



stillbirth

FOUNDATION INC.

little feet taking big steps...to reduce stillbirth

Stillbirth Foundation News
February 2008



Little Feet Taking Big Steps Ball 2008

The Stillbirth Foundation will be hosting their third annual **Little Feet Taking Big Steps Ball** on **Saturday 17th May 2008** at the **Four Seasons Hotel, Sydney!**

It is with delight that we announce **Marcella Zemanek** as our Guest Speaker at the Ball. Marcella has been a Radio Producer/Researcher for over 30 years and during this time has worked with some formidable people. She started her career with John Laws, before working in the USA with her husband Stan Zemanek, and on returning to Australia has worked for Alan Jones, Brian Bury and John Stanley. Marcella has much fundraising experience having been on the Variety, Humpty Dumpty Foundation and Youth Off The Streets Committees. Marcella and Stan had a stillborn son, Nicholas, on 22nd November 1981 and Marcella feels it a great privilege to be speaking at our Little Feet Ball. She is a vibrant and lively woman, and will certainly

contribute to making our Ball another fantastic evening!

We are also incredibly fortunate to have received much early support for our major fundraising event of the year at which we hope to raise \$150,000! **Jay Laga'aia** will be joining us as Master of Ceremonies, magnificent charity auctioneer **Ian Gollan** will run the live auction, **Professor Jonathan Morris** will introduce the importance of the stillbirth cause, and the band **Swerve** will once again ensure that the dance floor is full. Wines will be generously provided by **McGuigan Wines** and beer by **Byron Bay Brewery**.

Tickets remain at last year's price of just \$175 and invitations will be posted shortly. We are continuing to source prizes for the Ball, and if you have something to contribute please contact Leanne at leanne@stillbirthfoundation.org.au.

Patrons

Jay Laga'aia

Deborah Thomas

Melinda Schneider

Medical Advisors

Peter Barr

OAM, MBBS, PhD, FRACP

Julianne Brown

MPH, MAE

Jonathan Morris

MB ChB, MM, FRANZCOG,
DDU, CMFU, PhD

Deborah de Wilde

OAM, BSW, RGN, CM

Gates Foundation gives US\$1 mil for stillbirth

It is with absolute delight, we share the recent news that the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation has given US\$1 million for research aimed at preventing stillbirth and premature deliveries. The grant, announced Monday 18th February, is going to the Children's Hospital Research Institute in Seattle, USA. It's for a review of published studies, and the hospital is planning an international summit on the problem next year.

A statement issued by the hospital notes that premature births claim the lives of more than one million newborns annually. That includes more than 10,000 in the United States, making prematurity the country's leading cause of infant mortality. In addition, more than three million babies are stillborn worldwide each year, and scientists believe many involve the same factors that cause premature birth.

It is incredibly heartening that a high profile organisation, such as the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, has the foresight to recognise the seriousness of the stillbirth problem and to commit to helping prevent future tragedies. We thank them very much for this generous gift that will make a world-wide difference to families & will ultimately save many baby's lives.



Pictured at right, Taylor Clark, born still 6th July 2005. Her mother, Lee, wishes to create and donate beanies to hospitals (see story page 3).



Update: The Stillbirth Study

In 2005, a research study examining the epidemiological and infectious risk factors associated with stillbirth began at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital in Sydney, conducted by Dr Adrienne Gordon under the co-supervision of Associate Professor Heather Jeffery and Professor Jonathan Morris. In 2006, the Stillbirth Foundation generously provided \$75,000 as a grant in aid of this research, and in 2007 Liz Headley joined the research team. Ethics approval is currently being sought to extend this study to several more hospitals throughout Sydney, and it is expected that later in 2008 this study will be implemented at Nepean and Westmead Hospitals,

Prince of Wales Private Hospital, Mater Hospital, Royal North Shore Hospital and North Shore Private Hospital. The recruitment of participants into the study to date has been slow, and it is hoped that the planned expansion of the study will allow a greater population base from which to recruit and hopefully help us to find answers sooner.

The study recruits stillbirths \geq 32 weeks gestation, which were not associated with any known lethal or chromosomal congenital abnormality. We are recruiting those babies that are stillborn later in pregnancy as these babies are more likely to not have a cause identified for their death despite investigations. Those involved

in the study have comprehensive investigations performed as recommended from current guidelines plus some more detailed tests for possible viral infection. We also conduct an interview with the family to document details regarding health, pregnancy and delivery. The same interview and investigations are performed on control families and babies expected to deliver at the same time. It is hoped that the study will provide further knowledge into unexplained stillbirths and therefore potentially influence the prevention of stillbirth.

*Elizabeth Headley
Associate Researcher
The Stillbirth Study*

ICAP Charity Day 2007

ICAP, the world's premier voice and electronic inter-dealer broker, held its 15th global annual Charity Day on Wednesday 12th December 2007. The day was a huge success with more than £9.2 million raised, which will be donated to a selection of charities around the world, including the Stillbirth Foundation.

The Stillbirth Foundation is very fortunate to have received \$50,000 from ICAP and we are honoured to have been included in this event with the funds received going toward much needed research and public awareness for our cause.

The Stillbirth Foundation would like to sincerely thank ICAP for the generous donation and is also very grateful to Rachel Friend and Melinda Schneider for giving up their time to represent us on the day.



ICAP Trading Floor during the day, pictured at left from left: Colin Gibert - Director Fixed Interest ICAP Australia, Rachel Friend representing the Stillbirth Foundation, Hugh Gallagher - Managing Director ICAP Australia, Melinda Hickin of the Stillbirth Foundation Committee.

The Stormanston House Group

The Mater Hospital conducts the Stormanston House Group for mothers and fathers who have lost a baby. This group meets in order to give parents an opportunity to meet with others who have also experienced the shock, disbelief and deep sadness that accompanies the death of a baby. The understanding, encouragement and friendship of others who understand and accept the confusing and often conflicting emotions that follow the death of a baby can be a source of reassurance and comfort.

The group is facilitated by Belinda Power, a women's health social worker, and Deborah de Wilde, a midwife and social worker. Belinda and Deb provide a safe and nurturing environment in which parents can receive support whilst reflecting on the experience and aftermath of their baby's life and death.

Meetings are held on a monthly basis at Stormanston House, 27 McLaren Street, North Sydney. There is no charge for attending and all people are welcome irrespective of where or when their baby died. Please contact Deb or Belinda before attending the group for the first time, if you have any questions or would like to talk about what happens at the group. Belinda can be contacted at belinda_power@bigpond.com.au or Deb at peterbarr@bigpond.com. They will email or phone you back with all the information on how to get to the group, where to park and what to expect. The next few meetings for 2008 are as listed:

- Friday 7th March 10.30am -12.30pm
- Friday 11th April 10.30am -12.30pm
- Friday 9th May 10.30am - 12.30pm
- Friday 6th June 10.30am - 12.30pm



Beanies for Bubbies



On 6th July 2005, Taylor Louise Clark (pictured on page 1 of this newsletter) was born still at 37 weeks. We had found out the day before that our little one had died in-utero, we were in shock. We packed our hospital bag in a state of numbness, and went to the hospital. It was our first child, and the drive to the hospital should have been a happy and exciting occasion.

We expected the worst in regards to what she would look like, we really had no idea. However, she was beautiful, and there was nothing for us to have worried about. However, her little head was very misshapen. The midwives needed to take Taylor away and clean her up, and when she came back to us, she was dressed in the clothes, and bunny rug we brought with us, however we didn't bring a beanie for her head. It was the last thing we would have thought of. Fortunately the hospital had a knitted

beanie that they put on her head. We didn't think twice about it, where it had come from, who might have donated it. We were so wrapped up in our grief, and understandably so.

Two years later, my husband and I gave birth to another beautiful girl, Hunter Jade Clark.

During her first few days in the hospital, Hunter was taken away by the midwives to have something checked, when she came back to us, she had a knitted Vest on her head. Yes, I did say a vest, it wasn't a big deal, quite funny actually.

However, over time I started thinking about that incident with Hunter, and then started to think about Taylor. How awful would it have been to have a stillborn baby come back with a vest on her head? Or no hat all?

It's not the hospital's responsibility, but we do rely on the midwives, and

we are grateful for their thoughtfulness. But what happens when the donations of beanies aren't there?

It really made me realise how important the donation of a beanie is for these little bubbies.

It gave me a greater appreciation of the kind gesture of a stranger, who may not even realise how important their gift was. Or may be they do.

So I have decided to knit little "beanies for bubbies" and donate them to the hospitals throughout the country, and would really love some help. It's a small gesture, but one that I know is appreciated. My husband & I certainly did. If you'd like to get on board and knit some beanies, I'd love to hear from you. Please contact me by email at beanies4bubbies@gmail.com.

Lee Clark

Zoe Taylor, a journalist with the Daily Telegraph, is researching a book on all types of pregnancy loss and is looking for people to share their stories. Zoe has been a health writer for over ten years and is a compassionate and insightful person who readily understands and interprets the emotions of others. Zoe has personally experienced pregnancy loss, which positions her as the ideal author of such a book which will explain in simple terms all types of pregnancy loss whilst offering support and insight from real stories.

If you wish to be involved or would like more information to allow you to make a decision, please contact Zoe by email at pregnancyloss@mac.com.



2008 international
stillbirth conference



World Health
Organization

The International Stillbirth Alliance and the World Health Organization are pleased to announce the 2008 International Stillbirth Conference in Oslo, Norway on November 5 - 7, hosted by the Norwegian Society of Perinatal Medicine.

The 2008 International Stillbirth Conference's key topics will be:

- Developing countries and social inequities - policies and programs for effective prevention of stillbirths
- The challenge of fetal growth restriction - the epidemiology, causes and management to prevent deaths
- Excellence of care: prevention & management - the best evidence for management of pregnancies and stillbirths

Go to www.stillbirthalliance.org/conference/2008/ to register your interest or to learn more about the Conference.





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Are you on the Stillbirth Foundation mailing list?

If you would like to receive this newsletter electronically or are keen to be involved in any of our fundraising ventures or to be notified of any news that we may have please send your contact details to: info@stillbirthfoundation.org.au or phone 0419 995 464.



Welcome to Jay Laga'aia

The Stillbirth Foundation is thrilled to announce that Jay Laga'aia has joined the Stillbirth Foundation as a Patron. Stillbirth is generally viewed as too sad a topic to discuss and we are incredibly fortunate that Jay believes it is time that attention is given to stillbirth.

Jay knows that he is fortunate to have seven children and to have never suffered a stillbirth, though his wife endured three miscarriages.

He agrees that often parents who've lost a baby this way are spurned within their community because people don't know what to say, so they choose to say nothing at all.

He says being a father of seven children means he has huge empathy for families affected by stillbirth. In fact his wife's best friend lost a baby just two weeks before Jay's second-eldest son (now nine) was born.

'My wife Sandy went to the hospital with her girlfriend to dress the baby, and all the doctor could say to comfort her was: "I am sorry, but these things happen."

"Our friend's gone on to have two girls, but I know she can't look at my nine-year-old without wondering about her own son, what he'd look like and be doing now. It's had a lasting effect—not just on Sandy but on me as well,' Jay explains.

Jay joins our other Patrons, Deborah Thomas and Melinda Schneider, as ambassadors for the stillbirth cause. We are also thrilled that Jay will be our MC at our Little Feet Taking Big Steps Ball 2008. Please come to the night and personally thank Jay for his kind support of the stillbirth cause!

Emma Kirkwood & Rachel Friend



Jay Laga'aia, pictured above, at the 2007 Little Feet Taking Big Steps Ball at which he was Guest Speaker.

www.stillbirthfoundation.org.au



CHIPPENDALE

A special thank you is extended once again to Chippendale Printing of Concord West for their generous and kind support of the Stillbirth Foundation through printing all our material, including this newsletter — we are incredibly grateful!

The Stillbirth Foundation operates to ultimately reduce the incidence of stillbirth in Australia.

To achieve this goal, the Stillbirth Foundation works with three main aims, to:
increase public awareness of stillbirth, and the effects it has on women and their families;
support hospital bereavement services;
and most importantly, to fund and encourage research into stillbirth.

