



Spring 2013

special lives

Supporting families of children with life-threatening conditions

Supporting Arch

Four-year-old Cleo loves her big brother Archie.

They enjoy swimming in the pool, riding their bicycles together, running around the backyard with each other and being best friends.

But unlike most young girls, Cleo worries about her brother going to heaven. Archie was born with a rare genetic condition and was diagnosed with inoperable tumour when he was five years old.

Unfortunately, Cleo will never be able to have a conversation with Archie, as he can't talk. But what he lacks in speech, Archie makes up for in energy and movement. The siblings love playing together and they share a very special bond.

Archie requires assistance with all his daily needs and one-on-one care, which places great emotional and physical pressures on parents Carley and Nathanael Preston. They are also aware of the impact Archie's condition has on Cleo.

"She asked me the other day 'when Archie goes to heaven, will mummy still pick me up from kinder?' She also says things to other people like 'my brother Archie has a disability', so we are aware that she is becoming more knowledgeable about the situation," Carley said.

Sadly, from the very first day he was born, Archie Preston was unwell. His parents Carley and Nat came home from the maternity ward without him, as Archie spent his first days in the special care nursery.

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From the CEO



It has been a busy and exciting time at Very Special Kids!

Our cottages and barn at Glen Osmond Farm in Woodend recently opened to families for the first time. This follows years of planning, building, development and the hard work of the Very Special Kids team.

We have been supported externally by architect and Very Special Kids parent Peter Jackson, our project management team in Stephen Farrall and Denise Kendall, and most importantly the community of Woodend led by our major donors Janet and Bernie Hawkins. Demand from families is high and the feedback is absolutely heart-warming for those who have made this possible.

Another important achievement was the receipt of the City of Stonnington Citizen of the Year Awards by the Very Special Kids House Volunteers. The team are undoubtedly worthy winners in the "Community Group" category, receiving the award in recognition of their strong community values and outstanding achievements. This is an important success in the Very Special Kids story and recognises our commitment to community linkages. Congratulations everyone!

It has also been a busy fundraising period with several fun and highly-successful events taking place under the leadership of Amber Skehan and her team. Very Special Kids also welcomed Andrew Cole as our new Fundraising Lead, who joins us from Reach Foundation and Cancer Research UK. Andrew will be focusing on corporate and major donor relationships and we are delighted to welcome him to the team.

Wishing you all a wonderful springtime and I hope you enjoy the many activities taking place in the coming weeks as we ramp up our Piggy Bank Appeal!

Sarah Hosking,
Chief Executive Officer