

Aside from being a well-known singer and former Australian 'King of Pop', Ronnie Burns is also the father and manager of Olympic Taekwondo Gold Medallist Lauren Burns.

Ronnie said the events of the night would take some time to sink in. "I've been in entertainment and in the public eye for many years so nothing shock me," he said. "But I think I'll be lying awake in bed tonight, just thinking about everything after this."

He said the most important part of it all is that it will enhance profile of Appin Hall and the work that is done there.

Supported by his wife Maggie, he created the Appin Hall Children's Foundation Respite Centre, which provides refuge for terminally ill, disadvantaged, abused and destitute children, and their carers. His vision is to eventually have a village that will house 200 children and six permanent staff members.

NAS is proud to be a long-time sponsor of Appin Hall and Ronnie Burns - who works tirelessly in his quest to create a safe and nurturing environment and a future for what he sees as the most precious thing on this planet - our children.

Appin Hall Children's Foundation Newsletter 2008

What an amazing 12 months it has been! A year requiring the best type of hard work and focus. It has been inspiring and rewarding. Living in these times of accelerated energies our world is transforming at such a speed, and yet, certain life skills are required to slow things down to achieve balance and a sense of calm amidst the flurry. Appin Hall is governed by a strong Board of Directors who respond to the emotional, mental and physical needs of the children in our care. Our role is to provide a sanctuary of peace and harmony where children can recover from the trauma of serious illness.

The Foundation sits on the periphery of Health and Education, and clients and User Groups benefit from a range of activities that allow children to experience wellbeing, fun awareness and knowledge of the natural world. To walk in the forest, stand by the waterfall, and feel the majestic mountains, is a healing and refreshing experience. The most common response that the kids say to us is: "thank you for doing this for me!" They know that Maggie and Ronnie Burns are the frontpeople at our centre, they are also aware of a huge team of loving people supporting this journey for them.

Everybody is valued and appreciated at Appin Hall. Children, families, large camps, carers, teachers, supporters, volunteers, donors, trades people, office and garden staff have been so amazing. Each year we sing the praises of our growing volunteer group, who, with their hearts wide open, are not afraid



to roll up their sleeves and do what ever it takes to provide the highest standard of comfort and care these children need.

Our Respite Centre diary reveals 2000 'bednights' achieved within the past 4 years. This is a huge accomplishment and continues to inspire us all – but would not have been attained without the commitment and care of these wonderful people.

In the movie 'Field of Dreams' (Kevin Costner) the message is: "if you build it - they will come". And come they do - in car and busload! And so for four years we have successfully met the needs of the passed through our door. The vision is achieved through respect, conscious awareness and willingness to nurture and grow. In Appin Hall's case, to encourage self belief, a unified vision, fun, tenacity, courage, connectedness, heartfelt defined business practice - and trusting the process of the journey; recognising that transformation is not a product of mediocrity or a sense of being lulled into submission - transformation is awakened within an open heart that is willing to know itself.

"Be the change you want to see in the world" - Mahatma Gandhi

Children and their families ...

Throughout 2008 Appin Hall offered respite to a number of children – most being on-site with their families and others on-site with the supervision of professional carers or teaching staff.

There are several Commonwealth Carers Respite Centres around Tasmania - incl. Carers Tasmania and TasCare who receive government grants for large camp excursions. These young carers carry a huge responsibility on their shoulders constantly caring for seriously ill parents and siblings.

At Appin Hall they are able to relax, play, with the safety of becoming a child again. Through a brokerage scheme, Appin Hall successfully organises cooks, kitchen hands, food & beverage, entertainment night, local attractions and workshops such as Lauren Burns (Taekwondo), Kerry Martin (Tee-shirt painting and stenciling), Scott, Alexander King (Animal Dreaming), plus rock climbing and abseiling and more.

We plan to ensure the proposed 55m x 12m Hothouse is completed mid-2009, after which we can offer children an opportunity to propagate seeds, grow fruits and vegetable, and harvest produce planted by previous visiting groups. One long-range building project will be the proposed commercial kitchen whereby children can choose cooking classes coupled with veggie garden courses. Children/ families or groups will be able to make plum puddings, bottle fruits, make bread and pies, churn butter using high quality organic produce grown on-site. Other cottage industry produce will include soap and candle making, paper and drum making etc ... all to be incl. in our arts & crafts program.



Overall we have witnessed the most courageous family circumstances that display profound family love, high levels of care, emotional challenges, philosophical resolve and an ability to go the hard yard - no matter what is thrown at them. They appear to Will themselves against daily difficulties, financial hardship and systems that make it complex to hold their own in challenging times.

Throughout 07/08 we provided support to grandparents with grandchildren, incl. one brave grandmother with 6 resilient (beautiful) grand kids. Appin Hall also provided respite to seriously ill mums with more than one dependent child – and a courageous young lad suffering epileptic seizures. This young lad was excited about jamming with Ronnie - bringing his electric guitar for his visit. So Appin Hall bought him a ‘gig’ bag and guitar lead – plus a guitar amplifier. We believe that this made his day.

Sharing quality time with these disadvantaged children, who ask for nothing on their visits, allows Appin Hall the pleasure of giving a token gift in admiration for their determination and resistance to external pressures.

Something to share...

Personally I am a big fan of ‘treasure hunting’ ...rummaging through second-hand markets, hard rubbish collections and op shops in search of items to satisfy a thirst for interesting and unique pieces. A while back I was at an op shop in Kyneton where I found a fantastic zip up wallet-sized bag. So joyous was I about finding my treasure that I continued to show my friends and felt particular pride when I would refuse a plastic bag and whip it out at the supermarket. One day I was telling my brother how wonderful it was and how I should start making them now, when our plastic bag use is out of control. That was 3 years ago now and I am proud to share that this project which has been a real love of mine, has finally come to fruition and if you’re interested in checking out my handy bag, visit:
www.loveyourplanet.com.au

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