

It's all smiles as Telethon hands out record \$25.8m

■ Natalie Richards

Telethon bosses declared it the "best day of the year" and it only took a look at the wide grins in the audience to see why.

On the back of a record fund-raising year, there were cheers, high-fives and many pats on the back as representatives of 41 youth charities and organisations gathered to see their coffers boosted by the \$25.8 million raised by West Australians last year.

Raised from the smallest donation of children's pocket money to the big business donations of the fundraiser's million-dollar partners, the cash will allow medical research to continue at Telethon's world-renowned Kids Institute as well as helping with the heart-warming tasks of seeing wishes granted for severely ill children.

Telethon Kids Institute director Jonathan Carapetis summed up the value of the centre when he told how its staff had pinpointed a diagnosis for a seven-year-old.

The girl and her family previously made 40 hospital visits to no avail.

"They nailed it in a week," Professor Carapetis said.

"That's the sort of work I need funding to support and that's what Telethon does."

For last year's Telethon children Alyssa Bolger and Jayton Carter, there were memories of the star-studded fundraising weekend — with meeting Channel 7 personalities and each other among the highlights.

At just 10 years old, Scott Guerini made the most of

It's the children looking after children which is what we actually promote . . . that's the foundation on which everything is built!

Telethon chairman
Kerry Stokes

an audience of distinguished guests, including Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull and Foreign Minister Julie Bishop, high-fiving the front row and offering his business cards.

The Southern Cross youngster charmed the crowd as he told of how he had walked the 25km from his family farm into town since aged four.

He has since raised \$100,000 for Telethon and, with a marathon walk under his belt, has big plans for his generosity.

"I also want to be a million-dollar partner by the time I'm 90," Scott said.

Telethon chairman Kerry Stokes said the roots of the fundraiser came from the smallest donations and pointed to the most heart-warming — when children donated their pocket money.

"Everyone who has thought they've done the extra yard would be embarrassed to see what Scott's done," Mr Stokes said.

"It's the children looking after children which is what we actually promote . . . that's the foundation on which everything is built."

THOSE SET TO BENEFIT...

Princess Margaret Hospital for Children

Will provide scholarships for nursing and allied health and will employ two medical research fellows and an oncology fellow to help sick children.

Telethon Kids Institute

Researchers are working to free children of diseases and conditions including cancer, leukaemia, diabetes, autism and asthma. The institute is also researching ways to improve the health and wellbeing of indigenous children and their families.

Telethon Speech and Hearing Centre

Helps children with their speech, language and hearing by identifying issues early and helping with access to support.

Telethon Perth Children's Hospital Research Fund

Helps and improves the health of adolescents and children. Previous research has included children in neonates, childhood brain disorders, infant leukaemia, cystic fibrosis, autism, paediatric burn survivors and adolescents with depression.

Telethon Type 1 Diabetes Family Centre

Helps the families of those with type 1 diabetes and provides support from the initial diagnoses to lifestyle adjustments.

Ability Solutions

Creating social and physical interactions for children who need high care.

The Ability Centre

Provides equipment and programs to help children and young people with cerebral palsy take part in everyday activities.

The Amanda Young Foundation

Teaches children and their parents the importance of basic hygiene practice to prevent meningococcal sepsis and meningitis.

Asthma WA

Educates children and carers on asthma management techniques and improving habits and creating a greater awareness of asthma in the community.

Australian Children's Music Foundation

Influences the lives of children and at-risk youth in the Kimberley region through its music education program.

Autism West

Helps children with autism spectrum disorder through a program which develops skills including social behaviour and communication. Also helps families living with autism.



High fives: Brothers Ryley Coleman, 7, and Mitchell, 5, shout out a big thank you to Chevron's Robert Dobrik after Chevron was named as the latest Telethon Million Dollar Partner. Picture: Steve Ferrier

Bio-rehab for Kids

Provides advanced biomechanical rehabilitation therapy sessions for children with cerebral palsy and other movement disorders.

Camp Quality

The funding will be used to help children understand cancer and show them how to become a support friend to a person living with cancer.

Carers WA

Gives young carers aged eight to 17 a break from their caring role and helps them make friends with fellow carers through its Young Carer Camps.

Cystic Fibrosis WA

Provides regional, hospital and home support for children with cystic fibrosis.

The Dyslexia-SPELD Foundation WA

Helps develop culturally appropriate literacy and teaching materials for children living in remote communities.

Edmund Rice Camps WA

Inspires at-risk kids aged seven to 17 with camps throughout the year.

Foodbank WA

Providing healthy food and healthy eating tips to disadvantaged children.

Heart Kids WA

Supports the families of children with congenital heart conditions in regional WA.

Inclusion WA

Helps disabled children take part in sport, recreation and community activities.

Joondalup Health Campus

Funds will be used to develop its Telethon Children's Ward to provide better paediatric hospital access and care for local children.

Kalparrin

Helping parents and carers of children with special needs through a program which helps raise awareness, addresses barriers and provides ongoing coping strategies.

Kids Camps

Provides fun and affordable camps for children with intellectual disabilities and respite for their families.

Legacy Fund of Perth — Torchbearers for Legacy in WA

Helping children who have lost a loved one in military service reach their full potential through programs and activities.

Make-A-Wish Australia

The money will be used to grant urgent wishes to six West Australian children.

Muscular Dystrophy Western Australia

Improves the health of children with muscular dystrophy through a project which allows families to concentrate on maintaining quality of life for as long as possible.

Ngalá Community Services

Provides educational toolkits for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders which work with community and family traditions.

Parkerville Children and Youth Care

The donations will fund a paediatrician at the George Jones Advocacy Centre in Armadale. The paediatrician will give services to high-risk children and young people.

Redkite

Helping the families of children with cancer who are in crisis or experiencing chronic stress.

Riding for the Disabled

Uses horseriding and time with horses and ponies as therapies to help children with intellectual and physical disabilities. The funding will be used to build a seated gallery to allow parents, carers, siblings and volunteers watch the action.

Starlight Children's Foundation

Improves the hospital experience for seriously ill young people by providing distractions including music, cooking facilities, libraries, an art studio and Livewire TV.

Superfins WA Inc

Provides a Learn to Swim program for children with physical and intellectual disabilities.

Therapy Focus

Provides children and young people living with disabilities freedom and independence by providing aids and custom-built equipment.

Thriving Physical Activity and Health Program

Provides a physical activity and health program for children and teenagers affected by cancer, metabolic diseases and other complex juvenile conditions.

VisAbility

Provides a program to promote independence in visually impaired children.

WA Disabled Sports Association

Encourages children with disabilities to take part in sporting activities.

Western Australian Neuroscience Research Institute

Helps fund groundbreaking research into childhood muscle wasting — Duchenne muscular dystrophy. The research involves genetic 'patches' targeting gene defects.

Wheelchairs for Kids

Will provide more wheelchairs for disabled children.

Wheelchair Sports WA

Helping children with a physical disability build confidence, improve their physical and mental wellbeing and develop new skills through its participation program.

Women and Infants Research Foundation

Helps the survivors of premature birth through research projects.

Youth Focus Inc

Provides counselling services for young people aged 12 to 18 who show early signs associated with suicide, depression and self-harm.

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The Telethon Adventurers

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Wesfarmers

Ramsay Health Care

Ear health boost

■ Natalie Richards

WA's first ear health portal will be created in the North West, helping more than 1000 children, after a new Telethon million-dollar partner was announced yesterday.

Oil and gas giant Chevron donated \$1 million yesterday to the Telethon fundraising kitty which will go solely towards setting up the portal in the Pilbara — where hearing problems are rife.

Telethon Speech and Hearing Centre head of hearing services Jay Krishnaswamy said Aboriginal children in the area were prone to ear disease. The region, he said, had few specialist services and education on ear health was scarce.

The funding will provide three staff for the Karatha-based portal as well as a truck with an audiology booth which will travel to the most remote areas, testing children as young as babies.

"We can get to those remote areas, we go as far as Onslow which doesn't have any audiology services at all," Mr Krishnaswamy said.

Wheatstone Operations Manager Rob Dobrik said ear health held particular importance in his family after his son was diagnosed with speech and hearing difficulties as a child.

"Through some early intervention he was able to overcome those disabilities," he said. "He's in university studying software engineering as we speak so I do appreciate that early diagnosis."

The company, he said, also wanted to have a positive influence in the area where its liquefied natural gas operations were based.

CATALOGUE APOLOGY

On page 7 of our 36 page catalogue out Thursday 14/4, we advertise a Nikon Coolpix P610 camera at the incorrect price of \$149. The correct price is \$449.

We apologise for any inconvenience this printing error may cause.

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Common chronic ailments can give

■ Katherine Fleming

Children who suffer from common chronic conditions including ear infections and respiratory disease are at heightened risk of falling behind in their development by the time they start school, according to a study by the Telethon Kids Institute.

The research, done in conjunction with the University of WA, found WA children with an

ongoing illness were up to 34 per cent more likely to be classified as vulnerable in testing to determine readiness to start school.

The researchers matched the results of those tests for 22,890 children with medical data and found chronic illness had the potential to "profoundly influence" a child's development.

Almost 2880 of those children, or 12.6 per cent, had a chronic illness. Middle ear infections, known as chronic otitis media

and not traditionally seen as detrimental to school readiness, were the most common.

But the study found that just one condition was enough to put a child's development at risk. More than one worsened the impact, making children up to 85 per cent more likely to be classified as vulnerable or at risk.

The school readiness testing assessed social, emotional, language and cognitive skills, communication and general

child bad start to school years: study

knowledge and physical wellbeing.

The impact of a chronic disease was particularly pronounced for social and emotional capabilities, which previous studies had suggested was because the children were more likely to be submissive, excluded from play and have low self-esteem.

Acting early with programs to improve those ar-

eas could lead to children also faring better with behaviour and academic work.

Lead author Megan Bell said without intervention, children who started school behind their peers would continue to lag.

"Therefore, the effects of chronic illness on development have the potential to be long-lasting, even if the child's health recovers," she said.

"Although the increase in risk we saw in our study was generally small, the fact that these results are being seen at school entry and are likely to be cumulative over time highlights the importance of early intervention."

Ms Bell said no one chronic disease had a greater impact on development, so eligibility for intervention programs should be based on how a child was function-

ing, rather than a particular diagnosis.

"It is clear that a child with any chronic disease is at risk of falling behind and it is essential that there is support available," she said.

The study, which accounted for socioeconomic factors that could also affect a child's development, was published yesterday in the international journal Pediatrics.