving your donation by the 15th January 2012.

Dr Jane Fischer MBBS, FACHPM
Chief Executive Officer and Medical Director



Calvary Health Care Bethlehem Hospital
476 Kooyong Road, Caulfield Vic 3162
Telephone: (03) 9595 3225
Website: www.bethlehem.org.au
ACN 105 303 704 ABN 81 105 303 704

Give a gift this Christmas that will make a real difference in a child's life

Please accept my donation towards your work.

\$1,000 \$500 \$250 \$100 \$50

We respect your privacy and protect your information. If you do not want to be included on our mailing list, please tick this box and return this coupon by post to the hospital.

Enclosed is my cheque for \$

OR please deduct the nominated amount from my credit card.

Visa MasterCard

_____/_____/_____/_____

Name on Card Expiry /

Signature _____

A Bequest to CHCB Regular Giving Events

Telephone Email

Donations of \$2.00 or more to Calvary Health Care Bethlehem are tax deductible.