



country**hope**

“Childhood illness

touches the lives of everyone
in country communities...”



Annual Report

2020

Country Hope Trust

www.countryhope.com.au



Contents

Message from the Chairman	Page 4
Message from the General Manager	Page 5
Our Mission, Vision and Objectives	Page 6
About Country Hope	Page 7
The Support We Provide	Page 8
The Country Hope Journey	Page 9
Life Threatening Illnesses in Australia	Page 10
Income Statistics and Administration Report	Page 12
Expense Statistics	Page 13
A Family Story: Zoe	Page 15
Family Liaison Reports – Wagga/Albury	Page 16
Family Liaison Reports - Griffith	Page 17
Fundraising and Event Report	Page 18
Board of Directors	Page 20
Staff and Patrons	Page 21



Message from the Chairman



It is with pleasure I present my Chairman's report for 2020.

What a very difficult and extremely challenging year we have had, with the dreaded and deadly Covid 19 entering the world and changing many things we do at Country Hope – including the cancellation of our yearly camp at Borambola and our very popular Country Hope Christmas party.

Although it has had a very detrimental effect on all we do – fundraising, camps, Christmas party, home visits etc, we do have some very positive signs, including 15.2% growth in revenue and a 16.6% growth in profit. A very pleasing financial result under the present economic climate.

We also have 19 new families for the year, making it over 160 families we presently support in many ways.

If it wasn't for the amazing Gavin & Tammy Gilbert's Riverina Redneck Rally raising an incredible \$430,000 plus last year, we certainly wouldn't be in such a healthy financial position and in turn would not be able to help our very needy families us much as we are presently able to do! A massive thank you to Gavin & Tammy and their team for all their hard work over many years to put the rally together. The rally is growing more popular every year and since its inception in 2017, has raised an astronomical 1.1 million dollars. Country Hope will be forever indebted to you.

I would like to thank the following organisations for their continued monetary support: Wagga Wagga Amateur Picnic Race Club; South Wagga Wagga Rotary Club (golf day); Teys (golf day); Rundles Auctions; Evolution Mines; Dejong Family; Rotary Club of West Albury and

GEO Group and the Junee jail inmates who generously rebuilt a VL Commodore into a Brock replica, which become very hot property, resulting in a significant donation on their behalf.

There were many more fundraising efforts – including the Griffith and West Wyalong fundraising committees, plus many more donors and sponsorships and we at Country Hope sincerely thank you all. During the 2020 Financial Year, we received \$6,000 in Club Grants from the Griffith area as well as \$5,000 from the Australian Department of Social Services.

I would also like to thank all of our precious and dedicated staff including: Ellie for steering the ship; Kirsty our new receptionist (we're very happy to have such a highly qualified and pleasant staff member on board); Mick our new fundraising/events co-ordinator who took over from Tom (who is now enjoying retirement) and is showing his worth and doing a tremendous job; Stina and Bev who are doing a great work as our Family Liaison Officers; Nikky and Julie our volunteers, who support us in the office. A big thank you to you all from the Board of Directors of Country Hope and myself.

Lastly, I would like to thank my fellow directors for all your time, input and dedication to Country Hope and supporting me throughout the year.

Kerry Flinn
Chairman

Message from the General Manager



2020 has been an exceptionally challenging year with the drought and devastating bushfires, swiftly followed by the COVID-19 global pandemic. Childhood illness does not happen in a bubble and these events have affected Country Hope families, who are already facing the unthinkable challenges of a child with a life-threatening illness and the journeys they must endure. COVID-19 has caused increased anxiety for families who have had a child diagnosed with cancer or a chronic life-threatening illness, as those with compromised immune systems are more at risk.

Many charities along with Country Hope, have had a significant drop in revenue this year and at the same time have had rising demands due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting economic fallout. Even in these difficult times, Country Hope continued to provide financial, emotional and practical support to many, many families in Southern NSW and Northeast VIC, with 19 new families so far, this year. Country Hope is quick to respond to the changing and increasing needs of our families who have a child with a life-threatening illness, with the aim of delivering relief...when it matters most.

I am excited about expanding our operating area as far as Dubbo this year and look forward to establishing some great relationships there in the new year.

As Country Hope embarks upon the new year, I am thrilled and excited to implement our new strategic plan, with the support and proficiency of the Board of Directors and our excellent staff members. The plan came together with the specific guidance of David Bardos, which allowed us to set out our goals and strategise how and where we want to move forward in the next 24 months.

Thank you to our wonderful staff who have excelled and adapted so efficiently in these difficult times. We continued with our work from home when the COVID-19 pandemic started. We then took turns being in the office continuing to raise community awareness of the wonderful work we do and helping our families through the enormous burden cancer and other life-threatening illnesses places on them.

This year we have implemented a new CRM which has proved to be an enormous job but will go a long way in improving the work we do, saving time and money.

We have also adopted a staff EAP program to ensure our staff are supported with the challenges their jobs may bring.

Sadly, due to COVID-19 our "Time out for Life" holiday camp and our Christmas party had to be cancelled this year. As you can imagine, the children, buddies, volunteers and staff were all very disappointed!! We hope the Christmas hampers and gifts from Santa will help in some way.

I would like to thank the amazing generosity of our supporters and stakeholders who make everything we do possible. We couldn't do what we do without you.

To our amazing children and their families, your strength, spirit, resilience and vigour moves, motivates and inspires all of us!

Ellie Webb
General Manager



OUR MISSION:

To provide emotional and financial support to county families who have a child diagnosed with cancer or a chronic life-threatening illness.



OUR VISION:

Relief – when it matters most!



OUR OBJECTIVES:

We are dedicated to developing support programs and services, in response to the needs of families as and when they arise

We recognise that childhood cancer and chronic life-threatening illnesses have a tremendous impact on an entire family

We ensure the money raised in the country stays in the country to support country children and their families

About Country Hope

Country Hope was formed in 2003, starting with an annual holiday camp for the diagnosed children and their siblings, which contributed to the extraordinarily positive impact on the lives of the children. The camp also gives the parents much needed respite.

Although the camps undoubtedly achieved great success in increasing a child's ability to cope with and recover from their illness, it was quickly identified that an annual camp was simply not enough. It came to be obvious that country families had so many more pressures and additional needs when dealing with such life altering events compared to families residing nearer to the major paediatric hospitals.

Country Hope's aim was to adequately address the very critical and specific needs of local children who had been diagnosed with cancer or a chronic life-threatening illness and their families...when it matters most.



The Support we Provide

FINANCIAL

We help with the never-ending bills like mortgages, rents, utility bills, school fees. Families are often running two households. Usually, it's mum who stays with the diagnosed child in hospital in the city, a long way from home, and dad is home with the siblings, juggling work, getting the other children off to school or care, then packing them up on weekends to travel to the city to visit mum and the diagnosed child.

EMOTIONAL

It's very hard on the entire family when a child is diagnosed with a life-threatening illness. It's very important for them to be able to speak to someone as much as possible and not bottle it up inside.

TIME OUT FOR LIFE HOLIDAY CAMP

Each year we hold a camp for not only the diagnosed children, but their siblings as well. The siblings do it tough too. All the attention is on the diagnosed child...siblings need and enjoy the camp as well. They mix with children who are going or have been through exactly what they are going through. Great friendships are formed between the children and the buddies.

TRAVEL & ACCOMMODATION

A very big cost to Country Hope. We provide fuel cards when the family is driving, and we make sure their car is road worthy to handle all the trips to treatments and appointments. We book flights when they need to fly to and from treatments and appointments. We pay for their accommodation where necessary.

HOME VISITS

We visit families in their homes, making sure they are ok and are managing with food and ensure their never-ending bills, don't mount up.

HOSPITAL VISITS

Families are separated for long periods of time, sometimes up to 12 months when a child is receiving treatment in the city hospitals. It means a lot to them to have a visit from someone from Country Hope.

FAMILY HOLIDAYS

We encourage the families to try to have a break when possible. We provide fuel, groceries and spending money so it costs the families nothing to have a holiday away from their stresses. Families rarely can afford a family holiday.



THE COUNTRY HOPE JOURNEY



DIAGNOSED

A child is diagnosed, and the families lives are turned upside down.
The whole family feels the pain.



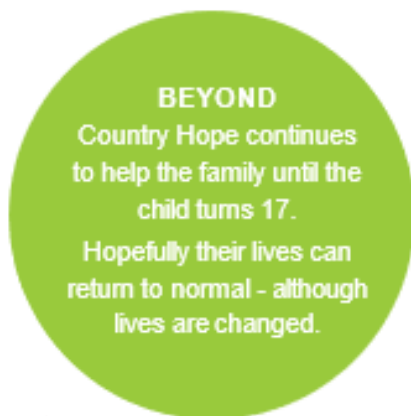
TREATMENT

Families are separated.
Feelings of guilt, anger, exhaustion.
Siblings feel left out.



LOSS

Income, jobs,
family as they knew it,
education, time,
energy & hope.
Sometimes loss of life



BEYOND

Country Hope continues to help the family until the child turns 17.
Hopefully their lives can return to normal - although lives are changed.



RELAPSE

Illness can return.
The journey starts all over again, sometimes worse than the first time.



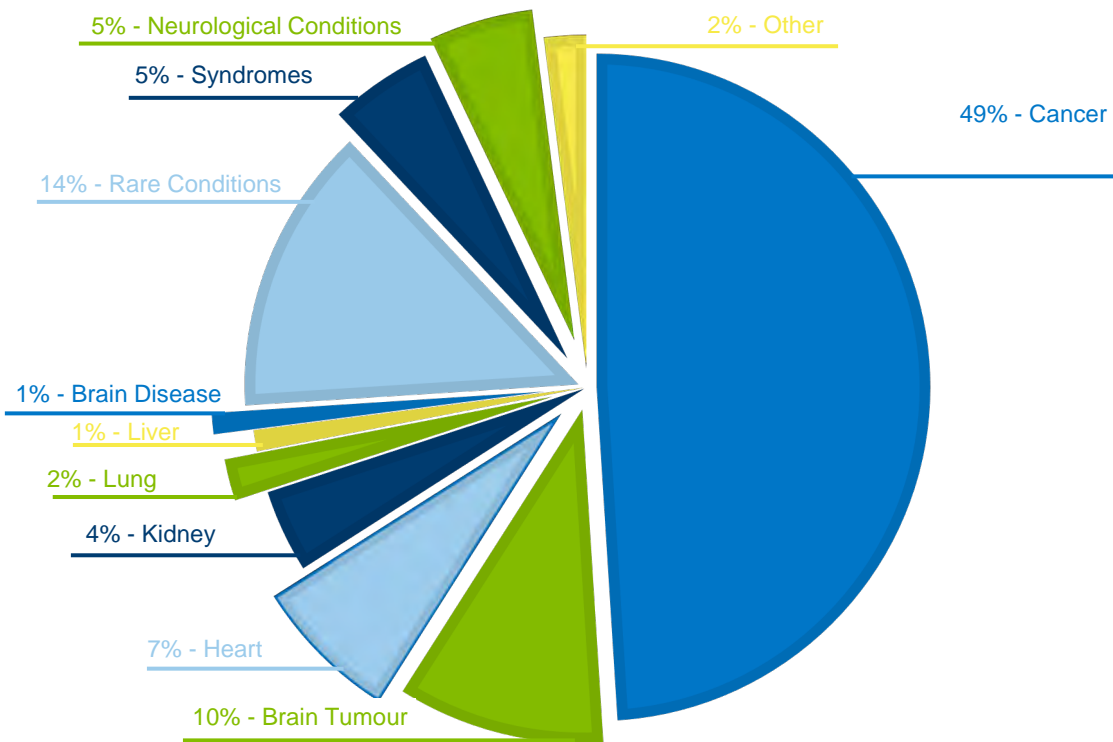
RECOVERY

Can take a long time.
Hard to get back to normal (if they ever do)



Illnesses in Australia

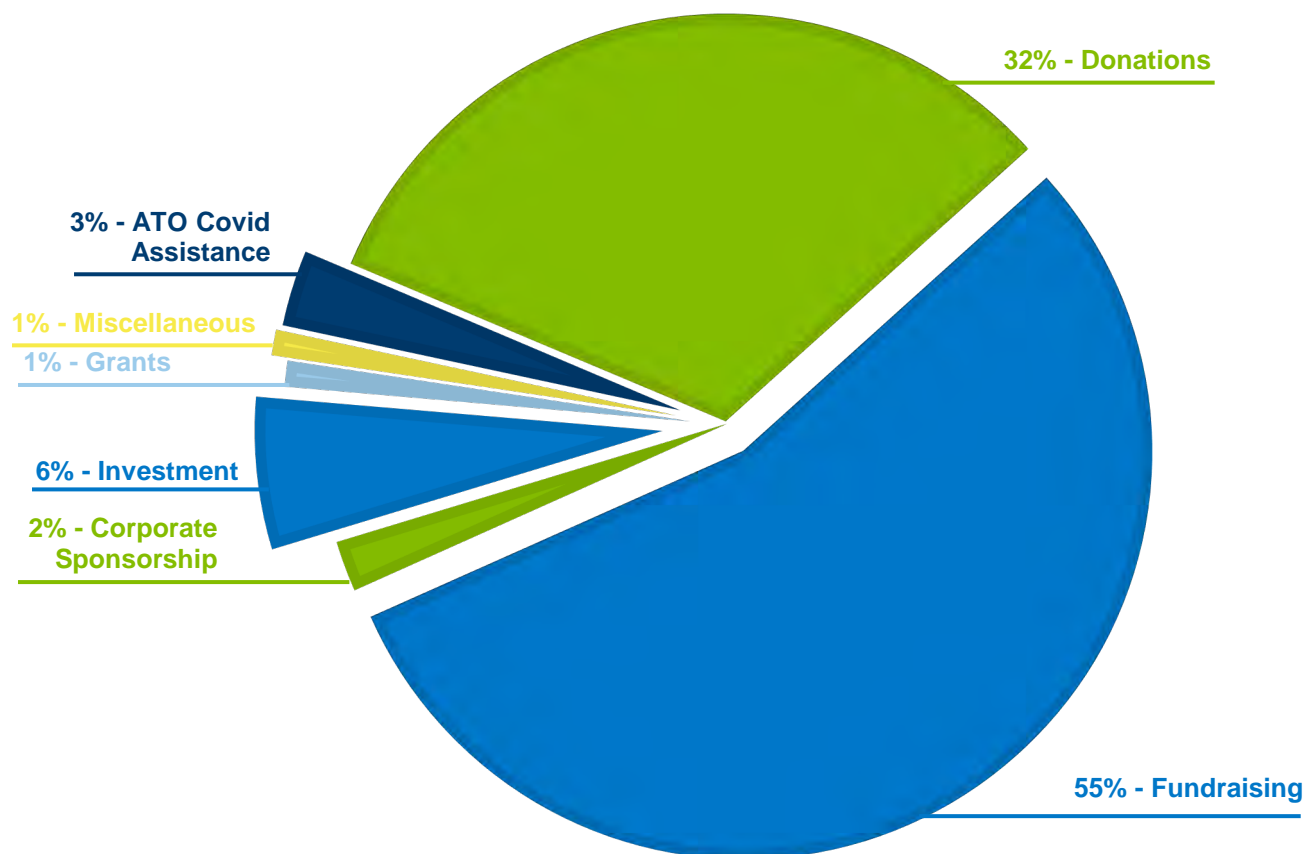
Categories of Life-Threatening Illnesses Presented over our Sixteen Year History



Category of Illness	Number of Children
Cancer	106
Brain Tumour	21
Heart	16
Kidney	8
Lung	5
Liver	2
Brain Disease	2
Rare Conditions	29
Syndromes	11
Neurological Conditions	10
Other	4
TOTAL	214



Income for the 2020 Financial Year



ADMINISTRATION:

Well in December last year, I was welcomed back into the Country Hope Family and what a 12 months it has been!

For those of you who don't know me, a lifetime ago before I had my children, I was involved in Country Hope as a volunteer. I had the tremendous honor of being a founding member of the Board back in 2003. Last year in a very serendipitous moment, I noticed the Administration position advertised and as they say, the rest is history. I feel very grateful for that moment and am absolutely delighted to be back involved with an organisation that does so much good for our community. Although I may have been absent for the last few years, the work the Board and Staff have done to ensure and grow both the financial position and the extent & diversity of support given to our families, is a true testament and an achievement that everyone involved, both past and present, should be very proud of.

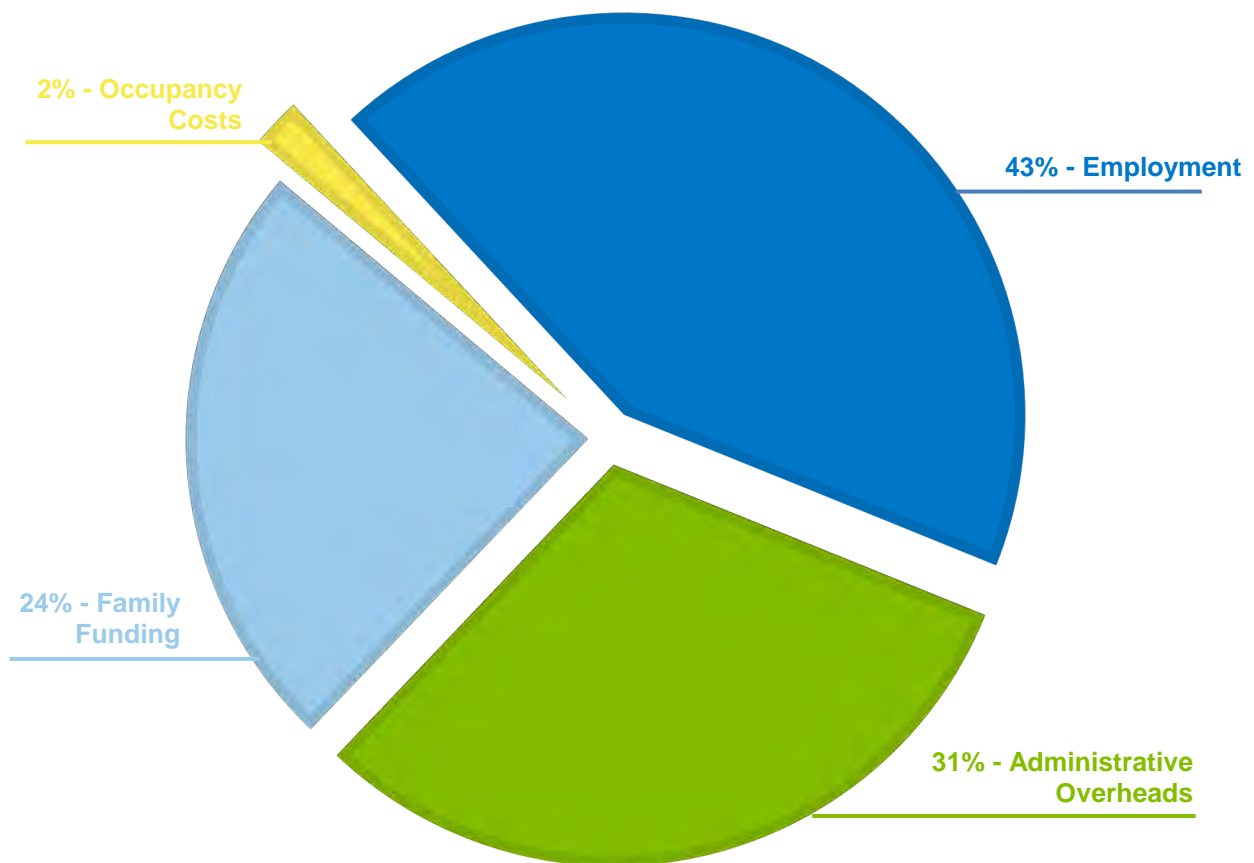
I am absolutely loving being able to support our amazing team and Board to continue to grow our organisation in a way that will benefit our families well into the future. As no doubt you are aware, Covid-19 has faced us with many challenges. I would like to say thank you to both Ellie and the Board, who allowed and enabled us to quickly diversify our working arrangements so we could safely continue to do our good work whilst maintaining the stress levels.

There have been positives from a challenging year. Many advantages can be made from taking some time to assess how we work to achieve our end goals. I am very excited to see the direction the Board and Ellie take with our Strategic Plan and I'm eager to apply our new CRM to support our goals in ensuring the overall future success of Country Hope.

Thanks team, it's great to be back.

Kirsty Cole
Administration Officer

Expenses for the 2020 Financial Year



EXPENSES	TOTAL COSTINGS
Total Administrative / Overheads	\$224,011.93
Total Family Funding	\$169,921.13
Total Occupancy Costs	\$14,450.76
Total Employment Expenses	\$309,902.65
Interest Expenses	\$853.42

Time out for "Life" Country Hope

Sadly Camp for 2020 was cancelled but here are some images of the fun had in 2019.



A FAMILY STORY: *Zoe*



2011 was a year that turned our life upside down , and the 3 years that followed.....

A roller coaster of ups and downs for us all...9 blood transfusions, 11 platelet transfusions, lungs collapsing, and too many operations to count and life-threatening infections that nearly took our beautiful daughters' life and her from us completely.

We had never taken the life or the people we had for granted ever before...but when we were faced bluntly by cancer with our daughter at the age of 5, we became even more thankful for every day we have with those we loved around us.

Those were dark, tough, roller coaster times...

Zoe and her family then...



Our circumstances were unique as I was pregnant and unable to care for my daughter physically because of the chemotherapy treatment being a danger to our unborn child, my husband had to take an immediate leave from work to be there for Zoe. It's hard to describe what life is like...day in day out, minute to minute. It's something no family should have to go through! We used to describe it as a "different planet" a planet filled with baldy, thin, sickly children fighting for their lives against their illnesses.

Nine years since diagnosis, Zoe has beaten Leukaemia and although it feels like sometimes that battle was only yesterday...it was so long ago.

Life after cancer...it takes a king while to get your bearings back on life, to try to put pieces of the puzzle back together to form some kind of NORMALITY again... there are moments and situations where your thrown back to "relive" those challenging heartbreaking times...mentally it can be a real struggle. The memories and struggles are always with you, always.

We thank Country Hope from the bottom of our heart... because they got us through those hard times and even with cancer far behind us, they still care about and support Zoe, about our family. It's what they do! They are the HOPE families like us need to get through such heartbreaking times...



...Zoe and her family now

FAMILY LIAISON REPORTS:



Wagga Wagga/Albury

This year we took a moment to pause... and think creatively.

We had a lot of plans moving into the year with new events for mums and dads, as well as for our teen children. All of that came to a halt with COVID-19. Thankfully, I was blessed to be employed during this time and having already set up a way to work remotely from Albury, I was ready to work from home. We all adapted the best we could and stayed in touch with the team to keep the morale just as uplifting as it is in person.

Our families really struggled during this time. Many of our mums who were already juggling medical appointments on top of everyday life demands, were suddenly feeling like they were drowning with added pressure of having their school aged children at home and expected to support their learning directly. Many of our families also made it clear they were not willing to risk their children's health with any home visits, despite how much they were craving a friendly face and social interactions. Even with our best efforts of being flexible, and using zoom calls, it became clear video conferencing simply was not going to work for our families. I found myself talking to mum's on loudspeaker or with one earphone in as they tended to their children's needs. It was much more challenging to assist their emotional journey with interruptions every few minutes. For our Albury/Wodonga families especially, there has been a lot of frustration with restrictions and its impact on their access to services. When students returned to school, I joined the parents in a sigh of relief.

The Country Hope name is slowly growing in the Albury/Wodonga Region with a large influx of referrals now coming from this region. As sad as it is to hear another family diagnosis, I remind myself, that is one more family who know we are in their corner, and we are here to help. The Albury Office continues to be maintained by our volunteer Julie. Families can still go to the office to collect Fuel and Coles vouchers when needed. I have missed my Albury/Wodonga Families and really looked forward to being able to visit them freely.

We were able to pull together packages for Mother's Day and Father's Day this year. The mothers were, as always, very grateful for their little parcel, but many of the dads were left quite moved by their gift. I heard reports of *'I didn't know they cared about me, no one outside my family contacts me for Father's Day'* and *'It meant a lot to me, I've put the card up on my work desk to remind me that I'm actually a decent dad'*. These were quite moving testaments to what we thought was a small, thoughtful gesture.

With our original teen program cancelled due to COVID, I was instead able to be trained by a Sydney team to run a CBT (Cognitive Behaviour Therapy) program for our teen cancer children via zoom. This was both an interesting and challenging experience with initial 1-on-1 session, followed by 6 group sessions, and then a 1-on-1 session 6 weeks after the program. When the time is right, I will organise an event they can all attend so they can meet each other in person. I will continue to work with the Sydney team in 2021 as we now adapt 'The recapture life program' to suit our non-cancer children. I very much look forward to running this program again, as well as piloting our original face-to-face program in 2021.

With the Christmas season nearly upon us, we have already started mapping out ideas of gifts for each child, to go alongside the family hampers. Regardless of how the year has been, Christmas will not be ruined. It's with that same anticipated joy that I look forward to continuing to work as part of the Country Hope team in 2021, in supporting our families through the turbulence of their medical journey.

Stina Constantine

*Family Liaison Officer –
Wagga Wagga & Albury*

FAMILY LIAISON REPORTS:



Griffith

Hello...well what a year 2020 has been for all of us with many changes to our daily routines, school & working life, family visits, sports & most importantly our health & wellbeing.

Our Country Hope families have adapted, facing the challenges of protecting their ill child & loved ones with determination & resilience.

Doctor visits to Sydney & Melbourne have changed to Telehealth, Zoom or Skype consultations where possible, to avoid travelling from home base. Some hospital treatments still went ahead, done under strict protocols, with personal protection clothing, mask's, gloves and hand sanitisers becoming the normal routine, usually followed with fourteen-day home quarantine. Families have driven or taken the train to attend these much-needed treatments as flights normally scheduled have been nonexistent making it even more stressful. Children received the utmost care from Specialists, Doctors, Nurses, Social Workers whilst in their care.

I am very proud and amazed how the children & their families have shown great courage & optimism this year has impacted on them. Some children having reached the end of treatments, some have celebrated milestones of which are so important to acknowledge, so well done.

The Griffith area has now West Wyalong children & families to support & I look forward to meeting them all before Christmas when I go to see them.

We also have new families to assist financially & emotionally, guiding them through their journey of a diagnosis with care & support.

Country Hope's 2020 "Time Out for Life" camp was also affected by Covid -19. The decision to cancel was to protect everyone involved. Buddies & Campers were encouraged to reach out to each other just to maintain those relationships, check out how they were, catch up on zoom or skype, send an email or card just to say we are thinking of you. Thank you all who did so, it's part of being in the Country Hope Family.

Fundraising in Griffith was also impacted this year, our generous supporters have recognised this & we have received donations from Rotary Clubs, Year 12 students with a "Hair Shave", a Retirement Village with a Fashion Parade. Funds also came in from grants I applied for locally from Griffith City Council & the NSW ClubGrants program.

I would like to thank our small team of volunteers who have given their time to help out this year.

I have had the pleasure of speaking to small groups about the values & mission of Country Hope this year, raising awareness of what we do in our communities for local families.

2021 is a new year & I am grateful & optimistic to continue my work with my "Country Hope Family".

Bev Devery

*Family Liaison Officer –
Griffith*



FUNDRAISING & EVENTS:

What a start!!

Bushfires and then Covid-19 since my time started here at Country Hope. As much as I wanted to hit the ground running, this did put a stall on things. It also had its benefits, enabling me to focus on doing some local media and also getting to know everyone involved with Country Hope.

The team dynamic we have here is something quite special and is something people comment about when they come in for a visit. We are all incredibly passionate about what we do and are working together with an equally passionate Board of Directors to achieve our goals.

We have managed to put together a fundraising committee for Wagga. Melanie Johnson, Ben Lesslie, Julie Debono and Leigh Ryan have already added some value to what we do at Country Hope, this value will increase as restriction lift and events can be hosted. Our next step is to put together fundraising committees in the Albury and Griffith areas. I urge those interested to get in touch.

The Riverina Car Rally is a massive part of Country Hope, we are so incredibly lucky to have our new Country Hope Patrons Tammy and Gavin Gilbert involved with our charity. Thanks just never seems enough for all the time and effort they put in for our charity.

A special thanks to all the businesses that have been involved in our events on a sponsorship or team support level, thanks for sharing our passion about what we do. The list is long when you consider the Country Hope Golf Day, Families for Families, Sponsors for Kerry's Rally Vehicle, Wagga Wagga

Takes 2 and the Hampers of Hope have been our events so far. These events have all been incredibly successful due to sponsors willing to contribute financially and we can't support our families without it.

GEO Group, TAFE, Wagga Wagga Takes 2, The TEYS golf day and Evolution Mine Charity Gibing have been amazing in their support to our charity throughout the year.

Our monster raffle is off and running. Even though times have been tough, local businesses have been very generous in donating to our charity to create a very long list of prizes. Again, it's a long list of supporters that need to know how grateful we are.

Last but not least, our donors and volunteers. Whether you donate money or time, or whether you organise a work fundraiser or shave your head (Rebecca Groat and her amazing crew). It may seem so little to you, but its massive to us. Thank you so much for thinking of us and contributing to our charity.

2021 is going to be packed full of events, fundraisers and opportunities to get involved with Country Hope. Like or follow our social media pages, get on our mailing list and if you want to help out in any way, please get in touch.

Mick Small

Fundraising & Events Co-Ordinator

Relief...
when it
matters
most



Sowing the Seeds of Hope

The Board of Directors



Kerry Flinn
Chairman



Pat Barrett
Deputy Chair / Secretary



Sally Whitley
Treasurer



Ged Madden
Director



Jen Spain
Director



Setchen Brimson
Director

Sowing the Seeds of Hope

Our Staff



Ellie Webb
**General
Manager**



Bev Devery
**Family Liaison
Officer – Griffith**



Stina Constantine
**Family Liaison Officer –
Wagga Wagga & Albury**



Kirsty Cole
Administration Officer



Mick Small
Fundraising & Events Manager

Our Patrons

Vera Entwistle
Rod Dunlop
John Studdert

Babs Donaldson
Richard Allsopp
Tammy & Gavin Gilbert

Brian & Joy Kahlefeldt
Steve Dwyer

**WAGGA WAGGA
GRIFFITH & ALBURY**

Free Call 1800 007 880

www.countryhope.com.au



A country based, family centred
support organisation for

**CHILDREN DIAGNOSED
WITH CANCER AND OTHER
CHRONIC LIFE
THREATENING ILLNESSES**



<https://www.facebook.com/countryhopeofficial/>



<https://www.instagram.com/countryhope/>