



RDNS nurse Sarah Boothby with young clients Keagen and Jarryd.

Breathing easy

Thirteen year old twins Jarryd and Keagen are typical of boys their age – they like to have fun, share a joke and they love to play sports.

They enjoy bowling, do karate and play football just to name a few. Next term, they may even try out for the school cricket team! And while it is true that in most ways Jarryd and Keagen are just like their classmates, one thing sets them apart – these lively and fun-loving twins have Cystic Fibrosis (CF).

As a parent, caring for just one child with CF is challenging and difficult from the day they are born. Caring for two can border on being overwhelming, as the twins' mother Cheryl knows all too well. Fortunately for parents and families, help is available. Cheryl explains that nurses from Royal District Nursing Service (RDNS) have helped care for Jarryd and Keagen since they were babies.

"My doctor referred the boys to the Cystic Fibrosis team at Monash Medical Centre and from there the team organised care

from RDNS. It was comforting to know that help was available, especially in the early days," says Cheryl.

Thirteen years on, RDNS is still helping to care for Jarryd and Keagen. Sarah Boothby, a Clinical Nurse Consultant at RDNS, has provided care for the boys at their school and at home for the past four years. As she watches Jarryd and Keagen run around the schoolyard, she remarks that physical activity is excellent for improving the condition of their airways.

"It's really rewarding to know that you're helping young children stay well, especially when you see how happy they become when their conditions improve," Sarah explains.

A typical visit from Sarah involves preparing the boys' many medications, educating them about CF and ensuring that they complete their physiotherapy for the day.

"By seeing them at school, only one additional physiotherapy session is needed to be done at home, and symptoms can be diagnosed and treated much earlier. This greatly reduces the

likelihood of them having to go into hospital," says Sarah.

Sarah's care also eases the pressure on mum Cheryl. "If a service like RDNS wasn't available, life would be a lot harder. I would have to ensure the boys do their physiotherapy every day and take them into hospital more frequently for review," Cheryl explains. "But Sarah gently helps the boys understand that if they don't do their treatment their condition can get worse, which means more time in hospital and less time at school and home."

And Sarah's education is working: the boys' trips to hospital are becoming less frequent. "At one stage, Keagen was going into hospital six times a year, but we've got it down to about half that now. Jarryd needs a hospital visit every couple of years," Cheryl explains. "We'd probably go into hospital a lot more if Sarah didn't come to visit," says Jarryd. "I quite like the food at the hospital but I don't like the needles!"

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Cystic Fibrosis (CF)

is the most common life-threatening genetic disorder amongst Australians, primarily affecting the lungs, digestion and sweat glands. Individuals with CF produce abnormally thick mucous in the lungs and pancreas, which causes serious problems with their respiratory and digestive systems.

Symptoms can include recurring chest infections, persistent cough, poor weight gain and lethargy. Currently, there is no cure for CF, so daily treatment is vital to prevent progression of the disease.

Thank you

RDNS is most grateful for the assistance provided by all our donors and friends. In particular we would like to acknowledge the contributions of our major supporters:

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Sarah is regularly in contact with school staff, further demonstrating how maintaining the boys' health is a team effort. Marianne, a school staff administrator, has assisted the boys with their treatment for the past four years.

"I'm directly involved in the boys' care. I get their nebulisers ready (a breathing device for administering the boys' medicine) and make sure everything is set up before Sarah arrives," Marianne says. "I also oversee the boys' physiotherapy when Sarah is not here. If I have any concerns, Sarah is always just a phone call away."

Marianne takes her additional responsibilities in her stride. "When I was first told that I would be required to oversee the boys' physiotherapy, I really

just considered it as part of my job. RDNS has helped me very much by coordinating education sessions on CF and providing training from a physiotherapist," she explains.

Next year, Jarryd and Keagen will embark on another chapter in their young lives – they will commence high school. And as Sarah has done for the past four years, she will be there for the boys and to help ease Cheryl's apprehensions.

"Before the boys begin high school, I will visit the staff to educate them about CF, what's involved in the boys' treatment and give advice on how they can help," Sarah says. "That's what I do and it's a pleasure to be part of the journey."

Lifetime Companions lunch in style

RDNS *Lifetime Companions* were among the hundreds of people who helped the Lord Mayor's Charitable Fund – a great supporter of the work of RDNS – celebrate their 85th birthday with a 'Christmas in July' at the Royal Exhibition Building.

Lifetime Companions are those vital people who are planning to include a gift to RDNS in their Will, our partners in providing a lasting legacy of compassionate nursing care.

If you would like to know more about *Lifetime Companions* call Richard Belford, RDNS Planned Giving Officer, on (03) 9536 5222.



With Melbourne football star Daniel Bell are (L tot R) RDNS Lifetime Companions Betsy King, Audrey Smith & Pat Mahoney.

Supporting the future of RDNS

Lifetime Companions

Your Name:

Address:

Phone:

- I have chosen to include a bequest to RDNS in my Will and I would like to join *Lifetime Companions*.
- I have chosen to include a bequest to RDNS in my Will but **I would not** like to join *Lifetime Companions*.
- I would like to find out more about Wills, bequests or *Lifetime Companions*.

Thank you.

Clinical detectives



Peering between the shelves of the RDNS Institute Library are Wound Care CLG members (L to R) Suzanne Kapp, Jenny Pilgrim and Janine Sunderland.

To ensure RDNS' nursing practice is always based on current evidence, RDNS operates a number of Clinical Leadership Groups (CLG).

The purpose of a CLG is to contribute to better client outcomes by promoting evidence-based practice in all clinical services within RDNS. This means incorporating new aspects of care into the Service only after they have been carefully evaluated in an appropriate clinical setting.

CLGs have been operating at RDNS since 2001 and enable clinical issues to be addressed using evidence from literature

and by accessing expert clinical opinion. CLGs have been established in aged care, continence, diabetes, palliative care, wound management and stomal therapy. Members include nurses with expert knowledge in these particular areas, plus an RDNS Clinical Services Manager. A representative from the RDNS Helen Macpherson Smith Institute of Community Health supports the work of each group, building a close working relationship between the CLGs and the Institute. This facilitates the implementation of research and education programs that lead to improved nursing skills and, in turn, better client care.

RDNS health tip

Well, not so much a health tip but a way to get hundreds of health tips and much, much more. Visit the *Go for your Life* website, at www.goforyourlife.vic.gov.au

This Victorian government site is packed full of good advice and great tips on keeping healthy – no matter what your age. It also has great recipes, tips for school lunches, things to do to keep you fit and events to attend. There is also access to health tips and information in a number of community languages.

**go
for
your
life™**

The importance of listening

At RDNS, we are proud of our reputation but we are also acutely aware that a reputation can only be maintained through on-going and consistently good performance.

In the last few years particularly, we have seen rapid growth and change within the healthcare sector and accordingly, we too have had to adapt and transform our service.

With so much happening, RDNS believes it is very important to listen to what our clients are saying about how our service is evolving, and how the 'new' RDNS is meeting their needs. To get this information as accurately and impartially as possible, RDNS recently commissioned independent researchers to conduct a client satisfaction survey.

Almost 2,000 clients were involved in the survey and the results have now been benchmarked against the national 'Home Health' database, which comprises 84 organisations.

The composite result for all clients is an indication of the overall level of satisfaction among RDNS clients and how this compares with other organisations doing a similar role. Pleasingly, this composite result saw the level of client satisfaction increase to 88.6%, up from the 86.9% we scored in 2003 – the last time a survey was done.

Of all the questions asked, it was the friendliness and courtesy of our nurses that scored most highly, along with their technical skills and the respect paid by RDNS staff to clients. RDNS also scored above the industry benchmark in all areas surveyed. These are good results and we can be pleased with the level of satisfaction that our clients are experiencing. However, there is always room for improvement and the results also indicated that we should continue to address areas such as our clients' sense of readiness to cease treatment; how changes to client care are handled by staff and how consumer complaints and concerns are dealt with.

RDNS Consumer Participation Advisory Committee

Our Consumer Participation Advisory Committee provides advice and comment from the perspective of RDNS clients and carers that helps us to continually improve the services we provide.

In the last edition of HouseCall, the committee called for expressions of interest from clients or carers to assist on the committee and were delighted to receive responses from a number of current and past clients.

As a result, the committee welcomed Janet Rollinson and Reg Monash as new members. Both Janet and Reg bring a wealth of information to RDNS from a consumer perspective and we are delighted to have the benefit of their experience.

The committee is now seeking expressions of interest from people who would like to provide feedback on our services in future focus groups on a variety of issues.



Janet Rollinson and Reg Monash (front row left) new members of the Consumer Participation Advisory Committee.

If you are interested in participating, please contact Sally Percy, Quality and Risk Management Coordinator, on (03) 9536 5264 during office hours or via email at spercy@rdns.com.au

Oh the agony of fuel prices!



If you drive a car, you'll know how much the price of fuel has jumped in the past year.

Now, when you fill your car, you watch the price counter on the pump spin at what seems like break-neck speed, while the fuel seems to trickle into the tank more slowly than ever before. As you stand forlornly by the pump, you can almost feel your wallet or purse getting lighter!

It certainly is a painful experience filling the car these days, and you know that every time you do so, you will have less money available for other things. But painful as it is, next time you fill up spare a thought for RDNS – we don't have just one car to feed – but 600 – and they are not used intermittently for private transport but are on the road almost constantly!

Yes, rising petrol prices affect the whole community, but for car-dependent RDNS the impact is very significant. With so many cars in the fleet, each one cent increase in the price of petrol costs us another \$8,700 a year.

To put that into perspective, in mid-2005 we purchased petrol for \$1.10 per litre. If prices return to the \$1.70 they were a couple of months ago, then in the next 12 months we will spend over \$500,000 more to visit clients in their homes compared to the 2005 financial year. If prices climb to \$2.30 a litre next year, as some commentators predict, we will be spending a further half a million dollars on top of that!

RDNS is a not-for-profit charitable organisation committed to providing the best possible care – and as much of it as possible – to those in our community with a home nursing need. The above increases amount to over \$2 million in just four years – *\$2 million that might have provided 27,866 hours of nursing care were it not simply burnt up in petrol costs.*

Yes, rising petrol prices are a problem for the entire community but for RDNS, and those in need of our care, every cent per litre petrol increase has a very significant impact.

Seniors rights in spotlight



Seniors Rights Victoria (SRV) is a new free service that has been established to help prevent elder abuse and safeguard the rights, dignity and independence of older Victorians.

SRV provides a range of services in relation to elder abuse, including a telephone helpline, referrals, legal advice, advocacy, community and professional education.

As the only service of its kind in Victoria, Seniors Rights Victoria aims to lead research, policy and advocacy on issues of elder abuse, mistreatment and neglect. It will also be the first point of contact for people and services responding to this issue.

People who are concerned about abuse or neglect that is affecting them, or someone they know, can call Seniors Rights Victoria on 1300 36 88 21 between 10am and 5pm (Mon-Fri).

Constant Companions more important than ever

With more people in need of care, rising fuel prices and pressure on our budget from all directions, our wonderful *Constant Companions* have become more important to us with each passing day.

Why? Because our *Constant Companions* not only donate regularly to RDNS, they donate a specified amount each month, automatically, through their credit cards or bank accounts. We therefore know each month exactly how much we will have available from our *Constant Companions* and can plan in advance to use it accordingly.

This is very different from other fundraising income, where we can never be sure how much we will receive and thus future planning is difficult.

Many of our *Constant Companions* calculate the amount they would normally donate to RDNS annually, and then arrange the

appropriate monthly deduction, knowing that at any time they can change or cancel the amount by calling the RDNS Fundraising Office.

RDNS is very grateful for all the donations we receive but the value we obtain from monthly donations is far greater than other forms of donation. This is because for our monthly donors we no longer need to send out appeal letters, saving us printing and postage costs, and thereby effectively increasing the value of each donation they make.

Would you like to increase the value of your donation without giving any more money?

Please consider joining our fast-expanding group of very special people – our *Constant Companions*.

Simply complete the monthly giving section in the response coupon on page 7 or give Chris or Judith a call in the RDNS Fundraising Office on (03) 9536 5222.

Order your RDNS Christmas cards now!

The 2008 RDNS Christmas card catalogue has arrived with a great selection of quality cards, as well as some real specials.

As in previous years, there are options to suit all tastes and budgets.

For your copy of the catalogue, call our Head Office on (03) 9536 5222 or you can view the catalogue online at www.rdns.com.au by clicking the Christmas card link on the home page.

Buying RDNS Christmas cards is easy. You can purchase them by mail order, over the counter at RDNS Head Office, 31 Alma Rd, St Kilda, or at any of the following charity card shops:

Banyule Information & Support Services
101 Burgundy Street, Heidelberg 3084

Box Hill Lions Club Combined Charities Christmas Card Shop

Town Hall Hub, 27 Bank Street
Box Hill 3129

Camberwell Charities Christmas Card Shop (CAMCARE)

19 Fairholm Grove, Camberwell 3124

Essendon Charity Christmas Card Shop (Orana Family Services)

Essendon Uniting Church
132 Keilor Rd, North Essendon 3041

Mountview Uniting Church

(Centre 81) 81 East Doncaster Rd,
Mitcham 3132



Monash Community Information & Support Charity Christmas Card Shop

6 Holskamp Street, Mt Waverley 3149

Mornington Community Information & Support Charity Christmas Shop

320 Main Street, Mornington 3931

RACV helps the homeless

For the past four years, RDNS and RACV have enjoyed a partnership that has provided financial and in-kind support for our Homeless Persons Program (HPP).

RACV's magnificent contribution to our work has enabled four cars to be purchased, expanding the reach of HPP, and for material aid to be provided to clients in desperate need.

But the support goes further than this, with many wonderful RACV staff volunteering their assistance for collecting food and

packing hampers for our homeless clients, assisting with fundraising and helping out at our annual 'Where the heart is' festival for homeless people.

A big thank you to all at RACV – the timely and substantial support you provide in so many ways makes a huge difference to our work.



The RACV volunteers who helped out packing Christmas cards.

URGENT: Can you help us in the lead-up to Christmas?

RDNS is seeking volunteers to help with our Christmas card sales. Do you have a couple of hours a fortnight or month you could spare to help us?

We are looking for assistance at two locations. The first is at our Head Office in St Kilda where we are seeking volunteers to help assemble our Christmas card orders. You will be working in a very friendly environment, with flexible hours (so you won't have to

battle any peak hour traffic) and free car parking is available.

The second location is at the Box Hill Charity Card outlet at the Box Hill Town Hall. Again, free car parking is available.

If you are interested in volunteering, we would appreciate hearing from you. Please call Julie Cocks, Christmas Card Coordinator on (03) 9536 5222 or 0410 561 140 as soon as possible.

New satellite location for RDNS Knox



RDNS Knox has opened a new satellite site in the Shire of Yarra Ranges.

The new satellite is called RDNS Yarra Ranges and is located in the newly built Yarra Ranges Health Clinic in central Lilydale.

The eight RDNS staff at the new Yarra Ranges facility are co-located with several other health services. These include cardiac rehabilitation, day surgery, allied health, mental health, palliative care and a continence clinic.

Please let us know

During the year, we send out to you several publications ranging from appeal letters through to newsletters like this one. Chris and Judith in our Fundraising Office are always pleased to hear from donors regarding the mail they receive and any suggestions you may have for improvements we can make. Just call (03) 9536 5222 - we would be delighted to hear from you.