

paradise kids



By Deirdre Hanna and the Paradise Kids Team



paradise kids

help heal the heartache

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Established 1994 • ABN 38 890 040 788 • Reg. Charity No. 1194 • DGR • Donations over \$2 Tax Deductible

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www.paradisekids.org.au

Paradise Kids



Paradise Kids grew out of the needs of grieving children in our local Gold Coast Community. In 1993 Deirdre Hanna (pictured here with St Francis of Assisi in the Paradise Kids Labyrinth) had a dream to start a hospice on the Gold Coast. With Rev. Dr Ian Mavor and a committee of dedicated people, they formed a charitable organization and 17 years later there is now a beautiful residential 8-bed hospice purpose built to care for people at the end stage of life. Out of the hospice movement, she noticed that children grieve over the death of a parent or grandparent, sibling or close friend and there was not a lot of support for this. In 1996, after gaining a Churchill Fellowship which allowed her



to study hospices and children's hospices around the world, Deirdre founded Paradise Kids as part of the outreach of hospice. One young father of two was dying of a brain tumour in the hospice and it was heart warming to see

his two children do the group grief program and proudly carry down their gifts of art and sculptures, through the healing gardens to visit their dad. He died shortly after and the children were so grateful that they had been able to be fearless about death, talk freely about it, spend quality time with him, tell him they loved him and deal with any unfinished business. They remained involved with Paradise Kids. Christabel, (pictured here on the left) aged 12 was nominated for youth volunteer of the year through her fund raising and public speaking effort.

Paradise Kids was originally in Dunkirk Close Arundel but now thanks to generous sponsors and donors there is a custom built counselling centre in 88 Allied Drive Arundel for children to receive group support and if needed, individual grief counselling. Last year over 400 children



came to Paradise Kids. On the same property there is also a lovely Holiday House that used to be the older counselling centre. This has been magnificently renovated thanks to a generous donor and other members of the Gold Coast community. The Holiday House now offers children with life-limiting illnesses and their families a place to come to receive support, friendship and a program to help them deal with grief and loss. The program they do is similar to the 7-week grief program but is run over 5 days.



Children's Groups



Paradise Kids helps with the emotional distress of grief and loss, and offers children dealing with grief and loss individual counselling and group support. We also make visits to dying children in hospital or their homes. The program includes art, music, meditation, stress reduction techniques and counselling. Each term, four terms a year, over 90 children take part in the support groups, and each child has the individual support of a trained volunteer **"Buddy"** while taking part in the sessions. **That's a lot of children and volunteers coming through our centre.**

Paradise Kids is unique in that each child has a buddy to share their story with, and they also hear the stories told by the other children. Sometimes, for the first time, they realise they are not alone in their grief.

So there is a lot happening now 17 years after the dream began. In the Counselling Centre each term we provide two 7-week grief and loss programs for children aged 3-5, seven programs for children aged 6-11, a play therapy group for children aged 2-5 years who are in foster care and a boy's group for boys aged 8-11 years who are need of a positive male role model. One little boy who came to us was grieving deeply through the suicide of his father and it emerged after a few sessions that he thought it was because he, this little child, had done something to

upset his dad. The groups help children move through all the stages of grief: acceptance of the reality of the loss, to the deep feelings of inner pain, to healing and new life with inner life skills to sustain them in times of further change. **All the children's programs have a support group for the parents to help them with parenting techniques, supporting their children's feelings and acknowledging their feelings around the grief and loss issue. Quite a few parents who come to us have had a child die, and they receive support for this heart-ache through a parents' support group.**

Our **Boys Group** is run by our Manager of Counselling, Patrick Lynch. Paradise Kids believes that it is very important for boys to interact with good-hearted men of high integrity. It is how a boy learns to become a good man. A few good men can make a big difference in the life of a boy who has no strong and reliable male role

model in his life. The men who work with the boys come from all areas of life and include tradesmen, professionals, students as well as men who have retired.

What they do have in common is personal integrity and a commitment to supporting boys to grow into good men. The men model a form of masculinity that demonstrates strength, integrity, compassion and respect – respect for women, each other and the boys. Each week, the boys participate in activities that challenge them to grow in self control and earn trust through the power of keeping their word. They learn respect for their elders, women and each other. They learn to look you in the eye and shake hands with a firm grip. The boys love the physicality of the program. while the Mums love to see and hear their boys having such fun with men that they can trust. For many of the boys it is the highlight of their week. Both the Mums and the boys wish the program could be longer.





Holiday House and Illness Support

The Illness Support Holiday Program was established in 2009, and we have supported 20 families so far. The program is offered to families who have a child with a life limiting or terminal illness and who live in rural and remote areas of Australia and haven't got access to emotional support. We are also getting referrals from Victoria's children's hospice. (Some of the families on the waiting list have also had the added burden both financially and emotionally of being affected by the recent floods.) The Paradise Kids Illness Support Holiday Program provides intensive week-long support for chronically and terminally ill children, their siblings and parents/carers as they undertake the Grief, Loss and Illness Support Programs. This unique program aims to support the ill child and family by providing therapy to understand their feelings stemming from grief and loss; equips the family with coping mechanisms and builds their competency for the stress and trauma of living with illness; we are able to provide physical support and respite in a pressure-free and safe environment; and through the generous support of donors and sponsors we reach families who otherwise would not have access to emotional and physical support. The Illness Support Holiday Program operates for one week. The families stay with us and receive access to counselling and our **children's programs**. Each family member is supported during the week and we cater for extended family members also, i.e. Grandparents. We currently have 10 families on the waiting list seeking support through the Illness Support Holiday Program. The program receives support from the Good Guys as part of their community charity program and generous private donors sponsor a family, which costs anywhere between \$1,200 and \$3,000 depending on whether we need to pay for air fares or not.



We offer this to children aged between 4 – 14 years of age who have a life limiting or terminal illness. Some families live in rural and remote areas of Australia. The program also targets families who are undergoing the accumulated stress of coping with the traumatic situation, for example a family who relocates



to be closer to medical services but lose their support network, a family at risk of breaking apart or separated as a result of caring for a seriously ill child. Chronic illness is very stressful and one in two marriages end in divorce after the death of a child. In addition to the support program, the families also get to enjoy sharing in a Gold Coast Holiday together. We cared for a little boy last year who was only 3 and was happily running around at Christmas as normal little boys do. By August he was dead of a fast growing brain tumour. He and his family enjoyed a holiday on the Gold Coast and got support to deal with the grief and letting their child go. He died 3 weeks after the program, but the parents wrote to say how they coped so much better because of the help they had received.



Paradise Kids Brisbane

44 Newdegate Street GREENSLOPES QLD 4120
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Paradise Kids was established on the Gold Coast in 1996 and expanded its services to Brisbane in 2008. Paradise Kids, located in Greenslopes, is a place of peace and hope for Brisbane families affected by grief and loss. The Founders, Deirdre Hanna and Rev. Dr Ian Mavor OAM (pictured), wanted to create sanctuaries where children **could come to 'help heal the heartache' in their little lives** when faced with traumatic situations, such as a death of a parent or sibling or their own terminal illness. Children also suffer grief through separation or divorce as one in two families break up in Australia. Paradise Kids provides group support and individual counselling to these children and their families.



In 2008, generous sponsors provided a property for Paradise Kids to expand into Brisbane, so that more lives could be changed. As on the Gold Coast, the **children's program over runs over 7 weeks and includes a mixture of art** activities, storytelling, breath work, stress reduction exercises, meditation, guided visualisations and movement. The program is conducted in an atmosphere of peer support, with professional counsellors overseeing the program and each child supported individually by a trained volunteer (Buddy).

How Paradise Kids Provides Support

Based on the Paradise Kids Way as developed by the Gold Coast founders, the sessions are designed to help children tell their stories and express their feelings about loss in safe ways. Over seven weekly sessions, the children learn inner life skills to help them cope with grief and any further changes they might experience. Please consult the Paradise Kids website for more information on courses and training as well as counselling services.

www.paradisekidsbrisbane.org.au. Charity number 1194. ABN 38 890 040 788



Simply Divine Café

One of Deirdre's dreams has been to support Paradise Kids through a business. The new Paradise Kids Counselling Centre opened in 2009 and allowed for Simply Divine Café to be integrated as a Café and second hand bookshop open to the public. It also caters for functions, celebrations of life and provides welcome respite for relatives and friends of patients in the hospice who can wander through the healing gardens to relax with a book and a cappuccino. Kids and adults alike enjoy the ambience of the café, with its lovely outlook over parklands next door and you can have delicious snacks and meals cooked by our Café Manager, Julie Howe. The café is staffed by a wonderful team of volunteers.

The Jacaranda trees next to Paradise Kids Café always remind us of hope and the seasons of new life. Come and buy a picnic lunch and enjoy nature's greening hospitality.



Lockyer Valley Mobile Response Team 2011



Paradise Kids provides 'Healing for the Heartache,' for children, their families and the community. The entire Paradise Kids Mobile Response Team program was free for the families and sponsored by the buddies and generous donors as their gift toward Queensland's Flood Recovery in 2011. Paradise Kids Program is adaptable and mobile, and responds to crises in our community as a service given with love.



Clare College of Transformative Education

Education has always been high on the priorities of Paradise Kids and Hopewell Hospice. Co-Founder and Executive Director, Rev. Dr Ian Mavor OAM has a doctorate in Education, and is a Fellow of the Australian College of Educators. He also runs the Suicide Intervention Skills Training programs. Together, he and Deirdre Hanna have developed Clare College of Transformative Education, and draw upon the work of philosopher Ken Wilber to provide an Integral approach to education. Over the years, thousands of members of the community have been trained in Grief Counselling, Palliative Care Education, Wellness and Stress Reduction, and Integral Transformative Practice. Many trainees want to work with children, so we have over 80 volunteers trained in grief counselling working with Paradise Kids, and students from different Universities do their practical work with us. Thirty-one students are enrolled in Paradise Kids as a placement for their academic studies in 2011. Some of the trainees are also interested in becoming volunteers at the adjacent hospice or they simply want to live a more conscious, aware and integrated life about

their own or their family's grief and loss issues and have a desire for a holistic lifestyle.

Additional services at Paradise Kids Centre in Allied Drive, Arundel include individual counselling, Sandplay therapy, Child Parent Relationship Training, Explorations in Spirituality and Worship, Family Tree of Life Training, Suicide Intervention Courses, and Stress Reduction Courses.





Paradise Kids evolved out a need in to the community and has, like ripples in a pond, spread out in the wider world. We now have a Paradise Kids branch in Brisbane.

We also support the work of Father Themistocles Adamopoulos in Sierra Leone, Africa through ParadiseKids4Africa

Paradise Kids for Africa

“Australia's answer to Mother Teresa”

That is how Australia's Channel 9 describes the Very Reverend Father Dr Themistocles Adamopoulos. Father Themistocles (as he is known) is a remarkable human being who has dedicated his life to helping the less fortunate people in Africa. However Father Themistocles' story is amazing. He was once a rock star who supported the Rolling Stones on their tour of Australia and then left it all behind when he decided his life's path was to serve the poor and

oppressed in one of the poorest countries of the world, Sierra Leone.

Father Themistocles was born to Greek parents in Alexandria, Egypt, in 1945. The family immigrated to Melbourne in 1956. Father Themistocles studied at Williamstown High School, where he won a scholarship to Melbourne University, studying Commerce. Father Themistocles deferred his studies for two years to follow his passion for music. As a member of the rock group "The Flies" {Australia's answer to the Beatles}, Father Themistocles supported the biggest names in show business.

After returning to University to study Arts, he became very interested in philosophy, political science, and history. At the age of 22, Themistocles became a tutor at Melbourne University. Joining the Greek Orthodox Church in the 1970's he then achieved a Masters of Education at Melbourne University before studying overseas at some of the great academic centres in the world, including Harvard, Princeton and Brown Universities.

Returning to Australia, Themistocles became one of the founding lecturers at St Andrew's Greek Orthodox Theological College in Sydney in 1986. It was at this time that Father Themistocles, who had always admired the work of Mother Teresa, decided to follow a similar journey and dedicate his life to the less fortunate. Themistocles felt that he could do the most good in Africa and moved to Kenya. Understanding the importance of education, Themistocles began, in partnership with the Orthodox Church, building schools, providing free education, food and clothing to the people in the slum areas of Kenya. Nairobi has a population of four million people, one million live in a slum called Kibera, so the need is immeasurable. Father Themistocles also built Colleges to teach people about business and information technology, thus helping to break the cycle of poverty.

After many years of changing the lives of those who needed help the most, Father Themistocles was invited by the Orthodox Church to choose another location. At this time the BBC called Sierra Leone the poorest country in the world. The country had been totally devastated by one of the longest Civil Wars in West African history {eleven years}, so Father Themistocles felt that this was the place he would relocate to, as they needed help the most. Themistocles' words were "we will start at the bottom and work our way up" This was the time that Paradise Kids decided to support Father Themistocles and his work in Africa. We are very proud of the enormous difference he has made in the world, and look forward to working with Father Themistocles into the future. Father Themistocles has said that if the work of the churches was removed from Africa then within 3 weeks perhaps 80 million people would be dead. So far, he has: provided the largest library in West Africa, built a village and a school for the disabled, provided sewing machines and sewing lessons to women in gaol.



The Paradise Kids Team

Front: Theresa McEwan, Illness Support Coordinator; Mireille Allan, Program Coordinator and Lecturer; Deirdre Hanna, Founder and President; Grace Merrick, Holiday House Carer and Pastoral Care in the Hospice; Back: Iva Brewis, Holiday House Carer; Sue Harrison, Receptionist, Intake and Volunteer Coordinator; Rev. Dr Ian Mavor OAM, Executive Director and Co-Founder; Patrick Lynch, Counselling Manager and Lecturer; Natasha Waters, Finance Manager; Brodie Sheiles, Development Manager.

Above Right: **Patrick Lynch, Manager. Counselling Services** making a 'talking stick' for the boys group.

Bottom Right: Brodie Sheiles, Development Manager and Event Coordinator at the Cocktails and Couture Event. Paradise Kids is very proud of our wonderful staff, volunteers and children. Together we are making the world a better place.



ANGELS FOR PARADISE KIDS

Paradise Kids are now offering a unique opportunity to individuals who would like to donate regularly and become an **ANGEL FOR PARADISE KIDS**. You can purchase an annual supporters pack for \$120 with all proceeds going directly to our organisation. Angels will receive copies of the bi-annual Hopewell Herald, special Angels bi-monthly e-newsletters which include discounts and offers only available to Angels for Paradise Kids and each year all Angels will go in the draw to win a fantastic prize!
Help support Paradise Kids today.

Cost: \$120 / year OR \$10 / month
Registration: Contact Community Development Manager, Brodie Sheiles on (07) 5574 6853 OR Email: bsheiles@paradisekids.org.au

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Mireille Allan, Program Coordinator Grief & Loss Support Groups
Theresa McEwan, Illness Support Coordinator & Holiday House Coordinator
Dr Pamela Chalip, Children's Counsellor
Sue Harrison, Receptionist & Support Group Intake Coordinator

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Hopewell Hospice & Paradise Kids Donation Form June 2011

Registered Charity 1194—Donations over \$2.00 are Tax Deductible

Please find enclosed a donation to support: Hopewell Hospice Paradise Kids Where most needed

Donation Amount: \$ _____ Cash Credit Card Cheque

Card type: Visa MasterCard AMEX Signature: _____

Card number: _____ Expiry Date: [/]

CVV /CCV number found on the back of card:

Name on card: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

_____ Postcode: _____

Email: _____

Credit card and cheque donations can be mailed to PO BOX 1290 Runaway Bay QLD 4216
Cash donations can be made by visiting Hopewell and Paradise Kids at 88 Allied Drive, Arundel QLD 4214