



Pierce and Susan Burns with Christopher Jefferys

PEDAL FOR PIERCE

BY NATALIE CAVALLARO

Inspired by a conversation with a fellow student, 10-year-old Christopher Jefferys came home from a school sports day, determined to do something to help those less fortunate.

'I was talking to a boy who had a special need with his talking and he was saying how much fun he was having at the sports day,' Christopher said. 'When I went home that night I told mum and dad

I wanted to do something to help people with sicknesses.'

His parents Rebecca and Nigel and brother Ashley, 8, threw their support behind Christopher's idea and decided to raise funds for an illness that affects a little boy they know, Pierce Burns. And the cycling event Pedal 4 Pierce was born.

Four-year-old Pierce suffers from congenital muscular dystrophy, a disease which has no cure and no

treatment. With only six children in Australia with the particular strain of CMD that Pierce has (a collagen VI deficiency), funds for CMD are desperately needed.

'Initially, we were overwhelmed by what Christopher wanted to do,' Pierce's mum Susan said. 'Every bit of support for CMD helps and we are hoping the Canberra community really gets behind this and makes it an annual event.'

Although Pierce seems a little shy about all the fuss, Christopher is ready to ride.

'I'm hoping to make heaps of

money,' he said.

'I already have \$570.'

Pedal 4 Pierce will be held at Stromlo Forest Park on Saturday 12 December from 10am until 4pm.

All are welcome to participate in this fun bike ride which will include 'Pierce's Track' mapped by Christopher.

To sign up for the ride, email pedal4pierce@hotmail.com or call Nigel on 0418 440 481.

For more information about congenital muscular dystrophy or to read more about Pierce's story, logon to curecmd.org.

Meet one man's best friend

BY NATALIE CAVALLARO

In order to meet Clayton Rumble, you have to meet his exuberant Labrador, Simba.

Bounding with energy and unwavering affection for his master, Simba is a pooch with special skills, an assistance and companion dog who is constantly by Clayton's side.

Clayton, an environmental consultant, was at his holiday house on the coast in 2007 when a sleepwalking accident resulted in him walking off a loft platform of a section of the house that was being renovated. When he woke up, he was paralysed from the waist down.

'I came across assistance dogs when I was in the Prince of Wales Hospital,' Clayton said.

'A quadriplegic came in with assistance dogs and explained what they do and I thought it would be a good idea to find out about it.'

For those who are quadriplegic or have a severe physical disability, full service assistance dogs are a constant help by picking up dropped items, helping their owner get served in shops and even picking up the phone.

'Simba is what is called a companion dog,' Clayton said. 'He's trained to help me around the house and when I'm out, but he didn't



Photo: Cole Bennetts

quite make the grade to be a full service dog because he was a little bit unreliable.'

Despite his excitable nature, there's no doubting Simba's loyalty.

'I definitely noticed the benefits when Simba came along, things certainly got easier.

'The biggest thing was the companionship for me,' Clayton said.

Assistance Dogs Australia provides dogs free of charge to people with physical disabilities to help them to achieve more independence. It costs the organisation around \$25,000 to train each dog and provide ongoing support.

Logon to assistancedogs.org.au for more information, or to find out about dog training opportunities.

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