



**MEDIA RELEASE: EMBARGOED UNTIL 11AM, WEDNESDAY DEC 7**

## **AUSTRALIA'S MOST COURAGEOUS KIDS REWARDED**

**Australia's five most courageous kids for 2011 have been honoured at the eighth annual Take 5 Brave Kids Awards in Sydney today.**

The campaign recognises the young battlers of Australia, with awards in five categories: Bravery, Inspirational, Local Hero, Sporting Champ and Young Carer.

The announcement was made at a special ceremony at the Australian National Maritime Museum, Darling Harbour, Sydney, this morning.

With hundreds of inspiring entries pouring in from around the nation, choosing the final winners was tough for the judges - cricketer Steve Waugh, charity campaigner Ron Delezio (father of burns survivor Sophie), actress Georgie Parker, and Take 5 editor Belinda Wallis.

The winners and their families were also honoured by a long list of celebrities at the event, including MC David Campbell, Justice Crew, Erin McNaught and Timomatic from *Australia's Got Talent*.

## **AND THE WINNERS ARE:**



**WINNER YOUNG CARER**

**Connor Harper, 15, Inverell, NSW**

Connor is his father George's carer. When George was diagnosed with non-Hodgkins lymphoma in 2005, Connor was only nine years old. The first thing he did was give his dad a hug. Since then, Connor has taken on the responsibility of caring for his father. He's there for him during chemo and has become the man of the house, cooking, cleaning and even helping George to eat and drink. When it comes to caring for his dad, no task is too big or too small for Connor.



### WINNER SPORTING CHAMP

#### Hayden Siebuhr, 12, Highfields, Qld

Hayden dreams of representing Australia at the next Commonwealth Games and competing in the Paralympics. At the age of two, Hayden was diagnosed with a cancerous tumour in his spine. He lost the use of his legs and had to undergo 18 months of chemotherapy followed by intense physiotherapy, but he soon mastered his wheelchair and was whizzing around the hospital ward. Nothing deters Hayden. He loves sport and has triumphed over adversity to become an active member of society. He plays wheelchair basketball, is a strong swimmer and has won several medals along the way.



### WINNER INSPIRING

#### Erin Toomey, 5, St Helena, Vic

Erin has had a rough start to life. She was diagnosed with T-cell lymphoblastic lymphoma - cancer of the lymph nodes - when she was three. Erin underwent chemotherapy immediately. After her first round of chemo, Erin started to collect beads to represent milestones throughout her journey. For every procedure or significant event in her life she got a colourful bead to add to her necklace. Receiving the beads gave her something to look forward to. Erin finished chemo in February 2011 and is now well into her two-year maintenance period. She loves talking to people about her cancer journey and her necklace now holds 400 beads of inspiration.



### WINNER LOCAL HERO

#### Stephanie Freeman, 15, Eatons Hill, Qld

Stephanie and her twin, Jenna, were born prematurely. They were tiny - the size of an adult's hand. Stephanie had breathing problems and needed surgery, so she spent six weeks in the neonatal care unit of Brisbane's Mater Hospital. When Stephanie turned 11 she decided to raise money for the neonatal unit that looked after her and her sister when they were born. To begin with, she completed a 10km sponsored swim, followed by a half marathon, and she set up a stall at local events and in shopping centres selling Mater Little Miracles merchandise. To date she has raised almost \$20,000.



### WINNER BRAVERY

#### Blake Rice, 12, Gold Coast, Qld

**(Note: Unable to attend for family reasons and not available for interview.)**

It's hard to believe what Blake has been through over the past 12 months. Blake, his brother, Jordan, and their mum, Donna, were caught in the floods that swept through Toowoomba in January 2011. When rescuers came, Blake and his family were trapped on the roof of their car, and Jordan heroically insisted Blake was saved first. Tragically, Blake could only watch as his mum and brother were then swept to their deaths. Not only has Blake lost his mum and his brother, but he's since been bullied and he's had to settle into a new life, home and school. But he's been so courageous and shown a maturity beyond his years.

## About Take 5 and Take 5 Brave Kids:

Since its inception in 2004, the Take 5 Brave Kids campaign has been acknowledged in parliament, and received several awards including a prestigious MPA media award. The highly emotional ceremonies have honoured a total of 40 courageous young Australians to date. With a circulation of 209,319 (ABC Jun 11 - Sept 11) and readership of 796,000, Take 5 is one of Australia's most popular weekly magazines.

**For further information, interviews and photos, please contact:**

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