



stillbirth
FOUNDATION INC.

little feet taking big steps...to reduce stillbirth

August/September 2005

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Welcome to Stillbirth Foundation

We have the pleasure of introducing you to the new identity of the Little Feet Foundation as **Stillbirth Foundation**.

Stillbirth Foundation has retained Little Feet's charming brand image with the footprints and our tag-line of "Little feet taking big steps... to reduce stillbirth".

While the name change was a legal requirement, to avoid confusion with another pregnancy-related charity, the goals and aims of Stillbirth Foundation have not changed and the new name gives us even greater opportunity to achieve these. It allows for immediate and obvious public awareness of stillbirth, which remains one of our aims. In addition, it provides us with a clearer corporate image and exciting opportunities.

Stillbirth Foundation represents all those families who have been affected by a stillbirth, whether from a known or unknown

cause, at any gestation from 20 weeks.

However, while our focus is stillbirth, the loss of a baby at any time during a pregnancy or the neonate period is a traumatic experience. It is hoped that the Stillbirth Foundation funded research will have positive implications for an understanding of other forms of reproductive loss, such as miscarriage and neonatal death, as well as appropriate means for providing all families with the information and ongoing emotional support required.

The balloon at right shows how much money has already been raised, the other balloon shows our first year goal of \$100,000. It's exciting that we are already one-tenth of the way there—thank you for your support! Please refer to page 4 for details of our upcoming fundraising events, to which we would love to welcome you!



Medical Advisors

Peter Barr
OAM, MBBS, PhD, FRACP

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

Deborah de Wilde
OAM, BSW, RGN, CM

Research is the Key—Some Facts

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, in 2003 there were 1288 fetal deaths (stillbirths) and 732 neonatal deaths (in the first 28 days of life). Compared to the previous year, **the stillbirth rate increased by 3.9%**, while the number of neonatal deaths decreased by 6.0%.

The graph below shows the change in both stillbirth and neonatal deaths over the past 10 years. The perinatal curve represents the total of fetal and neonatal deaths.

A study is about to commence in Sydney, titled "To determine the risk factors for stillbirth within a diverse Australian population with a view to identifying potentially preventable factors and improving public health". We plan to provide you with a detailed examination of the study, its investigators and how the Stillbirth Foundation hopes to contribute to its success in the next newsletter!

TRENDS IN PERINATAL DEATHS



(a) Per 1,000 relevant births.



Deborah de Wilde OAM

It is long overdue, that Deborah de Wilde, Obstetrics Social Worker and an Advisor for the Stillbirth Foundation, has recently been awarded an Order of Australia Medal for her service to the community providing support to bereaved parents.

Deborah originally trained as a nurse and a midwife. Upon the completion of her midwifery training, Deborah was employed as a health worker in a women's refuge and later as a midwife at the Royal Hospital for Women. She left the Royal to work at the Royal North Shore Hospital's neonatal intensive care unit. While there, Deborah and her colleagues, Dr Peter Barr and Julie Dunsmore, developed a more humane and responsive way of caring for families experiencing the death of their baby. Along with Peter and Julie, Deborah is a co-founder of the Stillbirth and Newborn Death Support (SANDS, NSW), a support group for these families. The groundbreaking care that Peter, Julie and Deb offered families was portrayed in the award

winning documentary, "Some Babies Die". She is also with Peter the co-author of the book "Stillbirth and Newborn Death: Life and Death are the same Mysteries".

The experience of observing the manner in which birth and death was managed within a large teaching hospital, led Deborah to embark on a Social Work degree. Upon completion of this degree, Deborah worked as a social worker at the Institute of Forensic Medicine and was a co-founder of the Homicide Victims Support Group.

Deborah is currently a Consultant Obstetrics Social Worker at the Mater, North Shore Private and Prince of Wales Private Hospitals where she co-ordinates the care of families who experience miscarriage, stillbirth or the death of their baby after birth. Along with her colleague Belinda Power, Deb runs an ongoing support group for bereaved families, as well as a Pregnancy After Loss Group, a programme designed to

support couples who are newly pregnant following the death of a previous baby.

Over the years, Deborah has assisted many, many people who have lost a child in a variety of circumstances. She is known and loved by many families associated with Stillbirth Foundation. If you are one of those people who have first-hand experienced the love, genuine care and commitment to yourself and your baby you can testify to the sheer calming magic that Deb exudes. Deb is a god-send to families whose child has died, as she helps people ride the often frightening times and complex waves of emotions that accompanies the death of a baby. Deb offers practical and emotional support to those experiencing this life changing event, an event for which one's previous life experience has offered little if anything in preparation. I know there are many people who may have found their ride through the rapids that is grief rockier and perhaps more lonely had it not been for their involvement with Deb.

Mater Hospital

The Mater Hospital's Bereavement "Quiet" Room is currently being refurbished, and the Stillbirth Foundation is pleased to be able to share the costs of this room with the Mater. The Stillbirth Foundation is contributing \$7,500 to the room and the Mater will contribute the balance, proposed to be in excess of \$15,000.

This Quiet Room is on the Postnatal ward and provides space within the Hospital where families can be counselled following the death of their baby, spend time with their baby and introduce their child to other family members and friends, farewell their baby and place him or her in their casket. Within this Quiet room, families will learn that they are not alone in their grief. Resources, support services and information will be available and will provide a sense

of comfort to the grieving parents.

The room will also be available for use by people other than those whose baby has died. Parents may rest here while their baby is in the Special Care Nursery and even other families, who have not delivered at the Mater, might gain use of this room when meeting with Obstetrics Social Worker, Deb de Wilde.

The Mater Hospital is a private hospital. It operates very differently from other private hospitals, in that it is a not-for-profit organisation. The profits of the Mater Hospital entirely fund the charitable works of the Sisters of Mercy and are reinvested directly back into the community through the works of the Mercy Foundation. The Hospital supports a diverse range of needs, there are no

shareholders demanding a large profit from the Mater, instead many needs of our community are funded by the Hospital through the Sisters of Mercy and the Mercy Foundation.

You must agree the Mater Mission is unique in its service to the broader community, and we are delighted to have this opportunity to be associated with them. The Stillbirth Foundation is proud to be assisting the Hospital in the development of this Quiet Room.

We, along with the Mater Hospital, anticipate holding a small "Opening Ceremony" and would welcome anyone who would like to visit the Hospital to view the Room. We will keep you informed via this newsletter.



Professor Jonathan Morris

The Stillbirth Foundation is fortunate that Professor Jonathan Morris, although incredibly busy as detailed in his brief biography below, has agreed to be a founding Medical Advisor. Professor Morris is well studied, conducts research into stillbirth and pregnancy losses, and his compassion and kindness allows him to truly understand the traumatic experience of the death of a baby and the stresses this causes in a subsequent pregnancy. This makes him an ideal Medical Advisor for the Stillbirth Foundation.

Background

Jonathan graduated from Edinburgh University in 1985 and came to Australia in 1987. Having completed his specialist training in obstetrics and gynaecology in the West of Sydney, he embarked upon further training in the management of high risk pregnancy and became an accredited subspecialist in maternal fetal medicine in 1997. In the mid 1990's Jonathan returned to his native England and spent 4 years in Oxford where he completed a PhD investigating the role of oxidative stress in causing pre-eclampsia.

Currently Professor Morris has a public and private obstetric practice overseeing the care of those who have had problems in pregnancy.

Research Background

After completing his subspecialist training and obtaining a PhD, Jonathan joined the Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology at The Royal North Shore Hospital in 1998. In August 2003, he took up his position of Professor of Obstetrics and Gynaecology at the University of Sydney's Northern Clinical School. Since joining RNSH he has set up the Northern Sydney Maternal Fetal Medicine Unit, which offers multidisciplinary care to women with high risk pregnancy.

He jointly heads the Perinatal Research Group within the Kolling Institute at Royal North Shore Hospital. The Group has both laboratory and clinical research interests. Current projects are discovering new knowledge about miscarriage, fetal growth restriction, pre-eclampsia, preterm ruptured membranes and stillbirth.

Other activities

Professor Morris has sat on various government and non-government committees, and is currently Chairman of the High Risk Obstetric Advisory Group of the New South Wales Perinatal Services Network. He also is regularly invited to present at perinatal meetings. Professor Morris is a grant reviewer for various Australasian and International Funding Bodies and is a reviewer for national and international journals. In 2004 Professor Morris traveled, as part of a 5 member team, to Vietnam with the Hoc Mai Foundation to conduct a needs analysis with a view to implementing educational strategies to reduce the high maternal and perinatal mortality in rural parts of the country.

Jonathan is married to Kath, and they have four boys: Callum (10), Luke (8), Aled (5) and Marcus (3).

I am delighted to be involved with the Stillbirth Foundation. Amongst the grief, frustration and despair of those who have experienced loss in pregnancy or the newborn period, is a profound desire to save others the ordeal. The Stillbirth Foundation has been formed to harness that desire and has the potential to make an enormous difference to people's lives"

– Professor Jonathan Morris

Hamper Winner

We are delighted to report that the winner of the Tempus Two/Coffee School basket has been won by Julie Englund of Mosman. Julie is pictured on the front cover of this newsletter with her husband Mark and their first child, Caitlin, stillborn 5th December 2001. Julie and Mark now have two more children—Alex (2yrs) and Emily (4mths).

Mark and Julie are happy that the Stillbirth Foundation has allowed them to make a positive and valuable contribution to society in memory of their beautiful Caitlin.





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Stillbirth Foundation Aims

The Stillbirth Foundation operates to ultimately reduce the incidence of stillbirth. To achieve this goal Stillbirth Foundation has commenced with the 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

Fundraising Events and News

The first official Stillbirth Foundation event has been set as a **Lunch on Sunday 23rd October 2005** at Shores Restaurant in Mosman. At this lunch the Stillbirth Foundation will be launched and Deb de Wilde's OAM will be celebrated.

We have two guest speakers on the day, Professor Jonathan Morris and Deb de Wilde. While the theme of the lunch will be serious, it will be a fun celebratory day out with entertainment, raffles and a silent auction.

At this event we will also be starting the first of our annual **Balloons into the Sky** day. As one community, we will be releasing balloons en masse,

each in memory of a baby who has died.

You might also like to diarise the date for our first **Stillbirth Foundation Ball—Saturday 4th February 2006** at the newly refurbished Hilton Hotel. We are in the process of securing guest speakers and entertainment for the night, have some great leads and already have some wonderful prizes to auction off on the night. It's shaping up to be a night not to be missed!

If you would like to attend either event, or would like to assist in sourcing prizes please contact Leanne Ambrogio (0402 857 575 or leanne@island.net.au). We have put together a Press Kit which you might like to use to persuade family

and/or friends to donate a prize!

We have had wonderful success with the sale of **Cadbury's Chocolates** which has raised \$1,650 for the Stillbirth Foundation in the past month.

Stillbirth Foundation also has a small team preparing for the **City to Surf**. We hope that this will become an Annual Event, with more people joining us next year. In Stillbirth Foundation T-shirts, our team should achieve great exposure!

Are you on the Stillbirth Foundation mailing list?

If you would like to be involved in any of our fundraising ventures or are keen to be notified of any news that we may have please send your contact details to Emma Kirkwood at

emmakirkwood@optusnet.com.au or phone 0419 995 464

Any support you can provide is most appreciated.



HOW CAN YOU HELP THE STILLBIRTH FOUNDATION?

We need the support of our community and businesses. Any contributions would be well received to aid us in raising money so we can meet our goals. You can help us by:

Giving a tax deductible donation.

Supporting our Fundraising efforts by:

- attending our functions;
- donating prizes, venues, catering, alcohol or decorations;
- running a Fundraising Event for Stillbirth Foundation.



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