2017 programs highlights

Starlight children's foundation
2017 HIGHLIGHTS

Starlight experiences in 2017: 522,208
Visits to the Starlight Express Room: 163,372

Children visited in regional and rural hospitals: 4,568
Experiences provided by Livewire to young people in hospital: 41,076
Captain Starlights: 152

Families would recommend a Starlight Wish experience to another family: 100%
Days in remote communities: 308
Logins to livewire.org.au: 20,717

Visits by Captain Starlight to children on the ward: 109,736
Volunteer hours to help deliver Starlight programs: 33,287

Trips made by Captain Starlight to 64 remote communities: 145
Starlight Wish referrals received from health professionals: 678
Starlight wishes granted: 551

Blogs written by young people on livewire.org.au: 803
Livewire workshops held in hospital: 2,537
Children, young people and their families attended a Starlight Extravaganza: 1,150

New Livewire members: 441
Experiences provided to children in remote communities: 9,707
Hours of live TV broadcast in hospital on Starlight TV: 2,135

All numbers are estimates as at November 2017, actuals included in the 2017 Annual Review

starlight.org.au
Thanks to Captain Starlight and Livewire, there’s never a dull day for sick kids and teens in hospital. One amazing day brought together Aboriginal artists Jade Dolman and Justin Martin, and “Crazy Scientist” AKA Gary Cass. The result was wall to wall fun and creativity with traditional dance, singing, storytelling and exploring. Science guru Gary brought in micro herb gardens and microscopes giving the kids a super close-up look at these incredible mini plants.

For many young people, moving from a children’s hospital to an adult hospital can be a difficult time. To support teens on this journey, Captain Starlight was involved with John Hunter Children’s Hospital’s very first Graduation Ceremony, helping turn this event into a fun and positive milestone (complete with photo booth to capture every moment!). Similar graduation ceremonies are held at the Children’s Hospital at Westmead and Sydney Children’s Hospital.

Animals in hospital became a reality thanks to our partnership with Taronga Zoo and Jimmy Giggle to create a 360° immersive zoo experience. This innovation lets kids in hospital experience all the magic and awe of seeing the animals at Taronga Zoo! The experience is offered in every major children’s hospital in Australia, in Starlight Express Rooms, throughout hospital wards, outpatient areas, day surgeries and A&E areas to give kids a truly fantastic (and unexpected!) experience.

Let’s Move with Captain Starlight launched in partnership with The Lady Cilento Children’s Hospital Arts in Health Program. It’s about fun, dance, rhythm and movement. Importantly, it helps kids get active, reduces stress and anxiety and helps with rehabilitation. Each week 25 children from the hospital school take part in the fun 30 minute sessions. We’ve had amazingly positive feedback from teachers, parents, occupational therapists, speech pathologists and physiotherapists involved with the program. Keep on moving Captain Starlight!
The talented Casey Donovan was crowned ‘Queen of the Jungle’ on the TV show *I’m a Celebrity Get Me Out of Here*. She also won the hearts of children and their families when she donated her $100,000 prize money to Starlight! There were plenty of smiles and high fives when Casey visited the Starlight Express Room at the Children’s Hospital at Westmead. Casey treated the kids and families to a special acoustic performance, appeared on Starlight TV and spread her infectious happiness around the wards. Queen Casey indeed!

When Swedish pop sensation Zara Larsson was in Australia in July, she found time to pop in to the Starlight Express Room. Zara performed a fantastic acoustic set of her biggest hits live on the Starlight Express Room stage, then surprised one of her biggest fans Dani with a bedside visit! It’s not every day you get to meet a pop star, so it was an unforgettable experience for sick kids in hospital.

“You guys make such a difference, I am always happy to send patients to the Starlight Express Room.”
—Medical Professional

But wait there’s more!

- Starlight Ambassadors Billy Slater, Carissa Walford, Chris Mayne, Daniel Rich, Darryl Brohman, Delta Goodrem, Guy Grossi, Herb Faust, Hi-5, Jed Holloway, Jack Gunston, Laura Cassai, Libby Trickett, Michael Hussey, Ryan James, Olivia Phyland, Sam Thaiday and Timomatic
- Lah Lah and her Band
- Disney Channel Hosts Ella and Ash
- WWE Superstar Wrestlers
- Jessica Mauboy
- The Australian Ballet
- AFL players Adam Goodes and Cyril Rioli
- Melbourne Football Club, North Melbourne Football Club, Melbourne Storm, Brisbane Broncos, Brisbane Firebirds, Brisbane Roar, Fremantle Dockers, Western Force, Perth Wildcats, Perth Lynx and more!
- Sydney Symphony Orchestra
- Astronaut Scott Parazynski
- Chef Anna Polyviou and Herb Faust
- Voice of Mario, Chales Martinet
- Cirque Du Soleil
- News presenter Basil Zempilas
- Aboriginal Hip Hop Artist Ziggy Ramo
Every month in the Starlight Express Rooms we have a fun and exciting theme. May was a SUPER month with our Superheroes and Comics theme!

Our Monday murals were beautifully transformed by volunteer illustrators and comic artists who created amazing artworks that lucky earhlings got to take home at the end of each week.

**WEEK 1:**
Was all about the intergalactic superhero of fun – Captain Starlight! We asked earhlings what their Captain Starlight nickname would be, made magical costumes and sent imaginations soaring with stories from Planet Starlight. To celebrate Starlight Day and all the fun that goes on in every Starlight Express Room across the country, Captain Starlight set up a video conference for the kids to play some long-distance bingo!

**WEEK 2:**
We celebrated Everyday Heroes; those behind-the-scenes superstars like police officers, firefighters, teachers and of course all the amazing parents and guardians caring for their seriously ill children. Friday was International Nurse Day so it was time for Captain Starlight’s Nurse Olympics!

**WEEK 3:**
We asked the BIG questions: Batman or Iron Man? Wonder Woman or Black Widow? Superman or Thor? It was a battle of the comic universes in Marvel vs DC week with the surprise arrival of the amazing characters themselves, thanks to The Superhero Experience and Truck-Tech!

**WEEK 4:**
HEROES ALL ROUND!
It was time for the kids in hospital to reveal their superpowers! In Be Your Own Hero week, the kids escaped the routine of hospital, making costumes, masks and capes to transform into their superhero and star in their very own action movie!

**WEEK 5:**
Week 5 saw the kids learn all about comics and illustrating and they got to make a GIANT COMIC STRIP that went right around the Starlight Express Room!
All in all, it was an amazing month giving sick kids some much-needed fun and the chance to shine as the superheroes they are!
2017 HIGHLIGHTS

Starlight Express Rooms

The activities in the Starlight Express Rooms were non-stop all over Australia with dancing, Disney characters, superheros and even celebrity chefs! To celebrate the fun of Starlight Day, the Starlight Express Room at the Royal Children’s Hospital turned on the ‘Hollywood’ glamour complete with red carpet, sparkling lights, glitter balls and a photo booth. Starlight Ambassador Chris Mayne and North Melbourne’s Ben Jacobs stopped by for an exciting visit and got involved in all the Starlight Day fun.

SNAP! STARLIGHT DAY FUN

“− The kids don’t remember what happened in hospital. All they remember is what happened in the Starlight Express Room. I love that they have those positive memories.”
− Starlight Parent

MAKE IT

MUSIC MONDAY!

Our first Music Monday was such a success thanks to the talents of DJ Lazy Susan and DJ BOK! Everyone loved escaping with the music and trying out the mixing decks to run the disco. It was fabulous to see the proud smiles on the kids’ faces having learnt an awesome new skill!

PAINTING STORIES

At the Women’s and Children’s Hospital in Adelaide, kids and families regularly enjoy visits from Aboriginal artist Cedric who comes in and shares his dreamtime stories through his amazing paintings. Cedric’s Art Workshops are engaging and a wonderful opportunity for all the children and young people to learn how to draw and understand the symbols used in Indigenous Art.
Teens love taking photos, so Livewire tapped into that passion and gave them some new skills too. Over six weeks, Livewire teens developed their Photoshop skills and created original works focusing on facial features. Over 30 amazing photos were then shown at Livewire’s Face Off exhibition.

In a first for Starlight, augmented reality has become a reality in our Starlight Express Rooms! Using a special app and device, the kids hunt for ‘treasures’ hidden by Captain Starlight around the Starlight Express Room or ward and hold their device up to ‘capture’ the treasure. Once a treasure has been found, it magically comes to life on the device! The kids felt so proud of their accomplishment in finding all the treasure! Another innovative new experience making hospital a happier place for sick kids.

A scavenger hunt in hospital? With Captain Starlight, anything’s possible! Kids took part in some fun challenges during Starlight’s Sports and Games month. Each ward became its own ‘tribe’ and competed in a number of ‘survivor-style’ challenges before the ultimate Starvivor was crowned!
While visiting Nguiu (Bathurst Island) Captain Starlight met a girl who loves singing, telling stories and having her face painted. She was upset and scared when she heard she had to fly to hospital for treatment. To help ease her fears, Captain Starlight told her all about the fun in the Starlight Express Room – including face painting and singing! The next day when she arrived in the Starlight Express Room at the Royal Darwin Hospital instead of feeling scared, she was beaming with excitement!

The Earbus Foundation and Starlight partner to support children and families by attending Ear Health Clinics in 17 communities across the Pilbara and Goldfields. When Captain Starlight heard about two families who were feeling nervous about going to Joondalup Hospital for surgery, there was only one thing to do! The Captains flew into action and went to the hospital to greet the families on arrival. The families were ecstatic to see the Captains and instantly felt more relaxed. During their stay, the families had fun playing and relaxing which helped ease their stress and anxiety. The power of collaboration!

Starlight was honoured to be invited to the 19th annual Garma Festival as guests of Miwatj Health, a major Aboriginal Health organisation. During the four-day festival, over 260 Captain Starlight experiences were created for kids and families (many of whom smiled widely when they recognised Captain Starlight from a community visit!). It was wonderful to receive so much positive feedback from families, health professionals and other not-for-profits about the impact of our Healthier Futures Initiative.
2017 HIGHLIGHTS

Livewire

FUN

LIPSYNC
FUN FOR ALL

There was great excitement in the lead up to Livewire’s Ultimate Lipsync Battle! The much-anticipated musical event reached over 180 people and was enjoyed by the young and young at heart. It was so much fun and provided such feel-good entertainment that one family came to every single show! One of the highlights was seeing a young girl totally come out of her shell and dance happily to Katy Perry (AKA Captain Starlight!). Magic!

Here’s a snapshot of some feedback...

- “The kids were hugely entertained” Mum of Patient
- “It made people laugh and me as well” Patient, 12
- “It was really funny and awesome” Patient, 8
- “Kids need this. Laughter is the best medicine” Mum of Patient
- “It keeps you from getting bored” Patient, 14
- “It keeps people happy” Patient, 13, and his dad.
- “To make people move from their wards so that no one can be bored and just be happy” Patient, 12

Livewire is the only place I can be myself and not my illness.
—Guide_Jess

Livewire is the only place I can joke about chronic illness and disability without getting weird looks and having to explain myself.
—MackenzieG

Livewire is the only place I can chat to a bunch of great people and hobbies instead of just our disabilities/chronic illnesses.
—Clauds

Livewire is the only place where I can chat to a bunch of great people going through the same things I’m going through about our interests and hobbies instead of just our disabilities/chronic illnesses.
—jassywy12

Livewire is the only place I can joke about chronic illness and disability without getting weird looks and having to explain myself.
—MackenzieG

Livewire is the only place I can always feel accepted and never ever judged.
—Guide_AceStace

Livewire is the only place I can show my true characteristics and be myself. I’m not worried about people judging me for who I am cause everyone understands on Livewire!
—Guide_Serena

Livewire is the only place I can be both silly and serious and have people understand those different moods and want to talk to me regardless of how I am feeling!
—Guide_Serena
Comics, drums & mandala magic

From loud African drumming to calming watercolour painting, teens at the John Hunter Children’s Hospital explored their creative sides through a range of artistic workshops. Artist Gwyneth Jones helped teens finesse their watercolour skills, while Zarin Cenna hosted a mandala workshop. Comic book illustrations leapt off the page thanks to Louie Joyce, and Earthen Drumming got everyone banging on the drums. These workshops gave teens the chance to learn new skills, build their self-confidence and make new friends. And the chance to make some noise!

NEW LOOK LIVewire!

We’re not saying Livewire.org.au was looking its age, but it was time for a refresh! The new site will meet the changing needs of teens and make the most of the latest technologies. Livewire members had input along the way to help develop a site that’s relevant to them and their community.

The new site was rolled out in December with shiny new features including:

- A live ‘newsfeed’
- Real time chat
- A customized avatar
- A ‘Check-in’ option
- A dedicated event space
- Live video streaming
- Wishgranting countdown and timeline

It’s Friday Night LIVE

Young people in hospital often miss out on typical teenage social activities like seeing live music. Enter Livewire’s Friday Night Live! This new initiative brings bands and artists to perform in the Starlight Express Room. As well as live music, there are quizzes, song writing and jamming sessions and open mic opportunities. Teens have also been suggesting local artists they’d like to see perform. Health professionals, especially those working in adolescent mental health say how positive the experience is. “It brings a bit of the outside world in and gives the teens what feels like a “normal weekend experience.” Now that deserves an encore!
Hey Livewire! One of the things I think people should know about me is; I love, love, love to write. I also love Livewire and all the friends I have met here. So I have decided to combine my love of writing, a bit about me and my love of Livewire with this ‘speech’ type thing called “There IS Such Thing as a Healthy Online Relationship.”

When I was in Year 8, my teacher told us we were to have a discussion in our table groups. The discussion question was “Is there such thing as a healthy online relationship?” Almost immediately, the people at my table said “No! Of course not.”

I didn’t agree. Not in the slightest. Still, I listened to their ideas. Unsurprisingly, they were the exact same things you would see on a poster for cyber-safety.

“It’s not real!”
“You don’t actually know them!”
“You can’t meet face-to-face.”

“They could be pretending to be someone they’re not.”

Of course I agree with all the above statements. They are things that, in a world where everything is online, people should be conscious of. However, they should all be treated as ‘possibilities.’ There are many safe ways for someone to makes friends online and for that relationship to be healthy. One of those, is Livewire.org.au.

My name is Serena, I am fifteen (nearly sixteen) years old and I was born with Klippel-Feil Syndrome. While my family and friends have always been incredibly amazing and helpful, I wanted to talk to people who’d had similar experiences to me. I didn’t think this was possible, because I had always heard the internet was dangerous and not a place to meet new people.

In 2013 I had a surgery called a decompression. This was because I had what is called a syringomyelia which is basically a fluid filled cyst on the spinal cord. The surgery involved removing part of a bone to relieve pressure on the brain and spinal cord in an effort to reduce the syringomyelia.

While I was in hospital I found out about Starlight Wishes – an opportunity for sick kids and teens (like me) to have an awesome experience and something to look forward to.

I was granted a Starlight Wish and while planning what I wanted to do, I found out about a program called “Livewire Online.” It said that Livewire Online was a website for people aged 10-20 with a serious illness or disability. However, the thing that stood out to me the most was the word “safe.”

I told my mum about it, and she helped me sign up. They then called my mum and spoke to her to explain a bit more about Livewire and most importantly, to confirm that I really was who I said I was.

The first thing she explained about was the Chat Hosts. Hosts work for Livewire and participate in and watch over the chat room. They can be found with an ‘-LW at the end of their names! They can be found with an -LW at the end of their names!

If I was following the advice of my classmates and thinking that these online relationships were not healthy, I wouldn’t have made some of my best friends in the world. If I had said “They’re not real,” I wouldn’t share so much of myself with them. If I had said “I don’t know them,” I wouldn’t have bothered to learn about them. If I had said “You can’t meet face to face,” I wouldn’t have tried and therefore wouldn’t have done so. If I had said “They could be pretending to be someone they’re not,” I obviously wouldn’t be on Livewire ;)

However, I didn’t say those things. I knew that in a world where everything is digital and everything is online, there has to be a way to create healthy and beautiful relationships within a community of people who understand what you are going through. And so I met these people, and I made these brilliant friends.

They are amazing, I love them so much and I have Livewire, an online community, to thank for that.
Livewire

2017 HIGHLIGHTS

SENSORY OVERLOAD!

Teens in hospital had a sensory immersion experience like no other as part of the London Creativity & Wellbeing Week International Program. *Explore Your World* allows children and young people to see their world and hospital surroundings through sight, smell, touch and taste. The teens took part in virtual reality sessions, sensory texture trails and food science workshops with award winning chefs Stephen Clarke, Todd Stuart and Hans Ogrissek. This encourages awareness, inclusiveness, compassion and knowledge. What can we say, it was sensational!

GAME CHANGER WEEK


Here’s how the week played out. There were game design and illustration workshops, recording studio fun and of course all the gaming imaginable from Mario Kart to FIFA World Cup. The Pop-up Arcade kept kids young and old entertained and a few special guests popped by including Spiderman, Wonder Woman and Captain Jack Sparrow. All in all a game-changing week of fun for kids in hospital!

“My daughter has somewhere else to turn for help, advice and support that is non-judgemental and still a lot of fun.”
—Livewire Parent
This year we granted our 10,000th Starlight Wish to 10-year-old Sy. As a big fan of everything about the police, Sy’s Starlight Wish was to be a policeman alongside his Highway Patrol hero Sergeant Mick McCrann.

Sy’s wish kicked off with a big send-off from his school followed by a training session with the Australian Federal Police. Sy also got to ride in a police car and turn the sirens on! With training complete, Sy and his family flew to Melbourne, thanks to our Official Wishgranting Partner Virgin Australia. Sy couldn’t wipe the smile off his face when he had a NSW Police escort from home to the airport. But the biggest surprise was yet to come. Arriving in Melbourne, Sy was greeted by none other than Sergeant Mick McCrann. Sy was overwhelmed to finally meet his hero!

The week was full of fun policing adventures including being sworn into the Victorian Police force as ‘Sergeant Sy’, visiting the police horses and dogs and going out to Port Phillip Island on a police boat. But the highlight of the week was Sy pulling his dad over and giving him a ticket for not buying him an ice-cream!

“We know that Sy will have a challenging road ahead in life, but our focus is to make sure that he has experiences and opportunities right now that enable him to live his life to its fullest – regardless of what may lie ahead,” Sy’s mum, Lisa.

“Starlight is there like a ray of sunshine in what can be the darkest and scariest times in a child’s and their family’s life.”
—Sy’s mum, Lisa
Wish Week kicked off in October and what a week it was! Our families flew from across Australia to the beautiful Gold Coast and were suitably spoilt by the fantastic Virgin Australia crew and our amazing volunteers. There were surprises galore all week from goody bags, to a visit from the Storm Troopers to big bunches of flowers for all the amazing mums!

There was great excitement at Dreamworld with VIP entry into the park and a special tiger show that had the kids in awe. Special guest Dan Rich from the Brisbane Lions popped by too. The adventures continued with some close encounters with snakes, crocs, lizards, possums and dolphins! There was blockbuster action at Movie World with Bugs Bunny and Scooby-Doo and all the cartoon characters the kids could dream of.

Every year, Wish Week gives families precious time to be together, but it does so much more. Families say it’s so wonderful to be surrounded by people who simply ‘get it’ - who understand what it’s like having a child with a serious illness, who face the same highs and lows. And secondly, they tell us our volunteers are nothing short of amazing. The extra pair of helping hands makes days out less stressful and parents can focus on simply having fun as a family! And after all, that’s what it’s all about.

Car enthusiast Kris bought a 1982 Holden Ute with plans to restore it with the help of his mates, dad and brother. It was to be a labour of love, and a celebration of having just finished school. But soon after, Kris’ world was turned upside down when he was diagnosed with Acute Myeloid Leukaemia. Intense chemotherapy began right away, and his dream restoration project put on hold. It was then that Kris was granted a Starlight Wish.

Kris wished for his Holden Ute to be restored. And after over 12 months of hard work and a whole community rallying together, Kris dream car was restored. It was an incredibly special moment and brought Kris so much joy after the tough few years he’s endured. He now plans to use his beautiful new car to raise awareness for leukaemia as well as for Starlight. A true champion!
2017 HIGHLIGHTS

Wishgranting

UNPACKING FUN!

Being sick in the holidays is not much fun so during the winter school holidays, we sent out 500 ‘Surprise Packs’ to families across Australia. These packs were filled to the brim with animal arts and crafts including colouring books, stickers, clay, pencils, crayons, stationery and puzzles.

And what was the reaction when they landed?

- “Your surprise package put a huge smile on his face this morning. It will keep him busy.”
- “This lovely package arrived today and it was a nice surprise. The items inside were very cool and my kids love craft especially in winter. We feel very grateful to have the Starlight there for our kids on our journey.”
- “We received a surprise pack today and I just wanted to send a thousand thank yous to Starlight - it brought a smile to her when she really wasn’t feeling the best so thank you very much.”

EXTRAVAGANZAS OF FUN & FRIENDSHIP

What an extravaganza of a year! Starlight Extravaganzas bring families together for fun-filled days away from all the pain of hospital and treatment. We kicked off with a bowling Extravaganza in Tasmania, arcade games and a karaoke dance party in Sydney and circus tricks and a donut wall in Melbourne! Families in Canberra spent the day bowling and relaxing, while in Queensland wild times were had at Australia Zoo. Families in Perth and Adelaide were treated to aquatic adventures complete with pirates and mermaids!

“The best holiday ever—watching the kids getting to be kids, not being poked and prodded, away from the trauma—we were normal.”

—Starlight Parent
2017 HIGHLIGHTS

THE POWER OF A STARLIGHT WISH

We invite one in every four Wishgranting families to participate in an independent evaluation to review their experience, including the impact of the Starlight Wish and recommendations for improving the program.

In 2017, over 150 families participated and the results have highlighted the positive impact of the program.

- 100% of families would recommend Starlight’s Wishgranting program
- A average family satisfaction rating of 9.7 out of 10

“I think it was very inclusive of the whole family, it was special for her but it really included us as a whole family.”

“During a hard time, just allowing for everyone to be together was beautiful.”

“The stress was taken out of it because it was organised so well. To see him so happy was fabulous.”

“We just had so much fun. It was a once-in-a-lifetime experience.”

“It was a dream come true...everything went according to plan.”

“I think my parents enjoyed the opportunity, but I think they also really enjoyed seeing me be more active and be able to be active with me, being able to enjoy an activity with me and see me engage.”

“The best part was him being able to forget about everything that was going on, and just have fun. He just loved all of the activities, and when we were at MovieWorld. I’ve never seen him laugh so much.”

“It made his year. It brought our whole family together. Together we all care for the new dog... I have the privilege of seeing him so happy after going through so much, and knowing that his wish just keeps staying with us. He’s happy every day he sees his puppy. It was ideal. 1000/10!”

Starlight was invited to present at the 2017 World Congress on Adolescent Health in India which brought together over 1200 delegates from across the globe. Our presentation: ‘Livewire: An Australian program to improve adolescents’ wellbeing, both in-hospital and at home through creativity and connection,” focused on the findings from our recent evaluation at The Royal Children’s Hospital, Melbourne.

“It was a very worthwhile opportunity to connect with specialists, pediatricians and academics from around the world to discuss how we can improve the life of adolescents both globally and within the Australian context.”

We were also invited to present at other national conferences throughout the year, including:

- The 14th National Rural Health Conference “Starlight Children’s Foundation and Earbus Foundation of WA: An Impactful Partnership”
- Australian Parent Engagement Conference “Starlight Wishgranting Promoting parent engagement in the context of seriously and chronically ill children”
- 9th Annual International Arts and Health Conference “Using art and creativity to counter the challenges of hospitalised adolescents and build resilience: The Starlight “Livewire” program and how it supports young people with critical, chronic or mental health conditions”
- Australian Association for Adolescent Health Ltd Youth Health Conference “The use of tablet technology to engage with hospitalised children: The Captain Starlight experience”, “Changing the Game: Using music and gaming to positively disrupt the hospital experience of teenagers”, “Redesigning Livewire.org: The participation of teenagers in the rebuild of an online peer support community”
- Australian Palliative Care Conference “The power of positive disruption: How Starlight is connecting with palliative children, adolescents and their families”

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SYDNEY CHILDREN’S HOSPITAL RANDWICK

The excitement is building with work underway on the new Starlight Express Room at Sydney Children’s Hospital Randwick. The current room has stood the test of time for over 18 years so it’s time for an overhaul! Launch date is March 2018 so watch this space for a big, vibrant new state-of-the-art Starlight Express Room!

PERTH CHILDREN’S HOSPITAL

Our brand new Starlight Express Room has been built in the new Perth Children’s Hospital. We’re just working on the finishing touches and can’t wait to open our doors to kids and families in 2018.

DOORS OPEN IN DARWIN!

Hello Darwin! We were thrilled to open the brand new Starlight Express Room at the Royal Darwin Hospital. A first for Darwin, there are a few extra special things about this new space. Firstly, it has water views! You can see the ocean from the room which is really calming for kids stuck in hospital. It also has the latest technology, including floor projection for interactive gaming, Starlight TV and a host of arts and craft. The Starlight Express Room was officially opened by Hawks player Cyril Rioli, with the essential help of SER regular Zach. Joining in the celebrations—which included a rocket ship cake!—were special guests Outback Wrangler Matt Wright and Star Ball Darwin Chairman Justin Coleman.

Celebrations in Monash 😊

We were delighted to launch our brand new Starlight Express Room at Monash Children’s Hospital. Starlight Ambassador Guy Grossi officially opened the SER with the help of special guests Jack Gunston, Chris Mayne and the most important VIP at the event, ten year old Jack. In true Starlight style, the SER was declared officially open with the cutting of a ribbon of pasta! This our first room to have a balcony which means kids and families can pop out for some fresh air! It’s also equipped with a kitchen, a parent’s nook with comfy couches and all the latest in art, craft, gaming and technology.

“This is a space for children to forget that they’re in hospital; to be children, not patients.”

“We are incredibly grateful to the Starlight Captains, staff, volunteers, supporters and ambassadors to have this amazing space in our hospital.”

—Monash Health Chief Executive, Andrew Stripp
2017 HIGHLIGHTS

Program Development

HEALTH PARTNERS SHARE THEIR VIEWS

Every two years, our Hospital Partner Survey seeks feedback from health professionals around Australia on new program initiatives and to assist with tracking the impact of our programs.

This year we had over 600 responses – almost double compared to this time two years ago!

Key positive benefits identified included:

- Providing opportunities for fun and laughter
- An escape from the hospital environment
- Positive distraction
- Psychosocial support
- Inclusion of siblings
- Creating normality for families
- Fostering social connections

“It offers patients something fun to focus on, an interactive escape from what can at times be horrible experiences in the rest of the hospital. Starlight brings happiness to many patients and their families, relieving boredom, anxiety and stress. Kids ‘light up’ when the Captain Starlights come to visit, they can become more compliant with their treatment, distracted from their pain and misery. Parents relax, seeing their kids smile and laugh. The Starlight Express Room is a great motivator to get kids out of bed and walking after an operation, it encourages them to push themselves and helps speed up their recovery.”

—Nurse, The Children’s Hospital at Westmead

We have many siblings that come for appointments within our department and we don’t have enough for them to do whilst they wait. The Starlight Express Room is a huge help for distraction of those children who can get a little tired/bored waiting for their brother or sister to finish their appointment with us.

—Management, Sydney Children’s Hospital, Randwick

You guys rock, nothing brightens my day more than seeing the Captains floating around this hospital bringing smiles to everyone they come into contact with.... LOVE LOVE LOVE your work

—Ward Clerk, Lady Cilento Children’s Hospital

When they visit the Mental Health Youth Inpatient Unit, the young persons show such joy, even the older young persons enjoy their interaction with Captain Starlight’s team. As a staff member, I love seeing them here as they brighten up the unit, the clients and us nurses. Thank you Captain Starlight.

—Nurse, Royal Darwin Hospital

SA has the best Captains ever and we love them all :) Thank you to all in Starlight who work behind the scenes to ensure the program and great work by the Captains continue. A big thank you you must also go to the kind hearted donors who make all of the amazing, wonderful, fun, creative, endless opportunities possible.

—Play Therapist, Women’s and Children’s Hospital, SA

The Starlight team lights up the ward every single time they enter our ward. You can do nothing but smile at them as they come down the corridor, that’s staff, kids & their families. I have seen laughs, tears (on a happy song level), tummy stitches from laughing so hard, large groups forming in the corridors as patients think they might miss out on a visit, families going through extremely rough times smile for the first time in the hospital & loads more.

—Ward Clerk, Royal Children’s Hospital, Melbourne

Such a fabulous resource to bridge some of the gap between hospital and home / community. Great provider of the high priority of fun, when clinicians would love to be providing more fun but are often unable to do so due to high workloads.

—Physiotherapist, Monash Children’s Hospital

Captain Starlight and her / his crew are an invaluable resource at any children’s hospital lucky to have them. Every Captain I have met is happy, engaging and generally “just good people”. While I try to provide comfort and hope they provide what I often cannot - happiness.

—Doctor, Centenary Hospital for Women and Children

It is awesome, I love Starlight’s presence in the hospital, and I think all the Captains are fantastic.

—Social Worker, John Hunter Children’s Hospital

Thank you Starlight we would be lost without you, there would be far less joy in our hospital without you.

—Occupational Therapist, Princess Margaret Hospital

Such a responsive and holistic service that above and beyond meets the needs and expectations of children and families.

—Wishgranting Referrer
2017 HIGHLIGHTS

Program Development

FIRST PHD AWARDED

2017 was the first year of study for the PhD Scholarship that Starlight is co-sponsoring with the University of Technology, Sydney. The PhD student is researching the unique model of peer support offered by the Livewire.org program. When the research is finished, it will not only help Starlight to strengthen the Livewire.org program, it will also contribute to the broader research field of knowledge for chronic and seriously ill teenagers.

THE RIGHT TO BE HEARD

We’ve started an exciting research project with Children’s Healthcare Australasia and an advisory group led by Professor Les White and representatives from the Universities of Melbourne and Sydney. The project is looking into the rights of children to express their views and be heard and taken seriously. All Australian hospitals have a charter of Healthcare Rights and the project aims to identify and support best practice in this area.

You’ve got mail

Hello fellow patient, I have been in and out of hospital for a while now, was when I first heard about the Livewire.org program. The moment I have encountered while here, was when my friend, found out that he was dying, he started to cry because he was afraid that if he left all his friends would forget him. I know that he never really thought of himself, but he didn’t want to come back and everyone had to know that he was beautiful inside and out. To know that you are beautiful inside and out, you just need to believe it.

Over 100 Livewire teens across Australia took part in an old-school letter and artwork swap called Coast Post! The teens were encouraged to send messages and parcels to brighten another teen’s day somewhere else in Australia. As always, the teenagers were beyond inspiring. The support and positivity they showed to each other was amazing. They all loved the joy of receiving an ACTUAL letter in the mail!

“It has been a big impact on attendance to the Clinic with the Captain Starlights there.”
—Medical Professional

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2017 HIGHLIGHTS

Starlight proudly launched our first ever Reconciliation Action Plan during National Reconciliation Week. We celebrated around the country and each Starlight Express Room was buzzing with excitement! Adam Goodes, Haus of Dizzy’s Kristy Dickinson, comedian Sean Choolburra, rap artist Ziggy Fatnowna, storytellers, didgeridoo players, dancers and artists from communities all over Australia came in to share their culture with the kids.

Captain Starlight developed an Acknowledgement of Country video to screen each morning on Starlight TV and had daily screenings from our friends at Aussie Gumnuts, telling traditional Aboriginal stories through animation and song. It was a fun-filled week and a great way to kick off our reconciliation journey.

“A huge thank you to Thomas from Yalka Dayan and the Starlight team for visiting Roy and for giving him the special clapping sticks which will be treasured. It certainly brightened our day”
—Starlight Parent

After the Captain Starlight Rocket Ship landed in the UK last year, the kids and health professionals of England, Scotland and Wales demanded it come back permanently!

(Which really is our way of sharing the very exciting news that the program trial last year in the UK was an enormous success and Captain Starlight is now a permanent feature of children’s hospitals and hospices in the UK).

The Captain Starlight program was conceived and developed in Australia and has been an integral part of paediatric healthcare for over 25 years. This innovative program has expanded internationally, with 7 Captains delivering fun, joy and laughter to the seriously ill and hospitalised kids of the UK.

The program is managed and funded by Starlight UK through a license agreement with Starlight Australia, with us sharing our knowledge about what works well that has been developed over many years. Earlier this year the new Starlight UK Captains undertook training in Australia before being handed their silver capes (suitable for the cold climate of course) and flying back to the UK, ready to brighten the lives of kids in hospital.

Switch on STARLIGHT TV
Starlight TV just turned 15! The daily mix of pre-recorded content and live shows provides entertainment live at the bedside for kids in hospital. But since the introduction of Starlight TV, the way in which kids and young people engage with media has changed, so time to explore how Starlight TV could change too! We’re exploring ways for Starlight TV to have the greatest possible impact and to meet the growing demand. Stay tuned in 2018!
They say you need to ‘walk in someone’s shoes’ to fully understand another point of view. So that’s what the Livewire team did with the help of Virtual Reality. Using the latest technology, the Livewire team experienced what it’s like being a teen stuck in hospital. The immersive experience gave them real insight into a teen’s perspective which will help us develop and tailor our programs to have the best impact possible for young people in hospital around Australia!

October saw over 100 Captain Starlights take the rocket ship to Sydney for CapFest 2017. This year CapFest focused on three key areas – EARTHLINGS (kids!), SPACE (the spaces Captains engage with families within the hospital), and the PERFORMER (the Captain themselves).

The inspiring event gives Captains the opportunity to learn from industry professionals. There were exciting presentations by Polyglot Theatre, the Dead Puppet Society, hilarious workshop on engaging kids through comedy and top tips on content creation for Starlight TV! The Captains were completely inspired by a powerful keynote from artist Tim Sharp, the creator of Laser Beak Man and his mum Judy who talked about life with autism and how creativity unlocked a passion and creative genius. And lastly an uplifting masterclass was led by ‘The Voice’ runner up, Darren Percival, and Music Therapist, Matt Ralph, proving you don’t have to be a musician to make music. The Captains flew back to Planet Starlight feeling excited and inspired.

We are exploring a new program to meet the needs of children and young people with the most complex of health conditions. Working with palliative healthcare professionals, we sought to understand how we could support families who have a child with a life limiting condition. We learnt that they face a constant juggle balancing their complex healthcare requirements with the needs of day to day family life. We discovered it was often it was the ‘little things’ that families missed – small rituals like birthday cakes, pizza night or a simple family picnic in the park. Given Starlight is all about positive disruption, we are looking at ways to help give families these special moments to treasure. We are looking forward to the new program being trialled in 2018.
In 2017 you helped us create 522,208 Starlight experiences.

Thank you! We simply couldn’t do it without you.

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