

Kids great day out at Camp Courage



▲ The children have fun taking part in a crate stacking activity.

Organising and running a camp for kids recovering from burns was a labour of love for a committed group of career firefighters.

Held at the Ern Halliday Recreation Centre in Hillarys, the camp was organised by the Career Firefighters Fund for Children. They sought the support of Princess Margaret Hospital (PMH) staff who had witnessed the childrens' initial injury and their long, arduous journey of recovery.

Station Officer Claire Finucane, who is also President of the Fund, said the aim was to provide a carefree day for kids aged between eight and 12 years recovering from burns.

"It was wonderful to be able to put smiles on the faces of children who miss out on a lot of fun and spend so much time away from family, friends and school due to their injuries," Claire said.

"Parents and siblings also found the event rewarding, and it was a great way for both firefighters and PMH staff to network with the families and provide them with additional support."

Claire was amazed at the energy of the children as they got involved in team building and trust games, indoor rock and crate climbing, and riding a giant swing, as well as basketball and indoor hockey.

"It was just fantastic seeing these children running around and overcoming fears like not knowing anyone, and participating in new and challenging activities," Claire said.

"As firefighters we see injuries sustained from burns, but rarely get to see how people recover and often wonder what happened to particular individuals.

"It was worthwhile being able to understand the recovery process from a traumatic injury such as burns, and we learnt something from everyone involved."



▲ The happy bunch of children, parents and FRS career firefighters at Camp Courage.

More than 200 children under 15 in WA require inpatient treatment at PMH each year, with the highest percentage being one to four year olds – 44.5 percent.

Claire said the burns ranged in severity and age, and while some had scarring that was very obvious, others did not.

“Care was taken to ensure that the children all wore burn socks or body suits to cover and protect their healing skin,” she said.

“Recovery can be an extended process and each will be outpatients at hospital for their growing years and possibly their entire lives, to consistently monitor and address issues such as scarring and infection.”

Claire praised all the career Fire and Rescue Service firefighters who contribute to the Fund for Children, PMH Burns Ward staff, burns specialist Dr Fiona Wood, and everyone who dedicates themselves to the recovery of these children.

“It was heartwarming that a large group of firefighters volunteered their time to help and make it such a stand out day for the kids,” Claire said.

More than 200 children under 15 in WA require inpatient treatment in PMH each year, with the highest percentage being one to four year olds (44.5 percent).

The majority of burns are caused by scalding (53 percent), followed by contact, then flame or explosion.



▲ Katerina and Firefighter James Hislop.

Smiling rock climber.