

# 30 ways to boost a child's confidence

Information from NAPCAN. Visit: [www.napcan.org.au](http://www.napcan.org.au)

1. Give lots of kisses and cuddles to babies and young children.
2. Smile and talk to your child from the time they are born.
3. Be consistent – if you say you will be somewhere, or do something at a certain time, do so if you possibly can.
4. Give praise for things achieved – like making beds, cleaning teeth, putting their toys away etc.
5. Tell children you love them – even when you think they don't deserve it!
6. Avoid nagging – either children or adults!
7. Discipline young children by removing them from the situation – hitting only makes things worse – use the opportunity to teach them about correct behaviour.
8. Explain to children that parents need time to discuss things too. Children often interrupt but as they grow older they will realise they can remember things to tell you later and will interrupt less often.
9. Share daily activities – let your child plan a meal and help prepare it. Share a story. Have meals together at the table (without TV).
10. Care for yourself! You need time out and rewards to cope with the demands of being a parent. Plan for these regularly. Go for a walk, take a bubble bath, play your favourite music. If you care for yourself you can more easily care for children.
11. Stay calm and be fair. You are the adult and your child's teacher. Your child will copy your behaviour. When you feel really stressed, as all parents sometimes do, get support and talk it over with someone.
12. Reinforce and encourage your child's good behaviour. Use praise or a special game or time with your child.
13. Spend time with your child! Play with your child. Have some fun times or read together.
14. When children misbehave, let them know they are okay – it's their behaviour that is not okay.
15. Talk together. Talk about everyday things as well as big issues with older children.
16. Take time to listen to children and really hear what they are saying and want to share with you. Give them the opportunity to make their message clear. Quality listening time can be built into a routine, such as bed time or travelling time.
17. Encourage children to develop their own strategies for achieving things and help them review their effectiveness. Resist the temptation to provide adult solutions all the time.
18. Encourage children to see 'mistakes' and 'awkward moments' as a natural part of learning and growing.
19. Catch your child being good and comment on what you have noticed.
20. Don't be afraid to say 'sorry' when you make a mistake.
21. Encourage children to have a support network and identify those people children can go to for help.
22. Children feel valued and important when family and friends watch them participate in school and weekend sports.
23. Take an active part in your child's schooling – help out at school where possible and show interest in their school activities.
24. Teach children personal safety principles – they have permission to say 'no' to anyone if they need to protect themselves from an unpleasant situation. They must learn to trust their feelings, recognise that they own their own bodies and that they don't have to keep secrets which frighten or hurt them.
25. Your teenager is more likely to respect your views if you respect his or her views too.
26. Respect your child's privacy. Older children particularly need privacy. They need their own space and time to themselves. If you respect their privacy they are more likely to confide in you.
27. Let your child know you're there when she or he needs you. No matter how independent your children seem, let them know that you will always be there to offer comfort and support.
28. Make it clear that you want to be involved. If you find that your child NEVER wants to discuss anything with you, you may need to work really hard at it. A good start is to make it clear that you are interested in them and in what they do.
29. Don't impose your thoughts – if you think your teenager has odd views, remember that imposing your own attitudes could make things worse.
30. Laugh with your children – not at them.

# Australia – this is my home

*Story from Living Out Back: People of Western New South Wales, 2002*

Cristeta Janes is a passionate Australian. She has lived in the outback for the past 10 years and doesn't take her adopted country for granted.

'When I arrive here in Australia my husband, he pick me up in the Sydney airport. I say Australia, this is my home now. He said we are going to Broken Hill. I said where is Broken Hill?'

That first trip to the outback is one Cristeta will never forget.

'I thought the road was never ending. I saw lots of birds on the road, different colours, beautiful galah and parrot. I never saw this in my life before because in the Philippines they shoot and eat it.

'There seemed to be so much food that I thought I'd get fat by eating so much beef. In the Philippines one kilo of beef would feed a whole family.

'The environment is very clean and there are a lot of nice trees. In my country it is very hot and humid and you sweat all the time, but here it is very hot in summer and dry most of the time.'

Cristeta does volunteer work with the Red Cross and a local aged care centre.

'I like to work and contribute to Broken Hill. In the Philippines we never get money like the pension. I said, ooh Australia is very kind.

'They give us a good life here in Australia, the taxpayer. I said well, the taxpayer is paying me (her husband gets the old-age pension) so I work charity. If I work charity

I feel better giving something back and I can contribute my gratitude.

'I am very grateful that they are helping me and my family. For me I like to give back to the community.

'While in the Philippines, I work hard for my family but in the long run I get nothing. So a friend introduce me to this man. I imagine that he would be tall dark and handsome. When I meet him he is so old.

'My sister said it doesn't matter as long as you have a better life. We got on very well so he asked me would I like to come to Australia. I said "yes". So we got married, he sponsored me and I migrated to Australia with him. He is good to me and very kind to me.'

Since leaving her homeland, Cristeta keeps a diary to capture her memories.

'I write my story so that later in life my kids may be curious about me and want to know how come I came to be here.

'The hardest thing is being so far away from my family. It was very hard in the beginning because no one to talk to. No one can understand how you feel.

'I know most people around Broken Hill now. They are friendly to me and visit me. I have not experienced racism.'

The Broken Hill Multicultural Women's Resource and Information Centre is a non-profit organisation set up in 1986. It aims to assist women living in Broken Hill and the

surrounding areas in their settlement issues and has been a lifeline for Cristeta and other migrant women.

Centre Coordinator, Eleanor Blows, works with a management committee to apply for funding and organise regular activities which address many needs identified by the women.

In 2001 a series of accredited training courses were run for migrant women wanting to update their skills and join the work force. Cristeta participated in these courses.

'I did some of these courses last year and learned computers, writing and applying for jobs... I was offered two full-time jobs. When they say there are no jobs in Broken Hill, just look at me! I like to learn more. It helps us.'

About 100 women are involved in the Centre's activities. These women represent a diversity of backgrounds including Italian, Greek, Chinese, Thai, Indonesian, Egyptian and Filipino.

Despite the challenges, Cristeta is certain that the outback is where she will stay.

'I have been to other places but I think Broken Hill is really my home... and if we go somewhere I just miss Broken Hill.' ■

*Living Out Back is a beautiful hardcover book providing a glimpse into the diverse lives of people living in outback NSW. To order, Ph: 1800 028 374, Fax: 1800 642 065 or Visit: [www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/bookshop](http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/bookshop)*

## ST GEORGE FOUNDATION FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Provides financial support to charitable organisations throughout Australia to assist children and young people up to 18 years of age with special needs. Grants range from \$2,500 up to \$25,000.

Ph: 02 9236 3534,  
Fax: 02 9236 1576,  
Email: [stgeorgefoundation@stgeorge.com.au](mailto:stgeorgefoundation@stgeorge.com.au), or Visit: [www.stgeorge.com.au](http://www.stgeorge.com.au)



## COUNTRY ATHLETES SCHEME

Assists talented young athletes from rural NSW to access training, coaching and competitions. Athletes must be 17 years of age or under, a permanent resident of NSW, and must live more than 80km from Sydney. Applications open in October and close 31 December.

Ph: 02 9006 3853,  
Fax: 02 9006 3884, Email: [info@dsr.nsw.gov.au](mailto:info@dsr.nsw.gov.au), or Visit: [www.dsr.nsw.gov.au/finance/f\\_cas.asp](http://www.dsr.nsw.gov.au/finance/f_cas.asp)



## RURAL & REMOTE TERTIARY SCHOLARSHIPS

The University of Adelaide website has a list of scholarships available to students who normally reside outside the metropolitan area in any Australian State or Territory.

Visit: [www.adelaide.edu.au/scholarships/undergrad/isolated](http://www.adelaide.edu.au/scholarships/undergrad/isolated)

# Being different

*Toni Romeo-Mackin, Wunghnu VIC  
From Network: A newsletter of the  
Victorian Rural Women's Network,  
No.3, 2005*

Starting school is an experience most children look forward to with great delight, but for me it was an experience that still haunts me.

My father migrated to Australia from Italy in 1951 and my mother in 1952. We spoke one of the many Italian dialects at home, so therefore when I started school, I could not speak a single word of English.

The pain of learning English and some Aussie words, was still some months away. But at that moment, being in a big classroom with lots of kids, a brilliant thought crystallised in my mind and I discovered the horror of being different. I experienced that to be dark,

with oily skin, have big brown eyes, was to be different, because most of the other kids in the classroom, had fair skin, light hair and blue eyes.

Migrants are obsessed with many things - financial security, success in a new country, a better life for their children and the education they never had back in the old country. So here I was, trying to obtain an education, at no matter what cost. I remember one incident so vividly. I was playing in the school yard with my sister, my spirits high, having fun for a change, when a group of boys started teasing us.

We managed to run away, but in doing so, I nudged a girl. It was little more than a bump, but when I offered my "scusi" (sorry), she snapped at me and spat out words that I could not understand. My sister gently touched my arm, pulled me aside and said, 'they don't understand Italian'. Again I

was different, but determined to overcome this barrier.

These kids at school could never resist having a go at me for being Italian and different. There was another incident when some boys made fun of me, because of what I was eating for lunch. I had two thick slices of home-made bread with home made salami wedged in between. No vegemite sandwiches like the others. I was fortunate enough though to have a female teacher who was very caring and took the extra time to assist me and with my determination to show these kids I could be like them. I eventually mastered this difficult language.

Growing up I always tried to fit in and be like the others, not to be different, but as the years have passed I have come to realise that by being different it has made me who I am today. I am actually very proud of being

different and thank my parents enormously for giving me this opportunity, instead of being like everybody else. Now today, my husband, kids and most of my friends are Aussies and I am educating them how to be different, by sharing the traditions my parents passed onto me and my different ideas. ■

## IDENTITY

*An identity sometimes is someone  
Who has lived for a lengthy time  
With knowledge of all around them  
And relates it with word and rhyme  
All of us have an identity  
That which we may try to mask  
Perhaps if the past is shaky  
With questions we don't want asked  
But it's there, our personal history  
Dating from when we were born  
Directed by our ancestors  
Proof of how our genes were formed  
So whether or not we like it  
We are picture proof of the past  
And hand on to the next generation  
An example that will forever last.*

© JEAN OPPERMAN, PASCOE VALE

## BOOK REVIEW BY CAROLE BROADHEAD, BERMAGUI

### Mahboba's Promise

*An autobiography by Mahboba Rawi with  
Vanessa Mickan-Gramazio*

Mahboba was born in Kabul, Afghanistan, and as a teenager took part in the protests against the Russian invasion of her country. She fled Afghanistan to take refuge in Pakistan and later India where she married and finally came to Australia as a refugee.

Mahboba's Promise takes us on a very personal journey as she settles into another way of life and raises a young family. We experience the joys and sorrows including the extreme grief of losing a child and the breakdown of her marriage.

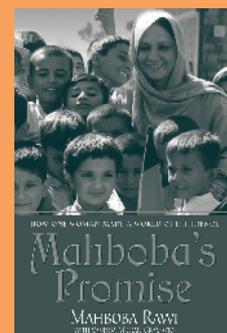
Courageously Mahboba returns to complete her education by first learning English and then completing a tertiary Community Welfare course. We follow her life as she returns to Kabul and faces the devastation of the country. It is this visit which sets her on a new journey. Mahboba makes a promise to a small seven year old girl. This meeting changes both their

lives as she embarks on a plan to help orphans left alone after the Russian invasion of Afghanistan.

This book is an inspiration to anyone who has a dream. It proves that having the passion and sharing your dream with others can make it come true. Mahboba Rawi reminds us not to take our lives in the 'lucky country' for granted. She shares her love of her country and for its children who need a basic education, food to eat and an ability to make choices in life. Mahboba showed me that with faith anything is possible. This is one of those books guaranteed to give you a great lift.

ISBN 1 86325 429 3

**Random House Australia has given two free copies of Mahboba's Promise as giveaways. To win a copy, write to us and tell us in 25 words or less why you want to win a copy. Entries close 30 June 2006.**



# My left breast

*By Jenny Magner, Texas, Old*

Yeowtch! I grabbed the gate and my left breast at the same time. I would also have sworn violently, only I was just too sore! A very large woolly wether had just slammed into the metal yard gate that I was about to latch, and the impact of the gate caught me right on the boob. On closer inspection, after I had caught my breath, I realised I was going to get one helluva bruise. By the time I showered that night the colourings were quite remarkable – various shades of pinks, blues, mauves and purples. There was also a sore, lumpy swelling, and I clearly remember saying to myself, 'If I am ever unlucky enough to get breast cancer, that is where it will come'.

Apart from being very tender for a week or so, and being extra careful to latch the gates with lightning quickness when working in the sheep yards, there were no long term problems associated with the incident... so I thought. The abstract mural of various changing hues gradually faded to skin tone and I forgot all about it, until...

About 7 months later Paul, my husband, contracted Q-Fever and became extremely ill. He was hospitalised in the small town closest to our farm.

The day Paul suffered the worst of his fevers had been a hectic one for me. I was running the property alone, apart from having our sons 27 kilometres up the road and neighbours on emergency stand-by. We had two breech

calf deliveries that day, one of which I had to deliver by myself – the calf was born dead after a mammoth struggle.

After lunch I drove the 96 kilometre round trip to visit Paul. When I arrived at the hospital I found the Doctor and two nurses desperately trying to get him stabilised. What a shock! I stayed until his temperature receded to a non-immediately life threatening level and then drove home in floods of tears. How I managed to negotiate all the cattle grids on the road without collecting them says a lot for the homing instincts of our Landcruiser! After a busy evening of farm chores I stood under a life-saving hot shower and while soaping myself... found a lump in my left breast.

After my heart started beating again I gave the lump a more thorough inspection. It was hard, noduley, painless and about the size of a large, odd-shaped frozen pea. It was also right where the bruise had been months before. At that time I made the tearful decision not to tell anyone until Paul was on the way to recovery. It was a difficult secret to keep and I very nearly told my Mum on numerous occasions. It did prove though, once and for all (which amazes everyone, most of all me) that I can keep a secret. But what a secret to have to keep. I now firmly believe that this is one secret that should NEVER be kept!

So, three weeks later, with Paul on the mend, I

casually mentioned that I had discovered a painless lump in my left breast and asked him to have a look. After a delicate inspection, much questioning, and a huge reprimand when I told him when I first discovered it, I was on my way to the Doctor at a rate of knots!

The speed at which I was embraced by Queensland health is nothing short of amazing. After a physical examination by our GP, and an immediate phone call to the Toowoomba Breast Centre, I was booked in the very next day for a mammogram, ultrasound, and two core biopsies. I knew the results weren't good, because even I could see that the images being displayed weren't right. The specialist had the same opinion but also reassured me that there was still a chance that the lump was benign and that the pathology results would tell us more in the morning.

So, after a seven hour round trip to Toowoomba the day before, we found ourselves summoned to our GP as a matter of urgency. Getting there we drove through a huge electrical and hail storm and suffered nine windscreen chips from hail stones and lots of fright.

When we finally arrived my GP very quietly and considerately gave us the bad news – I had an invasive malignant carcinoma – heart-stopping words at the best of times.

Tears flowed copiously and seemingly unstopably. Paul's hankie and the Doctor's tissues supply all got soaked. When my doctor thought I was able to cope, he talked quietly

about the next step which was to see a surgeon as soon as possible. We saw him the next day.

Our life was now centred around an alien subject for us. Our family and neighbours kindly took over our animals, garden and farm. Paul, who had often found that baling hay, planting etc. was far more important than wedding anniversaries, birthdays and the like (as any good farmer should), dropped everything to be by my side. After living with Paul for 35 years I know what a huge sacrifice it has been for him, but he never once even hinted that he thought he should be doing other things.

Following my visit with the surgeon, two days later I had a partial mastectomy and 11 lymph nodes removed from under my left armpit. Unfortunately, I had a very severe reaction to the anaesthetic, and after a very worrying time for Paul (I can't remember much of that ordeal) and two nights in the critical care ward, I was allowed to go home – complete with drainage tubes and a collection bag.

We were both pleased with the re-construction and I thought I could live with my left boob very happily, even though it was rather hollow! The surgeon had taken the tumour and a wide margin of seemingly healthy surrounding tissue. We anxiously awaited the pathology results for over a week as the surgeon was away. It was a long week!

In the meantime I learnt how to massage my lymphatic system and to exercise my very sore left arm.

Then we got a phone call from the surgeon. He wanted to see us in Toowoomba the next day. So we went, and there were more tears. There were numerous tiny cancers throughout the excised tissue, too risky to even think of leaving the breast on my body! Oh no! I had got used to my new look.

We had a week to come to terms with me losing my breast. A week in which to say goodbye and thank you for helping feed our two sons through a healthy babyhood so abundantly. Thank you for being so soft and voluptuous and for making me feel well endowed and feminine. I very reluctantly said 'Goodbye and thank you for being with me for the last 52 years but I am not going to let you kill me'.

I was shaking with trepidation as they wheeled me into the operating room. I did not want to leave Paul behind. I did not want to go through this!

When Paul came to visit me the next morning he was quite surprised that I was ready to go. I was given some pain medication for the trip home and so off we both went.

That trip home, over the bumpy roads, was one I will remember for years to come but it was just so good to get home. And while I wouldn't recommend everyone doing this, for me it was the best thing I could have done. I could lie on our bed and watched the little wrens fossick in the garden or sit on the verandah and watch the weeds overtake the flowers

– great therapy for getting better as you just want to get out there as soon as you can and DO something about it.

When the bandages came off, Paul and I both peered at the wound with extreme trepidation. The wound was much longer than I had anticipated and there were lots of stitches – a very flat, boyish chest, I thought. We both stared hard for a few minutes and then Paul said, 'It's not so bad. You've still got more than some of those skinny super-models'.

I know I have a lot to be grateful for – I'm still here. My family have been so supportive, particularly Paul, and my Mum and Dad who, although in their early 80's, have driven up the range from their farm (over 200 kilometres

away) on a regular basis, with food and help and love – a marathon effort I appreciate dearly. Our neighbours have also been stalwarts and take over instantly if we need to disappear to the hospital at a moment's notice.

The next phase...

Six weeks after my mastectomy I started on a course of chemotherapy, a six dose treatment set three weeks apart.

This treatment was not undertaken lightly. In fact, I had told myself on a number of occasions that if ever I was unfortunate enough to contract the BIG C I would never subject my body to such a toxic chemical. Well, how things can change.

*continued next page*

## Finding a change could save your life!

Four out of five women who find breast cancer early enough survive. That's why it's worth paying your breasts as much attention now as you used to.

Every year, more than 11,500 Australian women are diagnosed with breast cancer. Over half of these cancers are found by women or their doctor noticing a change in their breast.

It's vital, whatever age you are, to get to know the normal look and feel of your breasts. You don't have to use any special method, just check your breasts while you're showering or getting dressed and you'll soon learn what's normal for you.

Changes to look for include:

- A new lump or lumpiness, especially if it's only in one breast
- A change in the size or shape of your breast
- A change in the nipple, such as crusting, ulcer, redness or inversion
- A nipple discharge
- A change in the skin of your breast, such as redness or dimpling
- An unusual pain that doesn't go away.

Being aware of breast changes is important even if you are having regular mammograms. If you notice any unusual changes in your breasts, see your GP without delay. If you are unsure about what is 'normal' for you, ask your GP to check your breasts.

For more information go to: [www.nbcc.org.au](http://www.nbcc.org.au)

I absolutely detest my chemo treatments and due to complications I have to endure extra procedures.

My hair decided to quit soon after the first chemo dose. Handfuls departed! It was a real dilemma as hair was shed everywhere! (I didn't know a body could produce such quantities of hair!) I collected it in bundles and distributed it in appropriate places in the garden where we could watch the antics of little wrens and finches squabbling over various pieces of hair that they required for nest building. We had many laughs and now as I peer into the foliage and see a nest lined with my hair, insulating eggs for hatchlings, I feel quite proud that I have contributed to their comfort.

Bald, however, is not a good look with me. I do have a wig which is not anything at all like my old look of brown hair. This one looks towards the future and is a stylish salt and pepper grey. I tried on oodles, all in shades of brown and even red and blonde. I attended a fantastic and morale building Look Good Feel Better workshop run by the Cancer Council. I realised that after I have finally slogged my way through chemo there WILL be a new me. A new life to be challenged by, and me to challenge it.

There are a few things that have impacted on me greatly during this devastating time.

I don't know how anyone could get through this without the total devotion and support of their partner. I know some do, but how?

You suddenly find out who your 'real' friends are. Some totally disappear as soon as they hear the word cancer, as if it is a spreadable disease. However, that hurt is totally overwhelmed by new friends who appear as if by magic and become treasures in your life.

Suddenly, your appearance on the outside can be unbearable. With surgery, scars, flat chest, and no hair, looking in the mirror is enough to turn on fresh tears. Mirrors become redundant. You just don't want to go near them. You suddenly realise that the book you saw with the great cover and terrible story line is relevant. It's not the outside image that matters, but what is inside.

Forget next year, next month, next week, tomorrow. Just get through each minute of each hour of each day. Little, wonderful, goal by goal minutes in which to make small but significant achievements. Just keep on going forwards, and you'll finally get there!

Keep smiling, laughing, living! A friend phoned, shocked by the news, and said that she would love to come and visit as we hadn't seen each other for years. I said that was more than OK but to expect to see me minus

my hair. She said, 'Jenny, I have never loved you for your hair. It's your smile that I love! You still do have your smile don't you?' Well, it has taken a battering of late, but yes. There's still lots to smile about.

The support I get from talking to other cancer survivors cannot be underestimated. The swapping of experiences is so valuable in your own journey. There are shared tears, but also laughter. You know the other truly understands what you are going through like no one else can. You also suddenly realise you can help others starting on the same journey.

If I can achieve one thing through this ordeal, it's the nagging thought that everyone who notices a change to their breast shouldn't wait to see a doctor. A lumpectomy is so much easier to endure than a mastectomy. Don't be afraid. Just do it!

Life is not over if you are diagnosed with cancer! It just means that your life is going to take a course you never expected it to. It may make you a better person and help you to achieve more out of life. My message for all breast cancer survivors is - 'Go for it girls! Grab life and live it to the full!' ■

## HOME DUTIES IS NOT MY OCCUPATION!

When my second son was born, the birth registration form asked for my occupation. I wrote 'mother'. Under main tasks and duties I wrote, 'to nurture, to foster emotional, spiritual and intellectual development, creativity and awareness, and to build confidence.' It sounded like a pretty impressive job to me. A few days later, I got a call from the office of Births, Deaths and Marriages. 'We don't have a category for "mother", they said apologetically. 'We only have "home duties".'

This is not the first time my job as a mother has failed to be recognised, and undoubtedly it will not be the last. To me, 'home duties' is redolent of laundry, scrubbing, sugar soaping walls, and greasy washing up water. It does not necessarily have any relation to raising children, or to what I do, at all, because mothering does not necessarily involve housework and being at home.

I did not gain two Honours degrees, and leave a good job, in order to run a mop over the floor. Teaching two little boys about the world and their place in it, passing on to them their cultural inheritance that I have received from my mother, balancing their nutritional requirements, making sure that they feel important and loved, is an entirely different matter.

Whenever I receive a form asking for my occupation, if I can I will write in 'mother'. I tick 'home duties' as an absolute last option, if they don't have any other category. Sometime, I hope, perhaps when my children are running the country, the correct option will be available.

*By Isabel Dallas, TAS  
From W.A.A Newsletter*

## Sweet Dare

Your fashion accessories boutique

Handbags, Wallets, Bracelets, Necklaces, Luggage  
30 to 50% off most products

[www.sweetdare.com.au](http://www.sweetdare.com.au)

ADVERTISEMENT



## Beating the odds!

By Heath Francis, Newcastle

***Having a serious accident as a child is bound to impact on someone's identity. When that accident results in a child losing one of their hands, both psychological and physical pressures are going to contribute to how they see themselves.***

I lost my right hand in a farming accident when I was seven. It was crushed in a meat mincer. The butchery that contained it was located on the farm I grew up on. Right from the start I felt I had clear choices in front of me – Be angry about what had happened... or get on with my life. Even at the age of seven I realised that it wasn't really a choice at all. From my first moment after waking up from the operation and learning

I'd lost my hand, my mum was there telling me that I could still do anything I set my mind to. This was reinforced over and over by the amazing support I received from both family and friends.

As a result, the first few years after the accident went by with next to no major issues. Even adapting to having to do things with just one hand didn't prove too difficult. To this day I still find the most frustrating thing is trying to

cut up a tough steak. However as I got older there were issues and they did start becoming serious. As I hit adolescence I became incredibly self-conscious of the fact that I looked different and my right arm was really ugly in my mind. So I went to great lengths to conceal the fact that I was missing a hand. It worked to some extent as in my first year at high school one of the teachers didn't notice that I was missing my hand until the 3rd term. However, overall it was a miserable failure as I was in fact lying to myself. I was lying about something that was a part of who I am.

I didn't realise I was lying at the time and it wasn't this important fact that brought about a change – it was vanity. I was embarrassed about how my right side had wasted away. My right arm had next to no muscle on it and my back was starting to be shaped like a 'C' due to muscle wastage. My left lung and heart capacities were also reduced. This horrified me, so I set about building up and strengthening my left side through exercise. The effect of this was quite incredible. Muscle started developing and my self-confidence rose. Then a side effect occurred that would change the path of my life... my 'ability' at sport increased. My weaker right arm had been holding me back in my sporting endeavours. With my new strength program and some training I went from a good school athlete to a State level runner.

Soon after this I was approached by the Australian Paralympic Committee (APC)

and asked to compete at a 'Sports Council for the Disabled' meet so they could see me run. Just going to this event was a big step as it meant for the first time in my life I was admitting that I was disabled. It was a decision that saw me take my first step towards accepting my disability.

The head coach of the Australian Paralympic Athletics team immediately asked me to become involved in the Ambulant Men's Relay Team. Six months after first being approached I was running at the 1998 World Championships for Athletes with Disabilities in Birmingham England and it changed the way I saw myself. I was 16. My original trepidation about being in a 'disabled' team dissolved as soon as I became a member of that team. There were people with the same disability as myself, and much more significant ones also. I noticed that they didn't let their disabilities define them... but they also didn't hide them either. They accepted it as part of who they were and got on with being amazing athletes. From that point on I accepted my disability as part of who I am and got on with the job of being the best athlete and the best person I could be.



*It is now 8 years since Heath was approached by the APC and he has competed at 2 World Championships, 2 Paralympics, and this year's Commonwealth Games winning Gold in the EAD 200m final. Sport is a wonderful physical and mental help for people with a disability as Heath's story is testament to. It is inspiring how able these athletes are.*

# Daring to dream



CAROLE BROADHEAD  
BERMAGUI NSW

Carole Broadhead is a self-confessed 'China watcher' living at Bermagui on the Far South Coast of New South Wales. In recent years Carole has transformed her 'watching' into 'doing' by developing direct connections with rural women in China. With a group of like-minded local women she has established a small international support and funding group called 'Loomgrowers'. They support Chinese women in their struggle to achieve economic freedom and break the poverty cycle by becoming better able to take control of their futures and develop sustainable small business opportunities. The children of these Chinese women are also benefiting through Loomgrower scholarships, which are providing greater access to schooling. Loomgrowers has recently developed a close relationship with the Women's Federation of China, and together they are exploring new projects. And this all grew out of an afternoon tea Carole hosted in January 2003.

## *WHAT GAVE YOU THE MOTIVATION/ INSPIRATION TO FOLLOW YOUR DREAM?*

Loomgrowers is made up of a group of about 10 women. I invited them to come to my home and listen to four aid workers (including Kellie, a friend's daughter) share their stories of their work with women in Yunnan Province on the Border of Myanmar and China. After hearing the girls speak we all wanted to help the women in a practical way. The women had the expertise to weave but due to poverty and migration did not have the tools or the threads to get started. They needed a simple loom to make cloth, which could then be worn by the women, bartered for goods or sold at the market. We all put money on the table and raised \$180. It was enough to buy two looms and thread to get them started.

## *AT WHAT POINT DID YOU REALISE THAT YOUR DREAM WAS ACTUALLY POSSIBLE, AND WHAT WAS IT THAT MADE YOU THINK YOU COULD REALLY DO IT?*

We decided to meet again and thought we would get together occasionally and send a few dollars so that Kellie could buy more looms. My husband Bill came up with the name 'Loomgrowers', as that is what we were hoping to do — grow more looms! Initially it was just 'warm and fuzzy' for us, and then word began to trickle out and I was asked to go and speak to a local service club. At the end of the function the club gave me a cheque to send to China. I knew then that as we were handling 'public' money, we had to be accountable. A Loomgrower's husband was the President of the Sapphire Coast Producers' Association (SCPA), and most of us belonged to that group. As the Association was about sustainability, it was suggested "tongue in cheek" we become a 'special international interest group' sustaining Chinese rural women. We went to the SCPA Annual General Meeting and put up our proposal. It was accepted. We are now an official SCPA Special Interest Group and come under their incorporation, so that takes care of issues such as insurance and finance.

We manage our own bank account, which is audited through SCPA. This helped save a lot of money and paperwork. It also gives us confidence in handling public money, and we know that all the money collected goes to the cause.

As Kellie was moving on to another project in Africa, we needed to form some relationships of our own with the Women's Federation of China. In September 2004 Betty Craze, Dr Leanne Craze and I visited China where Kellie introduced us to the women who had been working with her, so we could start to build our own networks and come to some mutual understanding of how we could operate at such a distance.

This was a vital step if we were to keep the connection going. It was important that the Chinese women knew that Loomgrowers was not a government project, and that we were just ordinary Australian women linking with them on a woman-to-woman basis. It was heartwarming to meet so many of the women involved and to visit the school we support.

We are currently looking at a partnership project proposal with the Women's Federation of Yunnan. The Yi nationality women embroider beautifully but they need training to ensure a quality finish on value-added items, and assistance in marketing their work, if the business is to be sustainable. It all takes a long time because of the language and cultural differences, but with patience we are getting there.

## *WHEN YOU WERE A CHILD, WHAT DID YOU WANT TO 'BE' WHEN YOU GREW UP?*

I grew up in Stawell, a town near the Grampians in Victoria. Even though we didn't live on a farm, I always loved the smell of cows and wanted to be a herd tester. When I was fourteen I was told that girls couldn't be herd testers, so that was that. My first job was a milliner. Then I married and moved into the hospitality industry. I moved to Bermagui 35 years ago and my first husband and