

Media Release

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The Sarah Lilli Fund – a chance for disadvantaged children to live their dreams

The death of a much-loved daughter has prompted a Wellington family to set up a fund so disadvantaged children can pursue an interest or enjoy a special celebration that otherwise would be out of their reach.

Ruth and Paddy Payne have set up the Sarah Lilli Fund in memory of their middle daughter who died suddenly of a rare brain disorder three years ago, just after her tenth birthday.

“The fund is a way of remembering Sarah and celebrating her life, as well as meeting the aspirations of children who go without the opportunities she had,” says Ruth Payne. “The sorts of activities we’re talking about aren’t hugely expensive in our world but are beyond the reach of these families.”

The Sarah Lilli Fund was officially launched in Wellington in November but has already been running on a trial basis for five months. The fund has provided help to 50 children so far, in response to applications facilitated by Barnardos field workers. This has included guitar lessons, dance classes, soccer gear and subs, a school skiing trip and a special train journey.

“We will continue to donate the money that would otherwise have been spent on Sarah’s education and interests,” said Ruth, “but are now calling on others to give their support so that the fund can continue to provide many children with these opportunities.”

Sarah Alden, a Barnardos Senior Social Worker, says the fund is reaping very tangible benefits for the children involved.

“It’s a fantastic opportunity for children who have had few opportunities in their young lives. The chance to enjoy something they are interested in has been of great therapeutic value, as well as helped boost their self esteem and make them feel more able to socialise with their peers.”

The Sarah Lilli Fund is administered by Barnardos New Zealand. Those wishing to support the fund can send cheques made payable to 'Barnardos, Sarah Lilli Fund', PO Box 6434, Wellington or visit the website www.barnardos.org.nz.

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