

ACT FOR KIDS

Formerly known as the Abused Child Trust



NEWSLETTER – JANUARY 2012

ISSUE #55

Unloved, hungry and alone.

Luke* was five and living in foster care when he was referred to ACT for Kids. He had been taken into foster care when he was four and found alone at home in an empty room. Luke had suffered from horrendous neglect and had witnessed violence at home.

When Luke was placed into care, his foster carers quickly discovered that Luke was very good at opening cupboards, finding and hiding food away. He did not cry when he hurt himself and rarely asked for help. He hardly spoke and suffered horrible nightmares every night.

Six months after being removed from his parents, Luke arrived at ACT for Kids for therapy with his foster carers. He was small in size and rarely looked adults in the eye. He carried with him a tattered teddy bear he called Wally. As he walked into the therapy room he was drawn to a big brown teddy bear in the corner, he began to whisper to the bears.

ACT for Kids Senior Therapist, Michael, asked Luke if he knew how to talk to teddy bears. Luke nodded, smiled and looked at Michael for the first time. Michael introduced Luke and Wally to the big brown bear named Brian. He learnt that Luke and Wally had been together since Luke was a baby.

With Wally by his side, Luke began to talk and draw pictures. Michael learned that before being removed, Luke and Wally had taken care of each other, listened to each other, comforted each other when scared and found food when they were hungry.

Luke's foster carers began to understand and learn more about Luke's complex needs, his survival skills and how important it was to include Wally in therapy sessions because of Luke's strong attachment to the teddy bear and limited ability to trust adults.

Luke recruited four more teddy bears into his life and brought them along to the therapy sessions. Luke's foster carers brought along their own teddy bears as well and this playful team helped Luke work through his relentless nightmares. Each bear came up with different suggestions that might help and Luke decided on the best approach.

After 14 therapy sessions at ACT for Kids, Luke started to be more confident and talkative. His nightmares stopped, he hoarded food less as his life became more predictable and the relationship with his foster carers improved. After three months Luke was continuing to make improvements. Now when any problems re-emerged, Luke and his carers would invite all the teddy bears to a big meeting and sort it out.

*Name changed to protect privacy.

Emotional abuse and neglect are the most common types of child maltreatment with 65.7%* of reports fitting into these categories. Most people don't consider these as damaging or alarming as physical abuse but it is proven in severe cases to stunt brain growth in small children and infants, and cause life-long development and psychological issues.

*Statistic taken from Australian Institute of Health and Welfare Child Protection Australia report 2009-10.



From the CEO

I enjoy writing for the newsletter, it prompts me to reflect on what we've been working on and have achieved in recent months, and I'm pleased to say we have a lot to share in this edition. Our second Channel Seven/ACT for Kids Appeal saw a flurry of activity across the state as we raised our profile and much needed funds during National Child Protection Week. Dr Katrina Lines was also in the headlines after an invitation to join The Courier-Mail's 'Let the Sun Shine In' forum on law and order. She discussed the issues of child abuse and neglect, and government and community investment in early intervention, alongside four other high profile panellists.

The last few months have been full of celebration. We recognised and paid homage to our volunteers at our Gala Dinner where we awarded three longstanding supporters. In November I was honoured and humbled to shake the hands of our latest Indigenous Workforce Strategy cadets as they graduated with a Certificate III or Certificate IV in Community Services Work. After all my years in professional development and coaching I still get genuinely excited for people who realise their full potential and go on to achieve what they never thought possible.

Our North Queensland team have relocated to much bigger premises to enable them to work with more children and families; expanding

from four busy rooms to 21! This was a very physical and obvious demonstration that the demand for our services continues to grow across the state.

Our team has also grown significantly in this short period of time; we have welcomed many new volunteers to our offices and new supporters who generously donated to our Christmas Appeal. Without the ongoing help of our longstanding and new supporters, we simply couldn't continue to provide our exceptional services to the children and families who need them most.

While I'm proud of what we have achieved, we also continue to strive toward our strategic goals and plan for future service growth knowing there are still thousands of children and families who can't access the support they need to turn their lives around. Thank you, as always, for your commitment and support to our work and our kids.

Dr Neil Carrington
Chief Executive Officer



Volunteers shine at Emmy's Night of Stars

ACT for Kids' Emmy's Night of Stars Gala Dinner on Friday 2 September was a night to celebrate the hard work and dedication of our many longstanding supporters and a chance to raise much needed funds for our support services.

ACT for Kids Chairman Denis Looney OAM and awards sponsor, Anomi Bruynius from Tolerro were delighted to present Emmy's Crusader of the Year Awards 2011 to four committed and enthusiastic volunteers; ACT for Kids founder and Board member, Dr David Wood AM, ACT for Kids Board member and Treasurer, John Eales, and long-time fundraising volunteers, Marnie Sluice and Kayleen Tolley. Congratulations and thank you for your ongoing support.

Thanks to the supporters on the night, we raised more than \$85,000 through ticket sales, a live auction and silent auction. There was dazzling entertainment with acrobats, fire eaters and exceptional live music from "Phoenix" and singer/dancer Keiarn Cheseboro.

Thank you to Channel Seven News' Kay McGrath (MC) and Pat Welsh (Auctioneer), Founder and CEO of Zarraffa's Coffee, Kenton Campbell for sharing his touching personal story, and all of the prize donors, bidders and volunteers, as well as each and every guest for making it a fun night.

The money raised was a great start to the Channel Seven/ACT for Kids Appeal and will help turn more lives around from child abuse and neglect.



Even our volunteers had a great night!



Seven News Presenters, Rod Young, Kay McGrath and Pat Welsh presenting ACT for Kids CEO, Dr Neil Carrington, with a novelty sized cheque at the appeal launch.

Australians help turn lives around during Child Protection Week 2011

The second Channel Seven/ACT for Kids Appeal ran during National Child Protection Week, 4-11 September 2011, raising awareness and urging Australians to help turn lives around from child abuse and neglect.

Thanks to the many generous supporters who gave during the appeal, we raised \$108,804 which will help us to continue providing free services to the kids and families who need it most.

The theme of our appeal this year was 'help turn lives around'. You may have seen ads on Channel Seven, in newspapers or heard us on the radio talking about the appeal and the work we do. This year we focussed on the extraordinary work of our talented therapists who use everyday objects like bubble blowers to regulate breathing, and fit balls to develop fine motor skills, to ultimately change the lives of the kids we work with.

We would like to say a big thank you to Publicis Mojo who was the creative force behind the appeal again this year. Cutting Edge and BFILMS donated their energy and expertise to create our new TV commercials which explain the significance of our work.

Thank you to Channel Seven personalities and ACT for Kids Ambassadors, Kay McGrath and Joanne Desmond, for their support.

The appeal was launched at Brisbane Central Station on Monday 5 September with the Seven News team joining our volunteers shaking-a-can, handing out bubble blowers and supplying a free breakfast. Radio host, Michael Price and the 4BH team supported the launch with an outdoor broadcast from 5-9am.

During the week we also launched one of our six 2011 Platinum Class Lotteries at Reddcliffe Place in Brisbane with an outdoor broadcast from 96.5 Family FM and showcasing the first prize – a new Mercedes-Benz! Personal Trainers from UBody hosted fitness challenges with unsuspecting passers by highlighting the alarming frequency of reports of abuse, one every two minutes and one confirmed case every 12 minutes.

In addition to raising funds, building awareness of ACT for Kids' services was also an important goal of the appeal. We are continually working to educate Australians about child protection and need Australia's full support to continue our work.



Passers-by participate in fitness challenges to raise awareness of shocking statistics around reports of abuse and neglect.

Thank you to everyone who gave during the appeal, and everyone else who pitched in to make the campaign possible. Funds raised will help us reach out to more vulnerable children and families.

Dr Katrina Lines featured in *The Courier-Mail* forum

ACT for Kids Executive Director of Programs, Research and Education, Dr Katrina Lines was invited to participate in *The Courier-Mail's* Let the Sun Shine In forum on 15 September discussing the topic law and order.

The Courier-Mail's Let the Sun Shine In campaign was designed to draw focus to the challenges confronting Queensland. Public forum topics have included health, education, law and order and growth as well as a look at what makes a modern Queensland. The public was welcomed to attend and the floor was opened for questions.

Dr Lines was in good company, the panel for the law and order forum included Deputy Police Commissioner, Ross Barnett, President for Australian Council for Civil Liberties, Terry O'Gorman, Gold Coast celebrity lawyer, Chris Nyst and *The Courier-Mail* court reporter, Mark Oberhardt.

During the forum, Dr Katrina Lines spoke about the great outcomes from ACT for Kids' Youth Opportunity Program (YOP) pilot study over the past three years and how early intervention can significantly reduce re-offending. YOP assists children and young people aged 10 to 17 years who have had run-ins with the law. Many of these young people have come through the child protection system and end up in the care of the Youth Justice Services.

"They are referred to us largely because they have dysfunctional families, they might be living rough, they maybe have suffered abuse and neglect, and in fact half of the kids that come to us have had quite severe problems in their lives,"

Dr Lines said.

Dr Lines spoke about the need for more early intervention and rehabilitation services for young adults, particularly to ensure children did not become stuck in the juvenile justice system and move into the adult criminal courts.

"If they continue on that pathway without anyone trying to help them, then they become criminals later on in their lives. We need more early intervention programs for kids who have been abused and neglected and kids who enter the juvenile justice system."

It was agreed by other panellists Terry O'Gorman and Mark Oberhardt that more funds should be spent on early intervention to prevent crime.

Dr Katrina Lines wrote an article, vigilance vital to stop abuse, which was printed in *The Courier-Mail* the week before as a part of the lead up to the forum. The article focussed on the need for adults to stand up for children, look for signs of child abuse and neglect in the community, and report their concerns.

Permanent Bus Assistant for North Brisbane kindy

For many years, ACT for Kids has relied on dedicated volunteers to take on the demanding role of supervising kids with challenging behaviours on the Early Education Program (EEP) bus. The bus service ensures our kids travel safely and privately to and from our North Brisbane centre. This year we were able to recruit a permanent Bus Assistant thanks to the generosity of an anonymous donor.

The EEP at our North Brisbane centre is a unique therapeutic program unlike any other in Australia. It is a specialised education program for children aged two to five years who have suffered trauma from severe abuse and neglect. Children enrolled in the EEP have been referred to our Intensive Therapy Program (ITP), but they need extra assistance to overcome issues that will keep them from succeeding at school.

Without intervention, these children would not be able to go on to mainstream schooling, often being expelled from Prep and primary schools in their area.

The service combines multidisciplinary therapy with early education so they can be transitioned to prep when they are ready. Each class has up to eight students to ensure each child gets the attention they need.

To maximise attendance in the program, the children are picked up and dropped home in our EEP bus with a Bus Assistant on board to help manage the children's various behaviours and to keep them safe while travelling.

The Bus Assistant needs to be someone reliable who can become familiar to the children and is able to support and settle them during travel times. With this funding we were able to recruit an empathetic and competent Bus Assistant who has become a regular face and consistent comfort to the children. We simply could not continue the bus service without a dedicated Bus Assistant to make the ride as safe and stress-free as possible for our kids.

Our North Queensland centre is growing

The unmet need for our services is growing statewide. We have opened a second centre at the Gold Coast and in North Queensland we've quickly outgrown the therapy space that was kindly provided by Vincent State School. With only two therapy rooms, it restricted how many children and families we could support.

With limited funds, moving into a bigger space seemed like a distant goal but with some community help and donation of land from James Cook University, the vision is slowly coming to life.

In the meantime, JCU have offered us free space on campus in an existing building. Our North Queensland team moved on 24 October and settled quickly into their new space. They now have six therapy rooms which include a play therapy room, sensory room and an occupational therapy room.

In addition to the space, we're working with JCU to develop 'ACT for Kids Child and Family Centre of Excellence'. It will be a hub of therapy and support services and provide tailored professional development and postgraduate programs that will equip graduates with the skills to provide improved clinical and therapeutic support for abused and neglected children.



ACT for Kids' North Queensland centre has a new space with 21 rooms thanks to JCU!



IWS cadetship graduates with ACT for Kids-CEO, Dr. Neil Carrington.

Indigenous Workforce Strategy (IWS) cadetship graduation

Congratulations to ACT for Kids' most recent Indigenous Workforce Strategy (IWS) graduates on completing their Certificates III and IV in Community Services Work.

Nine Indigenous cadets graduated on 11 November in Cairns, marking the start of their careers in community services. Four graduated with a Certificate III and five graduated with a Certificate IV in Community Services Work.

ACT for Kids developed the innovative Indigenous Workforce Strategy (IWS) in 2007 to address a shortage of qualified Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community service workers in the Cairns region. Our IWS team deliver training, mentoring and support to cadets through their Certificate III and IV in Community Services Work and work placement. Our unique holistic approach also includes practical experience, study support, job readiness and assistance beyond graduation to ensure cadets' knowledge and skills are utilised in appropriate employment.

"This cadetship has been one of the best and most memorable journeys of my life. I have gained so much knowledge throughout this experience and have learned so much about myself. Thank you guys for allowing me to be a part of the 2011 cadetship," – Amber, Cadet 2011.

Congratulations to our graduates. We wish you the very best!

Indigenous parenting videos

The Raising Children Network recently released evidence-based information and advice for parents with a strong Indigenous focus on their Australian parenting website. The four new videos, filmed in Cairns in May 2011, were created with the help and expertise of ACT for Kids SafeKIDS and Youth Opportunity Program staff, and our Indigenous Workforce Strategy cadets.

"We wanted to make resources that could be used by families, or by workers helping families in Aboriginal communities. Our director Robyn Mildon met Dr Katrina Lines at a conference in Brisbane and was impressed by the work ACT for Kids was doing in Queensland, in particular the safe house program," said Ed Austin, Raising Children Network.

Using the relationships and trust ACT for Kids had developed in Aboriginal communities throughout Queensland, the Raising Children Network was able to gather input from workers in the field and families to learn what topics would be most valuable, and how to deliver this information effectively.

The new website content and videos are tailored to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander audiences and were funded by the Commonwealth Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs. The resources are designed to be used by families, or by workers helping families in Indigenous communities. Check out the videos at www.raisingchildren.net.au/articles/aboriginal_parents_videos.html



Lawyers volunteer to spring clean for kids

A group of 14 volunteers from Mallesons Stephen Jaques law firm in Brisbane rolled up their sleeves on 12 October to spring clean ACT for Kids' kindy in Brisbane.

The team of volunteers, armed with gurneys, buckets and detergent, cleaned the therapy center from top to bottom – including toys and play equipment. Guided by ACT for Kids Early Education Program staff, they helped move furniture and create new learning spaces for the students returning from holidays.

The team from Mallesons chose the spring clean as a practical way to celebrate the 10 year anniversary of their Mallesons in the Community Program.



Mallesons Stephen Jaques law firm in Brisbane volunteered to spring clean our early education kindy for a day.

Mallesons Stephen Jaques Solicitor, Cassie Kam said the Brisbane team is “proud to support ACT for Kids, a local Queensland charity which is doing great work with children through their therapy programs, including the ACT for Kids preschool.”

“We had a fantastic time assisting with spring cleaning at the preschool recently and look forward to continuing to support ACT for Kids through the Mallesons in the Community workplace giving and pro bono programs.”

Brisbane Regional Director, Debra Doherty, said the Brisbane therapy centre is largely maintained by generous, hardworking volunteers.

“The kids who attend our unique kindy are profoundly affected by violence, or a lack of care and attention from their parents.

“We don't have a lot to spend on improving our facilities, so we rely on donations and volunteers to help us provide the best possible therapeutic support and a fantastic learning environment for the kids we work with.”

Volunteers are an integral part of our organisation and often step up to take on important tasks that we just don't have the time or resources to complete. If you are interested in joining our team of enthusiastic volunteers, please contact us on 1300 228 000.

A warm welcome to the Corporate Services volunteers who joined us recently. Lorena, Juno, Nelissa, Marion, Helen, Robyn and Evannia help our Human Resources and Fundraising teams with administration tasks and Rhonda, Claire, Kathryn help out in our regional centres. Thanks ladies for your consistent help and support.

Freemasons open up the senses

After a year of sausage sizzles and fundraising, Freemason group, St Andrew of Townsville Lodge No. 94, raised \$5,624 to fund the development of a dedicated sensory and occupational therapy room in the new ACT for Kids' North Queensland centre.

Sensory rooms help children and young people who have experienced trauma to develop skills for self-regulating their emotions. It is designed to work with three senses; sight, sound and touch.

The sensory and occupational therapy room will be an invaluable tool for therapists and every child who comes through the centre will be able to use this room in some way. We have one other sensory and occupational therapy room in Brisbane which has had phenomenal success.

The current Master of St Andrew of Townsville Lodge, Beau Sankey, said “the Freemasons support a vast number of charities across Queensland and the globe. But with that said, it just goes to show that even small donations and fundraisers can amount to significant

change. ACT for Kids does wonderful work and we are proud to support that.”

The sensory and occupational therapy room will be named after the lodge in recognition of their gift.



Jodie Moore (Speech and Language Pathologist), Louise Taylor (Health Nurse) and Lindsay McFarlane (Occupational Therapist) receiving the cheque from Beau Sankey of St Andrew of Townsville Lodge No. 94.

Townsville RAAF riders sweat it out to raise funds

More than 65 local cyclists from the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) Base in Townsville rode over 100 kms on 13 October to raise more than \$5,000 for our North Queensland centre.

In the fifth year of the event, the RAAF Base chose to support ACT for Kids in their annual Charity Bike Ride. Corporal Chris Bell, known as Belly, who participated in the ride for the third time and also sponsored the ride this year, said child abuse and neglect is a very worthy cause for support.

“Fortunately I grew up in a loving and compassionate household, but unfortunately not all children are that lucky. ACT for Kids does a great job to ensure neglected and abused children can grow up with a positive outlook on life and make significant contributions to society.”



RAAF Base cyclists handing over an oversized cheque to ACT for Kids.

Townsville Bulletin jumps on board

The Townsville Bulletin is getting behind ACT for Kids as the official charity of North Queensland Newspapers. Kicking off their support drive, the *Townsville Bulletin* generously donated \$5,000 towards our local centre and ACT for Kids CEO, Dr Neil Carrington gave a presentation to staff about the great work we do. So far 14 employees have signed up as Kids Crusaders which is a great start.

General Manager of *The Townsville Bulletin*, Michael Wilkins said the newspaper is proud to support such a worthy cause.

“North Queensland News has decided to support ACT for Kids for one simple reason: the work they do is vital to families across our region and the state. There can simply be nothing more important than protecting our kids and I’d commend any other corporate supporter to come on board and see how the terrific crew from ACT for Kids is changing lives,” Mr Wilkins said.

Funding for iPads

A big thank you to the Reef Island Casino Community Benefit Fund for awarding ACT for Kids North Queensland with a grant of \$3,954 to purchase five iPad 2 tablets to use in therapy sessions.

This new technology is an invaluable therapeutic tool because of the platform it offers for educational, developmental and psychological programs. Our speech and occupational therapists use iPad applications that are specifically designed to develop fine motor skills and speech.

We currently provide therapeutic support to more than 250 children and their families in North Queensland. If you are able to support our work with a donation, equipment, services in kind or your time please don’t hesitate to call us on 1300 228 000 – we would love to hear from you!

Subway are gold!

As an ACT for Kids Gold Sponsor, SUBWAY has raised the bar in terms of support. Last financial year South East Queensland SUBWAY franchisees helped raise \$77,000 through in store ACT for Kids collection boxes. This year, thanks to the support from franchisees across the state we aim to roll-out ACT for Kids collecting containers in SUBWAY franchises across Queensland! Thank you SUBWAY for helping us give more children a second chance at the happy, safe childhood they deserve.

If you or your company are interested in giving a home to an ACT for Kids collection box please call Jodie on 1300 228 000.



Your chance to win a Merc!

Platinum Class Lottery 35 opens on 3rd January – don’t miss your chance to win the Mercedes-Benz C200 CGI BlueEFFICIENCY sedan! Proceeds help fund our free therapy programs.

Ticket sales close 2nd March.

**Call 1800 968 946
or visit www.platinumclass.com.au
to buy your tickets today!**

If you are interested in supporting ACT for Kids and would like more information, give us a call today on 1300 228 000.

Save the date!

3 – 10 March Make a Will Week

It is important to update your Will to reduce the heartache for your family. Including ACT for Kids in your Will could help our services grow so we can provide therapy for more abused and neglected kids.

24 March Celebration Day

Learn about where your donations go at a presentation in Brisbane about the work we do, and what we hope to achieve in the future. Please check our website for details closer to the date.

14 – 21 April Kids Crusaders' Week

Help us find our 1,000th Kids Crusader! Our Kids Crusaders make a monthly pledge which helps us put money where it is needed most.

28 April Townsville Ink Book Launch

Following the success of the first edition of *Townsville Ink* the second edition of the photographic art book featuring Townsville locals and their tattoos, will be launched at a lavish cocktail party. Funds raised through the sale of the book and event are donated to ACT for Kids.

11 May ACT for Kids Day

Help celebrate ACT for Kids' Day.

2 June Ride to the other side

ACT for Kids supporter Leeroy Donovan is leading a motorbike ride from Townsville to Broome, via the Savannah Way, raising funds along the way.

28 June Stop the Clock

Every 10 – 15 minutes a case of child abuse is confirmed in Australia. Stop for 15 minutes to collect money for ACT for Kids in your workplace.

Our Annual Art Show will be held in June. Check the website closer to the date for details.

Visit www.actforkids.com.au for more events.

Wish List

\$300 for a digital camera to take photos at events.

\$2,000 for a portable BBQ for our fundraisers.

\$80,000 for a 4-wheel drive for regular use by our safe house staff in Western Cape York Peninsula.

\$125,000 pa for a Community Counsellor so we can reach out to more families.

We also need:

- volunteers for a range of roles
- pro bono services in HR, website development, graphic design, grant-writing and research
- donated prizes for raffles.

Leave a gift in your Will

ACT for Kids is grateful to many supporters for choosing to leave a gift in their Will to help fund our vital work to treat and prevent child abuse and neglect. Jeanette Eleanore Ghantous was one such supporter who left a \$5,000 bequest.

If you are interested in leaving a bequest to ACT for Kids in your Will and would like a copy of our bequest brochure, please give us a call on 1300 228 000.

Thanks to our supporters

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ACT for Kids is a not-for-profit organisation which provides free professional therapy to treat and prevent child abuse and neglect. We have helped thousands of children and families overcome the pain of abuse since we were established as the Abused Child Trust in 1988.



Formerly known as the Abused Child Trust

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