

Wednesday 24th February 2010



Barnardos kids make a big splash with Olympic swimmer Eamon Sullivan

On Sunday, 21 February 2010, kids from Barnardos' Auburn centre were invited to participate in an UNCLE TOBYS Big Splash fundraiser at C2K Fitness Centre in Castle Hill, where they swam with Olympic swimmer, Eamon Sullivan. Eamon donated the prize money he won in Celebrity Masterchef last year to Royal Life Saving to help disadvantaged children learn to swim.

Barnardos Australia has partnered with Royal Life Saving to deliver this Swim and Survive initiative in order to highlight the importance of water safety and to give the children they care for the opportunity to receive a course of 10 swimming lessons.

"We cannot believe that our kids are going to get 10 weeks of free swimming lessons and we sincerely thank Eamon Sullivan and Royal Life Saving for their generosity," said Mary Haiek, program manager at Barnardos' Auburn centre. "These kids' families could never afford to pay for such an activity, so up until now they have never had a swimming lesson or even learnt basic water safety."

The children from Barnardos were thrilled to be part of such an exciting event, especially to receive personal swimming tips from one of Australia's elite sportsman. As well as getting to swim with an Olympian the kids from Barnardos had a go at CPR, and experienced a full range of swimming activities.

"Thousands of kids, like those that Barnardos helps, never have the opportunity to experience swimming lessons because they are considered too costly and a luxury to many families," said Eamon Sullivan. "The kids were so happy, and Royal Life Saving will continue to use the money raised through the UNCLE TOBYS Big Splash to help kids like these get the basic water safety skills they need."

Barnardos Australia, by means of a collaborative approach with other smaller welfare agencies, will continue to work with Royal Life Saving to provide similar opportunities to Australia's most vulnerable and severely disadvantaged children.

"Royal Life Saving believes that all children should have the opportunity to learn the life saving water safety skills offered by the Swim and Survive program," said Rob Bradley, CEO of Royal Life Saving. "We hope to offer this ongoing support to children from Barnardos Australia."

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For more information contact: Emma Lipscombe on 9218 2391 or email events@barnardos.org.au

Notes for editors:

Barnardos Australia is a non-government, non-denominational child welfare charity that has been helping children in need for over 120 years.

Barnardos is one of the largest children's charities in Australia, caring for children at risk of abuse and neglect. The work of Barnardos Australia focuses on the prevention of abuse, neglect and entry into care. Children of all backgrounds and cultural heritage are helped through a range of welfare programs including crisis care, family support, counselling and permanent foster care.

Our vision is that all children and young people will have caring families, in which they can grow up safely and reach their full potential supported by quality services and engaged communities.

For more information visit: www.barnardos.org.au.