

noseletter

In this Issue

Welcome to the March 2020 issue of *Noseletter* – your update from Red Nose.

In this issue, you can read about our latest impact figures, including the number of families you have helped support in the last year.

Find out how your generous donations ensure that our grief and loss services, such as the unique Memory Collation Program, are helping guide newly bereaved parents along the lonely journey of grief.

From our community, hear Michele Freemantle's moving story about how she started the SIDS movement in Queensland nearly 40 years ago, and why she's still so committed to helping bereaved families.

We also catch up with one of our most enthusiastic fundraisers, eleven year old Chase who shares how fundraising helps him remember and honour his sister Mylee.

This year, Red Nose Day will be held on Friday 14 August. Keep an eye out for more information in the coming months, or register your interest and learn how you can get involved by visiting rednoseday.org.au today.



Thank you for helping 2020 get off to an incredible start. Your generous support is helping to bring care and comfort to so many families in need, and we simply can't thank you enough.

I hope you enjoy reading this issue of *Noseletter*.

Keren

Keren Ludski
CEO, Red Nose Australia

Your Impact

Because of you...

800

grieving families were supported through free counselling and activities

8

annual remembrance services were held to honour babies lost too soon

4

long term research projects were supported through 2019 – helping to answer the never-ending question: "why?"

123,000

new and expectant parents received lifesaving safe sleep & safe pregnancy advice

14,000

early childhood teachers have been trained in safe sleeping

saving precious memories



▲ Pictured above
Skye and Shellie holding
Nina's castings

When a parent loses a child, they are not only left heartbroken, they are left with empty arms and a lifetime of grief.

And while in unimaginable shock and heartache, they must also collect and savor as many memories of their child as they can – the only memories they will ever get to create with their child.

The Memory Collation program is a free service delivered by Red Nose in partnership with local hospitals to help support grieving parents from the moment they lose their child.

Precious, tangible memories such as castings and ink prints of the baby's hands and feet, as well as delicate locks of hair are all preserved by our specially trained volunteers and presented in a beautiful Memory Box. Because in the midst of shock and grief, the last thing a family should have to think about is what treasured few mementos they will preserve to keep their baby's memory close for the rest of their lives.

Program Coordinator Shellie says, "most parents I speak to say the Memory Box with the castings of

their child's hands and feet take pride of place in their home. Having the castings on display in their home gives family and friends silent permission to speak about their baby and remember their life."

"Because we love to talk about our child, just like any other parent."

Bereaved mother, and trainee Memory Collation Volunteer Skye believes that the program was vital in her recovery – not only providing her and husband Trent with their daughter's treasured memories, but because it's also what first got her through the door at Red Nose.

Skye recalls, "I'm not sure that I would have initially reached out for ongoing support if it hadn't been for the experience of getting the castings done. A month after Nina was stillborn, I received a call from Red Nose that my molds were ready to be collected.

"What I thought would be a quick drop in, turned into over an hour of talking to the Red Nose staff and realising just how overwhelmed with grief I was.

"I then took the offer of ongoing counselling support with counsellor

Moira that I am so grateful for. Moira provided me with much needed support in order to help me navigate my way through my grief and eventually return to work."

Every family's journey of grief is different and complex. Our network of grief and loss services includes additional supports such as parent and family support, sibling support, peer and group support, annual memorial services and our 24-hour Support Line.

Thanks to your generous support, these services are free, because cost shouldn't be a barrier to healing people's broken hearts.

Red Nose Grief and Loss Services are here for you 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Call us on **1300 308 307** to speak to a trained grief counsellor or peer supporter.

Our website also has a wide range of free resources.

rednosegriefandloss.org.au

There are many dedicated staff, volunteers and supporters who together make the work of Red Nose possible. This is **Michele's** story.

I have been supporting families who have experienced the death of their beautiful child for over 42 years since having my own beloved son Todd, die from SIDS in July 1977.

Todd Matthew Freemantle was our firstborn child and only son. He was absolutely perfect – handsome just like his dad Morrie, and loved food just like his Mum! Todd was with us for just 45 days, during which he brought joy to our entire family.

Todd dying suddenly and unexpectedly, despite being perfectly healthy, was heartbreaking and incredible isolating.

Very little was known about SIDS at that time. I can vividly remember the police officers coming to collect his bedding to investigate his death. It was never explained that this was a matter of law. We saw it as being considered responsible for his death.

We felt abandoned by our community. Nobody knew what to do to help us and I was made to feel like an incompetent and incapable mother. I felt very alone.

The following year I was relieved (and incredibly anxious) to become pregnant

with Brooke, our rainbow baby. I was also fortunate to meet Vilma Ward, another pioneer of SIDS research and fundraising, and I decided it was time to take action.

I established the Queensland Sudden Infant Death Research Foundation with the tremendous support of Vilma and others in our community, to find the reasons why Todd and so many precious other babies were dying. This organisation would later merge with likeminded organisations to become Red Nose.

There have been many challenges working with SIDS. In the early days, getting myself out of bed was was challenge enough. On others it was fighting the many misconceptions and providing factual information to the general public, whilst advocating for families across Australia to help ensure that no other child had to die.

I found immense comfort in helping others, knowing they would not have to feel the judgement, isolation and hopelessness my husband Morrie and I felt when Todd died.

For any parent who has been though this, please be kind to yourself. You are not alone. Reach out for help and grieve in your own way. Talk about your gorgeous child to keep them with you, and surround yourself with supportive people who allow you to proceed through your journey without judgement.

I am honoured to have had the opportunity to share the impact of Todd's sudden and unexpected death with you all, and how it changed my life. Thank you for supporting me with unconditional love.

I hope Todd would be proud to see how his short time on earth inspired his Mum to try to make a difference in the lives of others impacted by child death.

He was my everything. And I'm incredibly proud to be his Mum.

You can read Michele's full story on our website at rednose.org.au/news/micheles-story

➤ Red Nose was founded by pioneers like Michele, who were determined to help other families through their grief and fund lifesaving research.

Thanks to your generous and ongoing support, Michele and Todd's legacy lives on.

Through world-class research, lifesaving safe sleeping and safe pregnancy education, and vital bereavement support services, we continue the work of our founders.

Together with your support, we can and will reach zero and stop little lives being cut short once and for all.

✔ Pictured below
His Excellency, Justice Paul de Jersey, Governor of Queensland with Michele Freemantle



behind the
red noses

History

for my sister Mylee



^ Pictured

Chase at his popsicle stand fundraiser

Chase Manning was only 3 years old when his baby sister Mylee tragically passed away from Sudden and Unexpected Death in Childhood at just 15 months. Today Chase is an empathetic and kind eleven year old, who dedicates his free time to fundraising for Red Nose in Mylee's memory.

Chase and Mylee were close, he idolised his little sister, and watching them grow together melted their parent's hearts. They were inseparable.

"Having a sister that died makes me sad and angry. There was nothing the doctors could do. I want to be the one who tries harder to save other babies."

Over the years Chase and his family have raised thousands of dollars in Mylee's honour. "It's important to me to fundraise for Red Nose because it helps families like ours, and helps us save the lives of kids and babies."

Chase's mum Melanie couldn't be prouder, believing that Mylee's loss has helped shape the person he is today. From celebrating her birthday every March 15th with acts of kindness, to participating in an annual remembrance run and running his own fundraising events, Chase has grown into a confident and passionate young man.

"I've done a lemonade stand and last year we sold popsicles. I did a talk at my school to teach other kids about SIDS and SUDC and to let people know about Red Nose so hopefully they get lots of money and can do more science to figure out why this happens."

"Our family was really upset when Mylee died. I remember her only a little bit now so doing these things for her helps me remember her and still get to be her big brother."

> Chase and his family are one of the many dedicated families whose generosity and tireless fundraising efforts make the work of Red Nose possible – helping bereaved families every single day of the year, and funding research and education to help save little lives.

You too can get involved in Red Nose Day – learn more at rednoseday.org.au

Friday, 14 August is Red Nose Day

Last year, you helped raise over \$600,000 to support families and help stop little lives being cut short!

Help us do it again in 2020. Register your involvement at rednoseday.org.au today.

Thank You!

For your ongoing kindness, generosity and caring support.

Your gifts touch the lives of countless families across Australia – whether it's through cutting edge research to help find answers to why babies die suddenly and unexpectedly, lifesaving safe sleep education to new families, or free 24/7 counselling and peer

support services for those families who have are experiencing the tragedy of the loss of a child.

We are so grateful to our many wonderful donors and supporters.

Because of you, we can be there for Australian families when they need us most.

Help continue the vital work by making a donation today.

Give online at rednose.org.au/donation or call 1300 998 698

Hold a fundraising event

Buy a Red Nose raffle ticket

Donate to Red Nose Clothing and Collection

Volunteer or become a peer supporter

Supporter Relations Team

1300 998 698 (during business hours)
fundraising@rednose.org.au
rednose.org.au

ABN 81 462 345 159



Bereavement Support Services

Red Nose 24/7 Grief & Loss Support Line
1300 308 307 | rednosegriefandloss.org.au

Safe Sleeping & Safe Pregnancy Advice Line

1300 998 698 (during business hours)
education@rednose.org.au
rednose.org.au