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MEDIA RELEASE

New Home Away From Home The Greatest Gift Of All

Marissa Florias, who recently celebrated her 20th birthday, will be granted her birthday wish on Thursday 10 April, when The Centre for Cerebral Palsy's Ida Street Children's Respite Home in Balcatta is transformed into a funky teenage respite centre catering specifically to the needs of young adults like Marissa who are living with CP.

The Ida Street Makeover will offer a home away from home to many of The Centre's young adults, providing an environment more suited to the 16-25 year age group, where vital friendships can continue to grow, allowing our teenagers and young adults to prepare for adulthood in a fun, nurturing and age appropriate setting.

Respite care is one of the many beneficial services offered by The Centre. At present, out of home respite care is provided for two age groups only; children aged 6 to 18 years at three venues in the metropolitan area, including Balcatta, and an adult respite centre for adults aged 18-60+. Although each of the venues maintain a friendly, homely atmosphere offering wide ranging activities, "there is currently no respite home where teenagers can enjoy activities and surroundings appropriate to their age," says Kym, whose son Hayden has CP. "There is only a children's home, which does not cater to the maturing needs of teenagers".

Without the new teenage respite centre Marissa and other young adults just like her would be limited to the adult respite service. "Although the adult respite care service provides an excellent service, most of the people accessing it are much older. It wouldn't be an easy transition for Marissa to get used to, both finishing school and then not having her friends around her anymore. The new respite centre will be a place that Marissa and other young adults in the 16-25 year age bracket can call their own, a place to watch movies, listen to music, play games and enjoy each others company" says Christine Florias, Marissa's mother.

Marissa is just like any other girl her age; she loves shopping and talking until all hours with her girlfriends, and has been attending respite for many years. Christine says "Marissa thinks of it as a sleep over and loves catching up with her mates. She's always wanted to have a big sleep over party at home but with so many wheelchairs and the high needs of some of her friends it's just not possible".

The Centre for Cerebral Palsy would like to acknowledge the contribution of its corporate partners, including Chevron Australia, the local community and Marissa, to the Ida Street Respite Home Makeover. Together with friends, family and www.everdayhero.com, Marissa raised over \$2500 as part of The Centre's Wheelie Big Rock Challenge, with all money raised going to the makeover. These funds, together with those received from the local community and The Centre's corporate partners make this makeover possible.

Renay Lambert, Respite Coordinator for The Centre says "Respite provides a fun environment for children to socialise, make friends and promote the preservation of the family unit by providing a break for families caring for their children who have high needs 24 hours a day 7 days a week. Thanks to the generous support of the local community and business groups, as

well as Marissa and her friends and family, we are now able to provide deserving young adults with their own special respite house where they can develop lifelong friends and greater independence with others in their own age group”.

Anyone in the local community who would like to support The Centre for Cerebral Palsy and its many programmes should contact Kathy Kane on 9443 0228.

Footage Highlights

The makeover will take place on Thursday the 10th of April from 12pm until 4pm.

The best time to get footage on the day will be between 3pm and 4pm as some of the kids would have arrived by that time and most of the makeover will be completed.

-ENDS-

For further information please contact:

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FACTS ABOUT CEREBRAL PALSY

- *CP is a permanent physical condition that affects movement.*
- *In Australia a child is born with CP every 18 hours.*
- *Australians under 18 are three times more likely to be diagnosed with cerebral palsy than cancer.*
- *There is no pre-birth test, no known cure and severity is on the increase.*
- *For most the cause of CP is unknown.*
- *CP is not a disease, it is not contagious.*
- *CP can be as mild as just a weakness in one hand ranging to almost complete lack of movement.*
- *Since 1951 The Cerebral Palsy Association has forged an enviable reputation as one of the leading disability service providers in WA. In line with the outstanding work we do in the area of CP management and support to those with disability, on 13 March 2007 we adopted a new name The Centre for Cerebral Palsy and a colourful new logo.*