

# Introduction

Written by Sue Wilkinson

It's a great opportunity to be given the chance to write in this space. It's also an honour to be a part of the first Australian newsletter that will reach so many families affected by congenital diaphragmatic hernia. My name is Sue Wilkinson. My son Henry died 3 years ago this month. He was born premature- 29 weeks with a left CDH. He survived an operation, but died 13 days after his birth.

Being thrown into grief and all that it encompasses has been something that I would gladly exchange, but sadly can't. I find myself an unwilling participant in a journey that I never signed up for. I find myself doing things I never dreamed, thinking things that I thought a person could never think and involving myself in groups and organisations that I never even knew existed.

I became involved in Cherubs in the early days, seeking some sort of solace and some understanding that I wasn't the only one going through this sort of personal tragedy. In my early weeks I was also involved in counselling from the Sudden Infant Death Foundation (SIDS) in Victoria and over the past years have been involved in public speaking events, book/ information development, creative program extensions and general parent support. So, in no way I am a professional. Like so many others I am fumbling through this experience as best I can, making mistakes, saying stupid things, and of course attempting to manage the whole experience as best I can, but without sounding strangely peculiar, it has been rewarding for me to find that people are interested in the things I have to say, and are finding comfort in the written material that I produce. Some people just like the illustrations I make (I hope to include some in each newsletter).

So, it is within this little forum I will be presenting some of my thoughts, ideas and understandings about grief and all of the horrid little prickly bits that go along with it. I am in no way a professional in the field, nor could I ever hope to elaborate on how all of us feel. It is just one gal's views, sometimes blatantly obvious, sometimes a little skewed and sometimes it may even be helpful. I hope in some way the people that read this column find something that they can relate to, something that might offer hope to endure yet another day, or something that might just bring a smile because, we are allowed to do that too! Looking forward to the next issue.