

The Meningitis Centre – Supplementary (Top-up) Scholarships in Child Health Research

The Meningitis Centre is hoping to support research by attempting to attract a student undertaking research for a doctorate or PhD. The Meningitis Centre Committee agreed to establish a Meningitis Centre PhD Scholarship Supplement research award for 2008-2010. The Award aims to encourage high-achieving postgraduate students considering, or currently undertaking, a PhD in an area of research of relevance to the mission and aims of the Meningitis Centre.

The Award will comprise a supplement per annum for 3 years, to be paid in conjunction with a University-administered PhD scholarship awarded



Telethon Institute for Child Health Research

through the University in which the student is enrolled. Eligible scholarships include Australian Postgraduate Award (APAs), the broader range of University Post Graduate Award (UPAs) and other University and competitive scholarships such as those of the National Health and Medical Research Council - NHMRC and charitable bodies supporting research.

The successful student must be enrolled full-time for a PhD, and the research must be undertaken primarily at or in conjunction with the Telethon Institute for Child Health Research and supervised by at least one of the Institute's researchers.

The Belmont Aussi Masters – swimming again

On Wednesday 8th and Sunday 12th August Belmont AUSSI Masters Swimming Club conducted a SWIMATHON to raise funds to assist the club with lane hire costs & in support of The Meningitis Centre. The aim was for club members to swim a total of 35,000 metres between them. This was well and truly surpassed with 20 club members swimming 42,120 metres in total.

A few of our senior swimmers covered distances of 1000 metres or over. Each swimmer did extremely well and distances varied between individuals with the longest individual swim at 4450 metres. All who participated did exceptionally well with several of our newer members putting in sterling efforts.

This is the fourth SWIMATHON that Belmont AUSSI has held and the club is pleased to have an ongoing association with The Meningitis Centre. After the swim members join together for morning tea and Treacy, The Centre's Project Officer, always comes along representing The Centre and has built a firm relationship with the club and its members over the years. Treacy was amazed at the swimmer's stamina and thanked everyone for being involved. We are always pleased to see her smiling face and to be updated on The Centre's activities.

A special thanks to all the club members for their support and to the Belmont Aussi Masters Swimming Club Inc President for help producing this article.



Belmont Aussi Masters Swimmers

Committee

- Mr Bruce Langoulant – Chairman and Parent
- Mr Bob Ginbey – Telethon Institute for Child Health Research
- Mr Michael Kailis – Businessman
- Dr Tony Keil – Clinical Microbiologist VISN
- Ms Melanie Trainor – Department of Health Communicable Diseases
- Prof Deborah Lehmann – Telethon Institute for Child Health Research VISN
- Ms Jude Willis – Telethon Institute for Child Health Research VISN
- Ms Heather D'Antoine – Telethon Institute for Child Health Research
- Jan Adams – Telethon Institute for Child Health Research VTG
- Mr Barry Thornton – AMA (WA)
- Dr Julie Dockerty – Clinician
- Mrs Sarah Johnston – Parent
- Mike and Yvonne Graham – Parents
- Michael Danzi – Parent
- Mrs Treacy Elliott – Project/Support Officer
- Ms Linda Gibbs – Coordinator

The Meningitis Centre would like to salute all our volunteers who support The Centre and help us to raise awareness of the disease. The Meningitis Centre has many active volunteers who contribute their time and resources to raise awareness. Their input, passion and dedication help to sustain and develop the organisation. Thank you.

Sponsors

The Meningitis Centre would like to express our appreciation to all donors and sponsors. We are very grateful for your on-going support.

The Meningitis Centre relies on sponsorship and donations to operate and to continue in our quest to raise awareness of meningitis and finding sponsors is still challenging.

If you know of a company who would like to sponsor The Meningitis Centre, or an individual who would like to donate, please encourage them to contact the Centre.



Disclaimer: The Meningitis Centre is a 'not for profit' organisation based in Australia, not a professional medical authority. The Meningitis Centre's literature provides general information about meningitis, not medical advice. Please consult your doctor for further information and seek medical attention if you are concerned someone may be ill.

The Country Women's Association of Victoria Inc. support our work

Centre's Victorian Representative tells how

Eighteen months ago I was invited to speak at the Victorian Country Women's Association Annual General Conference in Bendigo. The reason for the invitation was because the Victorian CWA had earmarked The Meningitis Centre as a worthy recipient of their fundraising efforts - over the next 12 months they would be working towards a donation to the Centre. My role was to offer a little education about Meningitis, so I told the story of our family's brush with meningococcal.

Telling the story about such a personal experience can be a little daunting, but when I realised I had 800 faces looking back at me, it became even more daunting! It had actually been some time since I had retold our experience, but the emotions that were there the very first time never go away. Perhaps it was the fact I was in the presence of so many women who I knew were mothers as well, that made me sense the strength, and the emotion in the room.

Twelve months later the CWA invited me back to their 2007 Annual General Conference in Shepparton. This time my role was to accept a cheque that was the proceeds of their

year of fundraising. I was not told how much had been raised, but I was invited to the stage to open the envelope containing the cheque in front of, yes, another 800 members! I was so surprised to see the amount raised. What was even more surprising was that after the presentation I was told that the money was raised simply by having a "donations" basket at each function so that members could drop a coin in. In a time of such terrible hardship for rural communities and families, the generosity of the CWA members amazed me and their efforts are outstanding. They are truly an amazing group of women and I would personally like to thank every one of them for their incredible gift.



Tina, The Meningitis Centre's representative in Victoria

Meningitis Centre chosen for 2006 Country Women's Association of Victoria Inc. Thanksgiving Fund

The Country Women's Association of Victoria Inc. is a non-party, non-political and non-sectarian organisation for country and city women everywhere. Our focus is on providing opportunities for friendship, personal development and advocacy in support of relevant social issues. We are interested in all issues that affect women and their families, the development of skills, their home, local district, town and state.

The Country Women's Association of Victoria Inc. was established in 1928 and its primary object was to improve conditions by community service as they affect the welfare of women and children. In its formative years the Association had many visionary women who traveled the state attracting new members and starting branches. Women wanted companionship and to learn new skills – just as relevant today.

From beginnings during the War years; a project is chosen each year as the recipient of our Thanksgiving Fund. Proceeds from voluntary contributions of members at their monthly meetings are allocated to a worthwhile organisation serving the community or a project for medical research.

Three projects are selected each year and our many Branches across the State vote on their choice – the winner being the recipient of the Thanksgiving Fund for the next year. The Meningitis Centre was the chosen project for the 2006 Thanksgiving Fund resulting in a donation of \$16, 829 being presented at our 2007 State Conference.

Thanks to the State President of the Country Women's Association of Victoria Inc. for submitting the above article about the organization. The Country Women's Association of Victoria Inc. web site may be accessed at <http://www.cwaofvic.asn.au>



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Chairman's Comments



Chairman
Bruce Langoulant

Late 2006 I became President of Confederation of Meningitis Organisations (COMO). COMO has faced many obstacles, however it is about to embrace new opportunities. I am convinced that the continued development of COMO will significantly contribute to our mission to raise awareness of meningitis across the globe. The annual COMO Conference will be held in Washington DC on 23rd and 24th September of this year.

The Meningitis Centre has been actively involved and supportive of the development of The WA Immunisation Alliance as we are committed to raising awareness of vaccines and are also convinced of the added value that consumer groups contribute when promoting the importance of vaccination. Please read the article about the WA Immunisation Alliance to learn more about the development of the organisation.

I would like to personally thank the Victorian Country Women's Association for all their fundraising efforts and their donation to The Meningitis Centre.

On behalf of everyone at The Meningitis Centre I would like to express our thanks for your continued encouragement and support.

An additional role for Bruce, The Chairman of The Disability Service Commission

Bruce was also recently appointed as Chairman of The Disability Service Commission (DSC) here in Western Australia. Bruce has been on the board of the DSC since 2001. Bruce said "My role as The Chairman of The Meningitis Centre provides opportunities to meet people who have been impacted by meningitis and left with disabilities as a result of the disease. This experience coupled with my personal family experience keeps me in tune with the needs and expectations of consumers of disability services. I look forward to the many responsibilities and opportunities the role has to offer and hope that I can work in partnership with other sectors of the community to support people with disabilities." The Meningitis Centre would like to congratulate Bruce and wish him well. Bruce will be continuing as Centre Chairman.

"We're helping save kids from Meningitis"

The Vaccine Trials Group (VTG), Telethon Institute for Child Health Research recently completed recruiting toddlers and adolescents to their Meningococcal B Vaccine study. This study is looking at how well a vaccine works in providing protection against Meningococcal B, which is the cause of 80% of all Meningococcal Disease in WA.

"The introduction of the Meningococcal C Vaccine has proven very successful in reducing this disease, yet developing a vaccine for the B strain has remained elusive due to the complex nature of the virus", says Larissa Rhind, Adolescent Study Coordinator.

To thank those in the adolescent study, the VTG invited all participants to an event in their honour. "Over half of the boys and girls were able to attend, engaging in a range of fun activities before providing us with valuable feedback based on their study experiences", says Heidi Hutton, Research Assistant and facilitator of the event.

"The afternoon culminated with a visit to Princess Margaret Hospital for Children (PMH)'s activity centre, Megazone. Here the kids were treated to afternoon tea and the choice of playing many of the centres arcade games", Heidi explains.

Before going home, each of the participants was presented with a wrist band inscribed "We're helping save kids from Meningitis", a slogan that some of our participants developed and a water bottle, kindly provided by the Amanda Young Foundation. Finally, to all the participants – thank you! Without their support, vaccines that improve the overall health and well-being of our communities just wouldn't be available.

If you would like more information about this study or any other study that the Vaccine Trials Group is involved in, please call research staff on 9340 8542 or visit www.ichr.uwa.edu.au/vtg.



New publications and those under development

The Centre is currently working with The Kulunga Research Network which is based at The Telethon Institute for Child Health Research. The Centre with the Kulunga Research Network hopes to develop a general information meningitis signs and symptoms poster specifically designed for indigenous populations. The Kulunga Research Network kindly agreed to assist The Centre with this project and we will keep you informed regarding developments. To find out more about The Kulunga Research Network please visit their web site on www.ichr.uwa.edu.au/kulunga/

The Meningitis Centre recently redesigned new adhesive badges which advertise the Centre's web site. The new car bumper stickers also advertise the web site and are available by contacting The Centre. If you would like to request some of the badges or car bumper stickers please contact the Centre on 08 9489 7791 or alternatively email us at meningitis@ichr.uwa.edu



WA fund raiser a hit -The GOLD Entertainment Book

It is with great pleasure that we announce that The Meningitis Centre managed to raise \$2832 from the sale of the Gold Entertainment books (in WA only) as a fund raising initiative for 2007.

Linda, The Meningitis Centre's Office Coordinator, organised the sale of the books and was inundated with enquires from people who were very keen to purchase the book. Linda said, "People felt the books are great value for money and are a really positive way of supporting the local community." Linda said The Centre hopes to conduct this fund raising event again next year. The Gold Entertainment books were \$60.00 and a small portion approximately \$12.00 from each book sold went to the Centre.

Thanks to all those people who bought Gold Entertainment books and supported The Meningitis Centre.



Jane, Meningitis Centre volunteer and appointed to WA Immunisation Alliance "

WA Immunisation Alliance

The Communicable Diseases Control Directorate (CDCD) of the Health Department of Western Australia has recently established a community and consumer based group to promote the importance of immunisation in Western Australia.

The aim of this consumer focused group is to promote immunisation, provide information of the benefits of being fully immunised against vaccine preventable diseases and to maximise options for vaccination. This group will also be a 'direct line' to the perceived needs of the community and will be able to provide expertise and suggestions on issues relating to non-compliance within the community.

Expressions of Interest were sought early in July, resulting in a number of high calibre applications being received. The proposed alliance has been able to attract the interest of those who potentially represent a wide and diverse range of the community, with each individual sharing a common goal of improving the health and well-being of our communities through immunisation. From these applications, the alliance members were selected and the first meeting to establish the scope, mission and aims of the alliance was conducted in August.

We are proud to announce that one of our volunteers Jane has been selected on The WA Immunisation Alliance.

Meningitis book now editing

We are now into the final stages of the development of the book based on the narratives of a few families who experienced different forms of the disease. Unfortunately the book has taken longer to write than expected and it is nearing completion. The Centre has not been able to interview or include everyone who agreed to participate in the book. Three families' stories were selected for the book. The family narrative and the perspectives of medical professionals involved in their stories have been included in the text.

Joanne our medical author has been very encouraged by the support she has received from medical personnel that she interviewed and was struck by the impact that caring for families has on the medics involved in their treatment. The messages that emerge from the stories are powerful. We hope that many people will read the book and that it will be a useful resource to health care professionals and we are optimistic that medical students and other health care students will read the book. The Centre would like to thank all the families that were willing to contribute to the development of the project and the individuals who supported the initiative in other ways. We would also like to thank Friends of the Institute, Margaret River Branch who donated funds to support the development of the book. We hope the book will be published some time in the near future.

Advertising – now is the time to be more aware

The Meningitis Centre has run advertisements in Perth metropolitan community newspapers over a period of approximately eight weeks during the winter months. The adverts are designed to raise awareness of The Meningitis Centre and encourage people to visit the web site www.meningitis.com.au or call the Freecall number 1800 250 223. The Centre has run a similar advertisement in local Perth papers for a few years and feels they are a good way of reaching the community. The success of the adverts in Western Australia has persuaded us to consider running similar advertisements in the Eastern States. So keep a look out in your local paper!

