

LIFELINE FOR BABIES, ADOLESCENTS AND STUDENTS



Nick Catchlove

SCHOLARSHIPS AND SUPPORT

NICHOLAS CATCHLOVE SCHOLARSHIP FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS.

Dr Barry Catchlove (MBBS 1966), former President of the Medical Graduates Association (now Medical Alumni Association) and responsible several years ago for the establishment of alumni-supported scholarships for students experiencing financial hardship, has funded a new scholarship to assist international medical students. It will also target students who are in need of financial support.

The scholarship will be named in memory of his son, Nick Catchlove, a commercial pilot who was killed in a plane crash in 1994.

The problems of international students doing their medical studies in Australia has been under the microscope recently. Most of the attention has focused on the Government's refusal to guarantee them internships in NSW public hospitals, leaving them in an extremely difficult position. But they also fare badly in other areas.

"International students make a great contribution to the University and to the Faculty of Medicine, but they can have a very difficult time here," Dr Catchlove said. "They don't have the support other students have available to them. The University provides some financial assistance for students in need but international students are mostly not eligible to apply. They are not able to obtain concessions for public transport, which makes a big difference if they have to travel from the university to Westmead Hospital, for example, each day."

Dr Catchlove was President of the MGA from 2000 until 2006, when he was elected president of the University's Alumni Council. He says his most important achievement during the period was the establishment of alumni-supported scholarships for students facing financial difficulties.

SCHOLARSHIPS PROVIDE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO MEDICAL STUDENTS

The Dean's Scholarship Fund has recently made four awards worth \$5,000 each to medical students in financial difficulty. It says a great deal about economic times and the significant need for such support, that there were 66 eligible applicants for the scholarships.

The Babak Shahidi Memorial Scholarship to assist a medical student in financial need has also recently been awarded.

Our sincere thanks to the Shahidi family, and to all alumni and friends, who contribute to these scholarships.

LIFELINE FOR CHRONICALLY ILL ADOLESCENT SUPPORT GROUP

Thanks to the generous support of an anonymous donor, an important adolescent peer support program which was facing an uncertain future, is able to continue. Reaction to the donation has been overwhelming from both participants and staff.

ChiPS (Chronic Illness Peer Support Program) is an initiative for young people aged 13-18 years who have been diagnosed with a diverse range of chronic illnesses, including asthma, cystic fibrosis, diabetes, neurological and renal disorders.

The program is based in the Department of Adolescent Medicine at The Children's Hospital at Westmead. It aims to provide peer support for young people with chronic illnesses, most of whom just want to be "normal", be with their friends, become independent, but instead have to face challenges including frequent hospitalisation and enforced dependency on their parents.

At least 20% of young people have a chronic illness. It can impact on self esteem, cause social isolation and loneliness. Uncertainty about their future, difficult and time consuming treatment which often takes them away from school and their friends, can increase their sense of frustration.

The ChiPS program aims to empower the adolescent to gain control over their health status, increase self esteem, encourage a positive attitude towards living with a chronic illness and decrease social isolation and loneliness.

ChiPS is based around a five-tier model of youth participation. The tiers are: peer support (consisting of discussion groups either as a monthly program while adolescents undergo medical treatment or a weekly program as an outpatient), social activities, leadership training, group facilitation and a reference group.

Each level allows the young participants to balance illness and adolescent life while achieving specific objectives.

The program is run by a part time nurse coordinator who oversees the program, is a trained peer group leader who develops new ways to engage and support adolescents with a chronic illness.



DONATIONS & BEQUESTS

If you would like more information on making a donation or a bequest to support medicine, please contact Amanda Durack in the Faculty of Medicine Development Office on (02) 9036 7185.



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ChiPS isn't about sitting around discussing our personal grievances or sorrows, it's about deciding we want to live the life we have been given and offering each other support to accomplish this goal.

ChiPS peer leader aged 18 years

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HELP FOR BABIES AT RISK

Research into the diagnosis and prevention of hypothermia and hypoglycaemia in newborn babies has received a substantial boost with the donation of US\$120,000 for a new diagnostic tool known as the *Pea Pod*. Funds were donated by two anonymous donors.

The research, led by Professor Heather Jeffrey, aims to investigate the hypothesis that babies who do not grow properly in the womb are more likely to die from stillbirth or, once born alive, have a much greater risk of suffering from potentially life threatening hypothermia (low body temperature) or hypoglycaemia (low blood sugar).

“It is known that body composition assessment provides a much better gauge of infant growth and nutritional status than length and weight measurements. The *Pea Pod*, with the newest technology, is able to measure efficiently and non-invasively the fat levels for the first time in a newborn baby, thus alerting clinicians to potential problems,” said Heather Jeffrey, Professor of Maternal and Child Health.

“Simple measurements will be devised using the *Pea Pod* as the gold standard, which can be applied simply, cheaply and effectively in communities and health facilities in low income countries.”

Currently located within RPA Newborn Care, the *Pea Pod* will also be used within the Poche Centre for Indigenous Health as an essential diagnostic tool in the assessment of newborn Indigenous babies.

BOND FOR THE BUSH

Congratulations to MedSoc President Ineke Wever and her team for hosting *Bond for the Bush*, a fabulous night of fundraising fun in Manning Bar on 13 August. By the end of the evening \$1500 had been raised to be shared equally between the Poche Centre for Indigenous Health and The Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience (AIME).

