

## A new world for Richard

For the first time in his life, nine-year-old Richard Zhao, who is living with cerebral palsy is able to push himself around in a wheelchair.

The Zhao family, who live in Beijing, have been unable to source a suitable wheelchair for Richard due to the lack of resources in China.

Richard has relied upon his parents his whole life to help him move around and is dependent upon a family member to push him at all times.

"When Richard was young we would carry him everywhere, however, as he got bigger and heavier we would push him around in a stroller," Mrs Zhao said.

The stroller which Richard sits in does not provide any postural support and contributes to promoting poor posture.

Mandy Hanna, Northcott Disability Services Occupational Therapist, said Richard could suffer from long-term health problems if he was not fitted for a wheelchair which could support him properly.

"The stroller causes Richard to hunch over and is causing him very bad posture," she said. "If Richard continues using this stroller he may develop spinal deformities and health complications in the longer-term due to the compression of his organs."

Richard's mother came to Australia in January 2009 to study economics for a year. Mrs Zhao was later joined by her son and husband in June.

Diana Qian, the Executive Director of Multicultural Disability Advocacy Association of NSW heard of Richard's situation and contacted Northcott Disability Services to request assistance in sourcing a suitable wheelchair and appropriate seating for him.

Northcott was touched by the Zhao family's situation and donated a wheelchair for Richard. Northcott's Occupational Therapist Mandy met with Richard and his family to fit a suitable wheelchair, which will provide good support, allow room for growth in the future and provide him with a setup that will enable him to push himself independently and engage the world around him.

"I was able to fit Richard into a wheelchair which will support his back. The wheelchair also allows for some growth, so that he can use it for several years to come," Mandy said. "Richard was able to push himself around for the very first time. He was ecstatic, it was quite emotional to see and the big smile on his face was very moving."



Richard's joy is uncontainable as he sits in his new chair for the first time.

# Message from the CEO

It is wonderful to be able to write in the last edition of *Northcott News* for 2009 after such an exciting year for Northcott, our clients, our staff and our supporters.

We have celebrated our 80th birthday this year in style, with lots of fun and laughter. However, the most important aspect of the celebrations for me has been the opportunity to reconnect with so many friends of Northcott, who have been able to share their stories.

Some highlights have been:

- The launch of our Client and Celebrity Ambassadors for the year. These generous people have given their time and their energy to promote Northcott in many ways and on many occasions. I feel honoured to have met them. Thank you Ingrid, Jacqui, Tiffanie, Diana, Cindy, Mike, Joel, Alex, Susie, Jayme, Peter and Stephen.
- The Gala Dinner in October, where we launched a fundraising appeal for research, and were so ably assisted by Jo Ragen and a trio of inspirational clients – Emily, Wendy and Julie, who helped the guests understand the difference research can make to the lives of people with disabilities.
- The launch of many new initiatives for Northcott, such as our Early Childhood Autism Service, and the opening of offices in new areas of New South Wales.
- The amazing contribution made this year by our Directors and our staff in putting in the extra time

and effort needed to organise celebrations and events in addition to their normal heavy working loads. And all done with good grace and cheerfulness!



Northcott is in good shape for 2010, which I hope will be a year of growth and change, as we strive to ensure the services we offer each client are those needed to help them realise their goals and achieve their dreams.

At the same time, I am delighted that the Federal Government has launched a Productivity Commission Inquiry into a national disability insurance scheme. Such a scheme will be a vital step in the journey to achieve real social inclusion for people with disabilities in our society.

May each of you have a happy and safe Christmas and a bright and joyful New Year.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Kerry Stubbs'. The signature is fluid and cursive.

Kerry Stubbs  
CEO

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## Here's to you!

Northcott would like to acknowledge and thank the following supporters who have donated or raised funds for us in the past few months: The Bluesand Foundation for \$15,000; Bruce & Joy Reid Foundation for \$5,000; Liamgrove Foundation Pty Ltd for \$5,000 and Collier Charitable Fund for \$15,000 to Northcott's Early Childhood Autism Service.

Energy Australia Employee Children Appeal also provided \$12,000 to Northcott's Paediatric and Spina Bifida Services; Baxter Health Care for \$16,000 to Computer Assistive Technology Services; and Sydney Water for \$10,000 to fund respite camps. Elders Real Estate, Dubbo raised \$10,000 from their Real Estate Golf Charity Day and Auction, and Ambition raised \$2,000 from their Trivia night.

A big thank you also to Holla Advertising for their support in developing the concepts for Northcott's 80th Anniversary advertising campaign this year and coordinating the campaign. The campaign features six-year-old Northcott client Hayley Sparkl and focuses on the support Northcott provides to encourage an inclusive society. Bruce Stephens and Associates have generously produced the television commercial as part of this campaign and must be acknowledged for their tireless work.

At Northcott's recent 80th Anniversary Gala Dinner event, Peter Flynn developed the powerful video emotive that was played at the fundraising dinner and for that, we thank you and last but not least, all the attendees and supporters from the night.

# Carers count

Ingrid Kelly is the full-time carer and parent to her son Jake, who is 11 years old and not only lives with autism, but also cerebral palsy, vision impairment and a rare brain abnormality.

As a single mother, looking after Jake as well as her daughter Jessie, Ingrid has faced some very trying times. For Ingrid, Jake's autism is the hardest to manage, due to the challenging behaviours that Jake exhibits.

"Jake's screaming and self-harming behaviours isolated us from other families over time," Ingrid said. Not only did the invitations to events and parties stop, but friends and acquaintances stopped calling in to see us. Even mundane things like weekly grocery shopping became impossible. We needed help to change this situation because my children deserved a better life than this."

Ingrid found what she calls her saving grace in Northcott Intensive Family Support Worker, Billie Preston. With the support of Billie, available to Ingrid 24 hours a day, seven days a week, Ingrid and her family's whole life changed, empowering Ingrid to be the loving mother she is and enabling Jake to achieve his very best.

"When you care for the carers you create an environment that helps a person with a disability to flourish." Ingrid said.

"I am glad Northcott focuses on the family as a whole and not just the person living with a disability. The holistic family approach sets Northcott apart from other organisations."

**To find out more information on Northcott's services which supports carers contact 1800 506 071 or visit [northcott.com.au](http://northcott.com.au)**



*[L to R] Ingrid Kelly with son Jake and daughter Jessie.*

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## A night to establish research

To celebrate 80 years of building an inclusive society for people living with disabilities and raise funds for a new research initiative, Northcott Disability Services held an 80th Anniversary Gala Ball at the Four Seasons Hotel, Sydney on Saturday, 31 October 2009.

The Gala event, superbly hosted by Channel Nine News anchor Peter Overton and comedy legend Jean Kittson, treated over 400 guests to an entertaining and inspiring night.

Ten-year old Julie Charlton, 18-year-old Emily Dash and 65-year-old Wendy Turner, who are all supported by Northcott, spoke about their daily challenges and needs, their numerous abilities and aspirations to a room that generously opened their hearts and purses.

The evening raised over \$150,000 to support research projects and initiatives that aim to improve the day-to-day lives of children and adults with disabilities.

"The Gala Ball has certainly allowed us to establish a founding base to develop Northcott's exciting new research initiative and to all our supporters, we thank you for your continued support," said Northcott CEO, Ms Stubbs.

Special recognition needs to go to Platinum sponsor Anchorage Capital Partners, Gold sponsors Raine and Horne Commercial Parramatta, Six Senses Resort and Spas, Jardine Lloyd Thompson, Donor partners Baxter Health Care and Beverage Partners The Beer Shed and Guy Stein from Robert Stein Winery and Vineyard.



*[L to R] Emily Dash speaks at Gala Ball with partner.*

# Growth and expansion

Members, supporters, sponsors, clients and staff gathered at Northcott Disability Services' central office in North Parramatta on Wednesday 4 November 2009 for Northcott's 79th Annual General Meeting (AGM).

The AGM highlighted the significant growth and expansion that Northcott has witnessed over the past 12 months.

In the last financial year, Northcott has opened a new office in Moree, increased client numbers and the number of programs the organisation provides to support children and adults with disabilities. Direct client numbers increased from 2,610 in 2007/2008 to 3,316 in 2008/2009, an increase of 27%. Of the overall increase in programs, 57% has been in regional centres and 42% in metropolitan locations, with more than 100 extra staff employed to deliver both expanded and new services.

"We are grateful to all those members of the Northcott family who engage with us in helping achieve our vision of building an inclusive society, and whose generosity and commitment make a powerful difference to the lives of so many. To our supporters, donors and friends we say thank you," said Northcott CEO, Ms Stubbs.

## Then & Now

**Then:** The first school for children with a disability was run by Northcott in 1930. Officially renamed the Northcott School for Crippled Children, the early schools ensured that children with a disability enjoyed a basic right – an education.

The closure of the Northcott School in 1989 reflected a trend towards inclusion and integration into local schools.

**Now:** Today, Northcott offers a wide range of programs that help support the child within school, as well as programs that help children with a disability make the big transition from home and pre-school to mainstream school.

Northcott works with the child, the family and teachers offering speech pathology, occupational therapy, physiotherapy as well as positive behaviour

## In The Hot Seat... *with Jacqui Facaris*

Jacqui and the Facaris family have received support from Northcott since Jacqui was one and a half years of age.

Jacqui lives with a very rare disability called Metatropic Skeletal Dysplasia, a genetic disability resulting in short stature and curvature of the spine.

Jacqui has been a wonderful client ambassador for Northcott's 80th year, speaking at events and to the media. Keep an eye out in the March Edition of Dolly Magazine for an article on Jacqui.

**My most treasured possession is...** my teddy bear

**Hero/Idol...** my mum

**Worst habit...** biting my nails

**My dream...** to become a reporter in a newspaper or magazine

**I avoid...** nothing. There is nothing worth avoiding



intervention services to best equip the child with the skills they need to attend a mainstream school.

**For more information on Northcott's Therapy Transition Program or Early Childhood Support programs please contact 1800 818 286 or [northcott.com.au](http://northcott.com.au)**



*Children playing at the former Northcott School.*

# Through the Lens...

Northcott held a family fun day for clients and staff members from metropolitan Sydney to celebrate together our 80th birthday. The birthday party included a petting zoo, clowns, face painting and banana cake.

To celebrate International Day of People with Disability Northcott partnered with Parramatta City Council and transformed the Town Mall with fun interactive activities and entertainment to be enjoyed by all ages and all abilities.



[L to R] Hayley Sparkl with balloon animal.



[L to R] Sisters Katarina and Maxine Barker.



[L to R] Genevieve Buckingham joins in the celebrations for Northcott's 80th year.



[L to R] Maria Stavrinou takes part in art and craft.



[L to R] Rosemary Lazar plays accessible volleyball.



[L to R] Parramatta Eels player Tim Robinson, Andrew Waite and Eels Kris Keating.

# Upcoming Events

## Walk With Me

Ability First Australia and Northcott Disability Services will host our inaugural event 'Walk with Me'. The event will bring people of all abilities together to walk along a pre-determined route, having fun, doing something healthy and raising awareness and much needed funds as they go!

Money raised during this event will be channelled towards respite, in its many forms.

**What:** Walk With Me

**Date:** Sunday, 2 May 2010

**Venue:** Starting from King's School North Parramatta

**To register or for more information:** Michael Johnson on (02) 9890 0127 or [michael.johnson@northcott.com.au](mailto:michael.johnson@northcott.com.au)



**northcott**  
disability services

**Interested in attending the next cricket lunch?**  
**Contact:**  
[michael.johnson@northcott.com.au](mailto:michael.johnson@northcott.com.au)  
or 02 9890 0127

**Northcott's 14th Annual Cricket Legends Lunch**  
Friday, 26 February 2010

Acknowledgement needs to go to all our supporters who donated prizes and their time for Northcott's 80th Anniversary Gala Dinner, without their help we would not have exceeded our fundraising goal.

The Sydney Swans  
Australian Rugby Union  
Axel Mano  
Anglo Australian Motor Sports  
Down under Jet  
Camilla Franks  
Andrea Cainero  
Graham Austin OAM  
Lynette Gould  
Peter Griffen  
Nafisa Naomi  
Bernd Heinrich  
Mimi Jaksic-Berger  
Sydney Tower and Oz Trek  
Harlequin Publishing  
Integra Finance  
Flight Experience Darling Harbour  
Stuart Alexander

Zed n Zed Jewellery  
Clayton Utz  
Bed Bath Linen  
Captain Cook Cruises  
Thunder Motorcycle  
Asterisk photography  
Sydney Harbour Bridge Climb  
Crabtree & Evelyn  
Avon  
Coogee Bay Hotel  
The Castle Robertson  
Simone Perele French Lingerie  
Franck Provost Paris  
Bang Art  
Parramatta Eels  
MBF  
The Four Seasons Hotel  
Cricket NSW

Otto Restaurant  
Sydney Rotary  
Diageo's  
The Hour Glass  
Red Balloon  
Gap Studios  
Medina Apartments  
The Australian Chamber Orchestra  
Small Luxury Hotels  
Helping Hand Group  
Robyn Ross  
Schmooze Cafe  
Westfield's  
Emirates  
Rush Hour Boot Camp  
Bruce Stephens  
Peter Flynn