

Darren and Sonia Sheppard Speech – Trivia night March 2006

Sonia

For those that have not yet had the chance to meet Cody well this is him, our little special boy who will be turning 2 in April. Cody has a condition called Cerebellar Hypoplasia and Cerebral Palsy. He will be affected both mentally and physically and will need 24 hour care for the rest of his life. Brochures have been placed on each of the tables, and these explain more about the condition and how he will be affected. Please feel free to have a read of these and/or take them with you and we have some spare ones if you require more.

Darren

Cody's first achievement was to learn how to suck from the bottle which meant we no longer had to tube feed him, his gorgeous smile was another plus for us and brought tears to our eyes to know that he was reacting to us, and enjoying life even though he can't do what an every day 2 year old can do.

Cody has ongoing breathing, and stomach/reflux type pain problems. He has been admitted to The Canberra Hospital three times since he was born, and was admitted to the Sydney Children's Hospital at the end of last year. In December he had a seizure and was rushed to The Canberra Hospital by ambulance. We then realised how much we really did love him and how devastated we would be if we were to lose him.

Sonia

Cody has vision problems, he can not yet sit, walk independently, feed himself, crawl or talk but one thing we do know is that he loves to laugh when you can get him in the right mood. We will continue to do daily physio and speech therapy with him.

Unless you, yourself have a child with a disability you will never know the pain, and emotional strain it has on you as an individual, and as a family. There are days when we have just wanted to give up as everything seemed too hard. But then every day is a new day, some days are better than others and it's our family and friends that get us through. We would not be here today without their ongoing support and love. Thanks to all of you! However I must admit that there are some days when you guys just don't know when to stop – it was February of this year when I finally got our boys to bed, I was lying in bed as the boys were sound asleep, I heard several noises outside our bedroom window, following were several knocks at our window, seem as though Darren was out and I couldn't yell for him I was about to get the phone and call the cops. Then I hear Sonia, Sonia are you alright, are you there, Sonia are you OK – who should it be – yes you guessed it two of my bloody sisters Leanne and Deanne stalking me at all hours of the night. But you got to love them and love their support.

Darren

We know that the love we have for Cody will get us through even though we become flustered at times because Cody can't do the most simple of tasks. We know that it is a lot of hard dedicated work ahead of us. Everyone tells us that special children are sent to us for a reason we have not yet found out that reason but we do know that it shows what true love is all about, and to watch Cody love us back is a miracle in itself.

Sonia

With the help of everyone we can give Cody the best life that he can live. We are going to try our best to compensate for what he can't do, and make things to suit his needs so he can join in and do things that we as a family are doing. He will not be able to run out on a football field and score a try or go to the beach and surf the waves. But one thing we do know is that we will love him either way. We will continue to love him, support him and do the very best for him. To have a beautiful healthy boy Benjamin means so much to us, and already we have seen Ben and Cody interact.

Darren

Thanks to all of you for turning up and supporting this night it means so much to us, and to the key people of each table that rounded up friends and family to get a table together.

We are so overwhelmed at the response and the financial support that we have received from the public. Thanks to all the businesses that supported tonight and those businesses that have made donations. These businesses are on the board, please take the time to check them out and please support these businesses in the future.

A huge thanks to the Italo Club. From the word go they have been so supportive and generous. Special thanks to Steve Doyle, Luke and the bar staff.

Thanks to our nieces and nephews who are here tonight. They play such an important role in our life and Cody's life, and they always seem to rally around Cody. Its wonderful that he has so many cousins to grow up with who can be his mates.

To Tim and Leanne for coordinating the raffles and helping out with the collection of glasses.

Sonia

Thanks to Dave Preston for your ongoing support with seeking business for the printing of brochures, seeking donations from the printing industry, and your generous donation to part with your Harry Kewell jersey which is on Ebay.

To Annie for accepting the role of MC tonight you've done an awesome job, and we appreciate your offer to be MC tonight.

Lastly I cannot thank enough all the people within the Committee. Tonight could not have happened without you guys. A special thanks to Leanne Hynes for seeking donations from a huge amount of businesses. Thanks to Therese who walked the streets of Crookwell, and Dearne, Marina, Tash, Anne, Kath and Melissa for the prizes that you obtained. Thanks to everyone who helped set up today and to Kath for coordinating the catering.

Lastly there are three ladies that recently joined the committee, and have been going 100 mile an hour since they have joined. Marina, Tash, and Anne we appreciate your efforts to date. A special thanks to you three as well as Dearne for the time and effort that you guys have put into planning this night. A big thanks to Marina for bringing your previous experience with Trivia nights to this event. Your ideas and suggestions

have been more than valuable, and when we seemed to be in a panic you were the one that kept things running smoothly and reassured us that everything was on track.. This night would not have been such a success without your input.

Just to finish of you all would be aware that the walker that Cody needs is \$6,200.00. We have now met this target through ticket entry tonight, and through the generous donations from the Canberra Community since the article was published in The Canberra Times. Any money over this amount will be put towards renovating our home to make it more friendly so that Cody can be more mobile in his walker. Thanks to Paco and Isobel who recently contacted us to help coordinate our home renovations.