

AUTUMN 2023

# Can:Do 4Kids **Smile**

Empowering children to achieve their full potential

## A Bright Start for Indianna & Mackenzie

Mum, Naomi shares her  
families hearing journey

## Dimi's Dot Watch

A small gift that  
can change a life



"Giving my children a bright start, where there is nothing they can't do, is my hope for my daughters futures"  
Naomi, mum of Indianna and Mackenzie (Indianna pictured)



# Welcome!

Welcome to the Autumn edition of our supporter update.



Please let me introduce myself as Can:Do Groups new Chief Executive.

Since starting in the position in October 2022, my initial impressions are of an organisation full of passionate people, clearly driven to provide the best possible support and assistance to all our clients.

Thank you for your generosity and support; it helps us achieve the amazing outcomes for our clients such as Indianna and Mackenzie. It was heartening to read the words shared by Naomi, their mother, within this publication. Her story shines a light on Molly, one of our brilliant therapists at Can:Do 4Kids, but we know they are all equally as wonderful.

Can:Do is one of the most socially valuable organisations in South Australia and our commitment to helping others is what really attracted me to the role. In my third month with the Group, I note that while I understand the Can:Do Group has a vital role providing much needed services right across the State, I am also conscious we are operating in a complex and changing environment. We are striving to build inclusive communities and give people the skills to live a life without limits. And, my ultimate goal will be to help the Group continue to thrive in a sustainable way so the people who rely on us for support can live full lives well into the future.

It takes courage and conviction to continue to do the work we do, with the dedication of our professional staff at the side of our clients families, as much as it does for you to continue to support us. For this we give thanks.

Warmest wishes,

Lester Wynne-Jones  
Can:Do Group Chief Executive



## A Bright Start for Indianna and Mackenzie



*“Giving my children a bright start, where there is nothing they can’t do, is my hope for my daughters futures”*

Sharing the hearing journey of her two girls, seven year old Indianna (Indi) and five year old Mackenzie (Kenzie) is mum, Naomi. Being supported by an Auditory Verbal Therapist at Can:Do 4Kids has given me useful tools and activities to do with my girls to expand their vocabulary and auditory comprehension.

Typically hearing children start to hear while still inside the womb. As babies and toddlers they are overhearing conversations and learning without knowing it. For my girls, they have to try really hard to learn new words and understand what they mean. They missed out on the first crucial developmental stage when it comes to hearing. That is why intense verbal therapy is so important for children with hearing loss.

My babies were both born with Waardenburg syndrome. Not something you hear every day – and in fact only 1 in 40,000 babies are born with it. It runs on the girls fathers side. I had prepared that they may have a mild hearing loss, however for some reason it never occurred to me they may be profoundly deaf.

Waardenburg syndrome is a group of genetic conditions that can cause hearing loss and changes in colouring (pigmentation) of the hair, skin, and eyes. Moderate to profound hearing loss can occur in one or both ears.

Hearing that our second born also had Waardenbug syndrome, was equally devastating if not more so, as we knew by then of the journey ahead. The first year in life, they had so many appointments. Blood tests, CT scans, MRI’s, eye and heart checks and so much more. Both girls had hearing aids at 6 weeks and after multiple tests over months it was determined they were candidates for cochlear implants. They were implanted at 11 months old. Indi’s surgery was a long 7 hours & Mackenzie’s 5 hours.

Hearing fatigue is a big thing for my girls. Spending all day with their processors on is really exhausting. Hearing doesn’t come naturally to them so they are really focused and concentrating at all times to hear, process, understand and then respond to what they are hearing.

Without Molly, I can’t even imagine they would be talking at all. When we first started seeing her, Indi was 2 and had absolutely no vocabulary and hardly babbled. Kenzie was a newborn and it wasn’t until their mappings were optimised & lots of intense therapy, that they began to show tremendous progress. They both still have a long way to go, and closing the gap between their hearing age & actual age is going to take a lot of effort, time, resilience and determination.

My girls have gone through more than most will in a lifetime, but they prove time and time again just how incredible they are. Although not easy, I wouldn’t change this journey as we have met some absolutely incredible people along the way that will always be special to us.”



Indianna and Mackenzie are can enjoy the sounds of a Wiggles Concert thanks to their bright start.

Your generosity has lit up the lives of Indianna and Mackenzie, making it possible for them to shine brighter. But there are still more families who need our help. Join us in making a difference by filling out the enclosed supporter form and becoming a part of the Can:Do 4Kids family. Let’s create brighter futures together.

## Dimi’s Dot Watch

The everyday struggles of a child with vision needs can bring tears to the eyes of even the strongest among us. But for Can:Do client, Dimi, the story is one of hope and determination, where the power of technology transforms challenges into possibilities.

Nine-year-old Dimi, who has Stickler-Marshall Syndrome and is blind and hard-of-hearing, has faced many obstacles in his journey, but with the unwavering support of his mother and the tireless work of Can:Do specialists, he has overcome them all.

The story doesn’t end there. The latest chapter in Dimi’s journey is one of empowerment and independence. Dimi had his sights set on the Dot Watch, a Smart Braille watch that would allow him to experience time like never before, just like his peers.

But when the manufacturers announced that they were ceasing production of the item, Dimi and his family were heartbroken.

At Can:Do, we believe that anything is possible. And with the help of our Occupational Therapy team, a Dot Watch was gifted to Dimi. The moment when therapists Justin and Rick presented the watch to Dimi was one for the ages. The look on Dimi’s face when he felt the Braille time through the watch was a picture of pure joy, and he couldn’t wait to share his new found independence with his friends.

This is a story of hope and the power of technology to make a difference in the lives of those who need it the most. A story that will warm the heart.

*“It made for one of my best days since starting at Can:Do 4Kids”, says Dimi’s Occupational Therapist, Rick. “It’s moments like these that we are reminded of why we do what we do!”*



Dimi receiving his Dot Watch, December 2022.



Your kindness is the driving force behind stories like Dimi’s. Please give a gift today to help more children like Dimi live a life filled with purpose and independence.

Dates to Remember

Dinner in the Dark  
Friday 26 May

# Can:Do 4Kids Smile

Empowering children to achieve their full potential

Support children in our community who are deaf or blind

Scan the QR code to donate today



## Spotlight Nicola Capon

What is your role at Can:Do 4Kids? How long have you been working for Can:Do 4Kids?

I am a Teacher of the Deaf at Can:Do 4Kids, having worked at the Cora Barclay Centre and Can:Do 4Kids for 24 years. I am passionate about the use of sound field technology in education and enjoy both my roles at Can:Do.

Tell us about your journey towards becoming a Teacher of the Deaf? Why did you choose this career path?

I completed my teaching degree and originally considered an Outdoor Education post-grad degree. However, I ended up taking a specialised education course to become a Teacher of the Deaf and it has turned out to be a blessing. I have held various roles in the Department of Education and now Can:Do 4Kids. Now I have two passions - working with students who are deaf and Hard of Hearing and being outdoors with friends at Scouts.

What do you love about working for Can:Do 4Kids?

I've been working as a Teacher of the Deaf for many years and have seen many changes in hearing technology. The speech processors for cochlear implants have greatly reduced in size, which is amazing. I enjoy working with children and witnessing their growth in areas such as language development and self advocacy skills.

What are some of the most rewarding moments you have had working with our clients and families?

It's rewarding to see the joy on children's faces when they learn to put their hearing aids on by themselves. Hearing students and parents share their stories, which is always inspiring. These stories, whether written or spoken, in a classroom or at important events, are special moments. From realising they can hear clocks to participating in sports, all are milestones that make my job fulfilling.

What are some of your hobbies/interests outside of work?

In my free time, I volunteer with Scouts SA. I have had various roles in Scouting and have traveled to many countries. I am going to South Korea in 2023. I also enjoy spending time with family, camping, travelling with friends, and building LEGO.



Connect with us...

**Can:Do 4Kids**

cando4kids.com.au



**Can:Do Hearing**

candohearing.com.au



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<p><b>1st Prize</b></p> <p>Early Bird Prize!</p>  <p>Toyota Kluger Hybrid GX RRP \$59,551</p> 	<p><b>2nd Prize</b></p> <p>Toyota C-HR GR-Sport Hybrid RRP \$42,306</p>  <p><b>3rd Prize</b></p> <p>Kozco Energy Solar Panel/Battery package RRP \$23,490</p> 	<p><b>Buy a \$2 ticket in the People's Choice Community Lottery to support us and go into the draw to win one of 43 prizes worth over \$300,000!</b></p> <p><a href="http://communitylottery.com.au">communitylottery.com.au</a></p>  <p><b>People's Choice</b> COMMUNITY LOTTERY</p> <p><small>Full T&amp;Cs <a href="http://communitylottery.com.au">communitylottery.com.au</a>. SA Lottery Licence No. M14289. Vic Raffle Permit No. 10454/22. Declared Organisation No. 58845. ACT Permit No. ACT/R 22/0017A. NSW Art Union Authority no. 60CAU/2410.</small></p>
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