



17 December 2019

Greg LaManna, Michael Piccolo, Nick Argyrou & Cameron Smith  
Charity Drive Days Inc.  
91 Cubitt Street  
RICHMOND VIC 3121

Dear Greg, Michael, Nick and Cameron

Children and cancer are two words that should never be said in the same sentence, but unfortunately, they are. Childhood cancer does exist and affects more than 750 families each year around Australia. At Challenge, we are working hard to try and change how those two words are said in a sentence and what they imply.

Challenge is about trying to lighten a family's journey by providing practical support and experiences that allow families to continue their lives outside of cancer. We help children be children and parents be parents.

As 2019 comes to a close, I reflect on the year with a sense of pride for what we have been able to achieve with the generous support of Charity Drive Days.

Our flourishing camping program, sponsored by Charity Drive Days, has provided 10 camps for more than 400 kids and 250 volunteers throughout the year. These camps gave children living with cancer the opportunity to experience different environments ranging from country destinations, to the slopes of Mt Hotham, to the beaches of Lorne and the inner city of Melbourne. All camp participants received a specially designed piece of clothing for camp which acknowledged Charity Drive Days' support.

Funds from the 2018 events also funded our extensive hospital program which saw new services such as Netflix, Stan and the Disney Plus program being introduced on Challenge's electronic equipment. On a monthly basis, over 800GB was utilised by children and families to enjoy entertainment or communicate with loved ones with the technology provided.

We would like direct the funds received from the 2019 Charity Drive Days events to the following areas in 2020:

#### **Challenge Camps within the Community**

As the 2019 camping program was so successful, we would like Charity Drive Days to continue its support of this program. Camps are constantly in demand and we have been able to increase numbers due to the generosity of the Charity Drive Days donations.

**Challenge**  
supporting kids with cancer

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We will be able to keep two new camps on the Challenge calendar which were met with high interest from our kids and families – Summer Camp and Ski Camp. We feel that this service is tangible and transparent and can provide direct feedback of the impact it has to the Charity Drive Days' supporters.

### **Holistic Therapeutic Programs**

Challenge provides Music, Art and Massage Therapy programs for our children and families. These services are delivered from the Challenge Family Centre, within the hospital and also within the home.

The demand for these services has increased exponentially as families identify the huge benefit these programs have for a child or parent travelling the cancer journey.

In 2020, we will be increasing our Music Therapy Program due to the increased interest from our families. The therapeutic benefits of all these services cannot be underestimated as the impact is significant. Alongside the medical treatments, these additional services assist children and families with their mental health and wellbeing.

Greg, Michael, Nick and Cameron, your dedication and desire to give back to those in need is exceptional and I feel extremely fortunate to have the support of Charity Drive Days.

Collectively, you have come together to help support families living with cancer and bring a sense of 'normal' to a journey that is anything but. Your support means so much to Challenge and without you, we would not be able to do the work we do.

Wishing you and your families a wonderful Christmas season and I look forward to communicating with you in 2020.

Yours sincerely



**David Rogers OAM**  
Chief Executive Officer



**Patrons**

Dr Amanda Sampson  
MBBS, FRANZOG, DDU, COGU

Mr Tom Gleisner AO  
B.A., LL.B

25<sup>th</sup> November 2019

Dear Greg, Michael, Nick, Cameron and the Charity Drive Days team,

Congratulations on the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of making such a significant difference to children and families in need through your wonderful Charity Drive Days events. It is a wonderful milestone and a huge effort on your behalf. We are both impressed and grateful for your boundless energy, passion and joy for fast cars, all while helping organisations such as Learning for Life. We watch in awe as your events get bigger and raise even more funds as time passes.

The children, families, schools and communities we work with are very fortunate to have your generous support. Learning for Life can really follow through on our mission to help provide the highest standard of autism services and help children on the spectrum to reach their potential. Charity Drive Days makes a big difference in giving them access to the best educational start possible, helping them to remain educationally, socially and emotionally engaged as they transition through their preschool, primary and secondary school years and beyond. You are a Learning for Life Major Fair Access funding partner.

This year the cheque for \$60,000 really took our breath away. We are proudly able to subsidise our early intervention programs for families who are struggling to be able to afford them. Even with the NDIS the road for many families is very rocky. Our subsidies made possible by generous benefactors, like you, help smooth this road and make times of stress easier. These times can be at diagnosis or when NDIS doesn't cover the therapy hours a child may need, if a parent/carer is sick or loses their job or other financial crisis, when there are gaps in funding for the children. Each child is unique and we look after families after listening to their needs.

To hear how our Fair Access makes an impact, here is a story about Udi. Natasha, his Mum, shares their story and how Learning for Life made a difference to his learning, development and the whole family's well being. Udi's full story is on the link below.

*Udi became verbal through his therapy. Now he can talk about what he wants. He can express his needs and his feelings and understands emotions. The best thing was when he was able to recognise us as his family. He can play independently now. He can be engaged and happy on his own.*

<https://www.learningforlife.com.au/udis-aba-story-with-l4life/>

In February we developed our 2019-2022 strategic plan to grow our assistance to children, families and schools. Our plans include:

- working with more schools across Victoria
- introducing an Inclusion Works preschools stream
- formalising research into best practices in inclusive education
- continuing our early intervention programs
- training parents and families
- providing ongoing education opportunities for our dedicated staff
- ensuring that we address gaps in autism services so that no child is left behind.

You can read more about our work in our 2018-19 Annual Report and our plans for the future.

<https://www.learningforlife.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/L4Life-AR-2018-2019.pdf>

Thank you again for your ongoing support on behalf of our board, staff, families, children, schools and communities, our Village.

Best Wishes,



Mary Muirhead OAM  
Chair/Co Founder



Tom Gleisner AO  
Patron/Co Founder



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The Founders  
Charity Drive Days

13 December 2019

Dear Greg, Michael, Nick, Cameron and everyone at Charity Drive Days

On behalf of our students, thank you so much for generously supporting us here at the Melbourne Indigenous Transition School (MITS). We rely on the generosity of the community for half of our funding needs, and we are delighted that you have chosen to be part of our MITS family. Equally, we feel very honoured to now be a part of your Charity Drive Days family too.

MITS is both a school and boarding house for young Indigenous people from regional and remote communities. Most of our students come from remote Top End communities, as well some from regional Victoria. Each year, 22 Year 7 students spend one year at MITS, before transitioning to one of our Partner Schools for Year 8 onwards.

What MITS stands for is actually quite simple; no matter where you come from, every young person should be able to determine their own educational journey. Many Indigenous families want their children to enjoy all the experiences and opportunities that come with studying and living in a great city like Melbourne. However, moving far away from your family and home, straight onto a large school in Melbourne is an enormous challenge. MITS exists to better prepare these students for success in their Melbourne schooling.

We also support our students long after their leave MITS after Year 7. We provide vital support to both MITS alumni, their Partner Schools and our students' host families. We work to ensure Melbourne schools are welcoming places for Indigenous students, and also help our students grow in confidence to be able to share their incredible culture with the Melbourne community. This is truly a two-way learning experience.

The incredible donation from Charity Drive Days will go towards the creation of our new Alumni Boarding House for Girls, opening in time for the 2020 school year. We are establishing this boarding house in response to the urgent accommodation shortage we faced for our alumni girls. This home-away-from-home will house up to 18 girls from Years 8-12. They will attend four different Partner Schools by day, and return to a place of peer support within a MITS-run home each night. The boarding house is only 80 meters from our current Year 7 boarding house on Richmond Hill. Our parents have described it as 'the best of both worlds'.

Our students are resilient young people with so much to offer. They have shown great courage in moving away from home in search of a great education. Thanks to Charity Drive Days, we at MITS will be able to provide the outstanding boarding environment that is a key ingredient to their personal growth and success.

Thank you once again for backing our students in such a generous way. We cannot wait to share with you the achievements of these girls, made possible thanks to your commitment and support. We are looking forward to continuing to be part of the Charity Drive Days team well into the future.

With thanks and gratitude

Melbourne Indigenous Transition School (MITS)



# building hope

14 December 2019

Greg La Manna, Michael Piccolo, Nick Argyrou & Cameron Smith  
Charity Drive Days Inc.  
91 Cubitt Street  
Richmond, VIC 3121

Dear Greg, Michael, Nick, Cameron, and all who are part of the Charity Drive Days family,

Thank you all for the incredibly generous donation to **building hope** and in turn to the work we are doing in partnership with Eating Disorder Families Australia (EDFA) to ensure that every family in Australia has access to the help and support they need as they and their loved ones battle an eating disorder. It is an honour and a privilege to have your support for our work.

Eating disorders can be fatal. About one in ten individuals with anorexia nervosa do not live a further ten years after the onset of the disorder; 20% of these deaths are from suicide. The mortality rate of females aged 15 to 24 years with anorexia nervosa is 6 to 12 times higher than their non-affected peers. Through the tragedy of personal experience, we learnt that this area is stigmatized and underfunded with enormous gaps in services across Australia.

The consequences of eating disorders are far-reaching, with impacts not only to the individual, but also to their support network. Family and friends often become informal carers for their affected loved one, often at great personal cost. Carer distress, both physical and psychological, is similar to that found in carers of persons with dementia or schizophrenia.

**building hope** was established in 2015 to provide high quality, evidence-based services to these carers to enable and empower them in their fight. We understand the need for a compassionate, flexible and holistic response to eating disorders and aim to educate and connect the community, health providers and support agencies to assist in excellence and consistency in the culture of care.

With the incredibly generous donation from Charity Drive Days and your supporters, we plan to continue our work in the following areas:

1. **building hope** to continue to be funded two days per week to establish a national framework and structure for carer support groups called **strive** (**strive** refers to our desire to support, teach, reassure, inform, validate and empower carers). Volunteer facilitators receive ongoing training and support to lead and educate those attending. We are fielding

- requests for groups throughout Melbourne, Victoria and Australia and have formalized the program so that it can be provided in metropolitan and regional locations as required.
2. Through the generosity of the Charity Drive Days community last year we were able to build on the first **strive** monthly peer led carer support group in Flemington, established a group in Bendigo (that carers now drive up to 3 hours to attend, such is the need) and next week will commence in Perth. These groups provide a place of understanding, compassion and optimism whilst sharing skills and knowledge to assist carers help their loved one fight for recovery.
  3. Our goal is to ensure that every impacted family in Australia has access to support when required and we will shortly roll out monthly carer support groups in both Launceston and Adelaide.
  4. **building hope** plans to continue to provide skills-based training and education clinics to clients of Alfred Health. Eating disorders are not pretty, and they are very difficult to treat. Recovery relies heavily on carers. Your support has enabled us to begin to provide the support that families need. The value of these services is immeasurable and your donation to **building hope** and EDFA enables us to continue. We offer you our heart-felt and sincere thanks and look forward to seeing you and thanking you personally.

Kind regards,

Helen Searle

Founder, **building hope**  
helendsearle@gmail.com

*Helen Searle trading as **building hope** ABN 44 826 538 090*



# building hope

Building Hope provides high quality, evidence based services to carers of eating disorder sufferers. These services include workshops, clinics and information for those who support carers in the community.

Our vision is to live in a community that effectively supports all sufferers of eating disorders and their carers.

## **Mission**

Building hope is dedicated to bringing about positive change in the provision of support of carers of eating disorder sufferers- in both the access to, and delivery of treatment.

## **Objectives**

To use a collaborative approach to identify, build and facilitate strategic partnerships to provide carer support and workshops to service all of Melbourne.

To encourage hope and help seeking through education and awareness; including up to date information about treatment pathways to GPs, psychologists and health services.

To advocate for excellence and consistency in the culture of care and support for carers of people with eating disorders, and encourage a better understanding of the complexities of eating disorders and the need for a compassionate, flexible and holistic response.

Educate and connect the community, health providers, government and other support agencies to assist in excellence and consistency in the culture of care.

Facilitate the development of effective models in early intervention by carers for people at risk of, or with eating disorders.

## **Building Hope Projects 2019/20**

With the support of Charity Drive Days and their donors, and in conjunction with Alfred Health and EDFA your generous support will be utilized for the following program in 2020:

**strive:** A program of national carer support groups, run by volunteer facilitators, for carers of those with eating disorders and delivered through Eating Disorders Families Australia (EDFA).

**strive** carer support groups:

- Provide a safe, supportive environment for carers to meet each month in a semi structured environment which allows for both education and peer support.
- Provide evidence based education and information to assist parents to understand eating disorders and their integral role in recovery.
- Encourage empowerment of carers in their role in the recovery of the person with the eating disorder.

*Comments from attendees at **strive** carer support groups:*

*'It is a safe space here, there is no judgement. So much support and exchange of ideas and knowledge- and knowing that we all understand each other'*

*-Parent carer*

*'I came away from the meeting more determined than ever to fight the ED. It gave me strength and confidence. I just wish I could attend every month'*

*-A rural parent*

*'I have learnt more from these support sessions about eating disorders than from any of my medical training and my profession overall'*

*-Doctor and carer of child with eating disorder.*



25<sup>th</sup> November 2019

Charity Drive Days  
U 1 100 Queensberry St  
Carlton VIC 3053

Dear Greg, Nick, Cam, Michael and the Charity Drive Days team,

A sincere thank you to the Charity Drive Days team and its supporters, for your generous support. It was a pleasure to talk about our project at your Cocktail Party earlier this year, and again at Phillip Island last month. We are forever grateful for your shared passion to help families facing mental health challenges, and for supporting us in our mission to improve the experiences and outcomes for these families.

Mental health challenges like anxiety and aggression affect around 1 in 3 Australian children. Left untreated, these issues may worsen and lead to a range of lifelong problems. Families often face a long waitlist of 6-12 months to see a paediatrician, who will likely then refer them to other community services such as parenting programs or psychologists. Parents will understandably seek information on how to best help their child in the meantime, but unfortunately such information is fragmented, confusing and hard to find.

With crucial support from Charity Drive Days, we can now create an online platform which delivers engaging, accessible and accurate information for parents who wish to better understand their child's mental health and available treatments. Designed and developed in consultation with parents, this will be the first online platform of its kind to guide families through the complex maze of mental health services, and empower them to choose their ideal service to suit their needs.

By having access to relevant and reliable information in one place, families may not have to wait as long to help their child, nor will some of them even need to see a paediatrician. This is especially helpful for disadvantaged families who face difficulties travelling to or paying for multiple specialist appointments. This platform can even be used by those working with children, such as kindergarten teachers, primary school teachers and Maternal and Child Health nurses, about what mental health services are available to them in their community and online.

Thanks to Charity Drive Days', we are empowering families and ultimately enabling parents to better help their children reach their potential. We look forward to keeping you up to date with the project and sharing stories of parents' experience with the platform in the future. On behalf



of our team, please again accept our sincere thanks for your ongoing generosity and shared commitment to children leading happy, healthy and fulfilled lives.

With kind regards and appreciation,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "H. Hiscock".

Professor Harriet Hiscock MB  
MS, FRACP, MD

Group Leader, Health Services,  
Centre for Community Child  
Health, Murdoch Children's  
Research Institute

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "D. Peyton".

Dr Daniel Peyton MBBS, MPH,  
FRACP

PhD student, Health Services,  
Centre for Community Child Health,  
Murdoch Children's Research  
Institute

13<sup>th</sup> November 2019

Greg LaManna, Michael Piccolo, Nick Argyrou & Cameron Smith  
Charity Drive Days Inc.  
91 Cubitt Street  
Richmond, VIC 3121

Dear Greg, Michael, Nick and Cameron.

Congratulations on running such a successful event at Phillip Island this year. Being able to fundraise such a huge amount, shows what a generous group of people your supporters are! On behalf of Solve Disability Solutions, we would like to sincerely thank you all at Charity Drive Days for the generous donation of \$20,000. We are thrilled that Charity Drive Days continues to recognise and value the work that Solve does for children with disabilities. The support we get from Charity Drive Days gives everyone in the office a great boost, and really helps us to get kids with disabilities riding bikes, attending school, jumping on trampolines, playing games and all the other things kids love to do. Giving these children the opportunity to participate in activities alongside their peers through customised equipment solutions is so important in building their confidence, sense of belonging and success in later life.

Statistically 42% of the clients we support live around or below the poverty line, as a consequence of their disability challenges and outcomes. With the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) continuing to experience delays, and not all people with disabilities being eligible for NDIS, many children and families are missing out on the equipment they need to live more independent and fulfilling lives. It is distressing for all of us at Solve, staff and volunteers alike, to see this and we continue to try to find ways to avoid this happening. As well as spending time advocating on these children's behalf, Solve relies on philanthropic funding to bridge the gap and that is where the donations from Charity Drive Days make such a huge difference.

This \$20,000 donation will enable us to take into account the personal circumstances of 20 of our young clients and adjust the cost of our service and their Assistive Technology solutions accordingly. We will allocate the funds donated by Charity Drive Days to assist children living with disability and disadvantage by subsidising the cost of their equipment to ensure it remains affordable.

This \$20,000 donation will also contribute towards the expenses associated with developing customised equipment solutions for children living with disability, including project coordination by an occupational therapist, volunteer expenses and administrative support.

These customised equipment solutions will help children with disabilities to participate more fully in their classrooms, to experience a wide range of recreational activities, and assist families to meet their child's needs in the home. Children will be supported to participate in all aspects of their life. They will be able to reach their full potential at school, through improved seating, positioning and access to educational materials. They will be able to ride a customised bike through our Freedom Wheels program and our "Freewheelers" bike skills training service. Most importantly, they will feel included, stay active and enjoy life.



Annaliese received her Freedom Wheels Bike at one of our Family Fun Days at the Kew Traffic School. Her mum was thrilled:

*"Just wanted to say a huge thank you for today. It was awesome to meet the team. Annaliese can't keep the smile off her face. When we got home she rode her new bike for over an hour showing off her new bike to her dad and her friends. Just wanted to thank everyone involved today. The location at the traffic school was fabulous. You have changed our lives and we are forever grateful."*

This donation to Solve Disability Solutions will enable us to extend our services and ensure children like Annaliese, who live with disability have every opportunity to be part of a community to 'live without limits'. We thank the Charity Drive Days team and supporters for your ongoing commitment to Solve and the children and families we support.

Yours sincerely

Doug Haig  
CEO

Rosemary Nolan  
Business Manager