

# The Boy Across the Road

My husband Jim and I love the Bashes. We drive a black stretch hearse and have a coffin in the back, which has been turned into a refrigerated compartment for beer!! We also love Variety and all the children we help.

I would like to relate my story about a young boy who lives across the road....

Jacob Ray of Culburra Beach is 10 years old, and he was born with neuroblastoma, a cancerous tumour of the spine, and he is a paraplegic.



Jacob loves sport and he is very involved in swimming, cycling and most active in representing his school.

We enjoy our involvement with Variety and for many years we have personally supported the Bash. About two years ago we decided to seek assistance from Variety for a bike for Jacob. He had outgrown his own and, even though Jim had changed the sprocket drive and done all he could to make the bike simple for Jacob to operate, he was fighting a losing battle. A new bike would enable Jacob to be more active and to keep up with his younger brother, Luke, and other children in the neighbourhood.

In May 2000 Jacob was presented with a new bike, donated by Variety Club NSW, and a more excited and happy child was pretty hard to find.

It is very rare to hear Jacob complain, and he handles his disability with great courage and determination. He is someone you can feel proud of. Jacob has the most wonderful support from his parents, Harry and Julie, his Nan Peggy and his brother Luke.

It is on occasions like this that you realize the true reason you are involved with the Greatest Charity in the world - Variety Club!

*Carol Lewis - Tent 56: New South Wales*

*A long term "Basher"*

# If I Die Tomorrow

The year was 1988, the place was Australia and I was Chief Barker of Tent 56, Variety Club of Australia. Our Victoria Region was chaired by Ken Morgan (Ken Morgan Toyota) and the Executive Director was Pam Blashki. With my approval and Ken's support (and despite all the obvious difficulties) Pam successfully organized the very first Variety Club of Australia 'dream flight' for children with terminal illnesses.

She arranged for an Ansett Airlines 737 and crew to be loaned to Variety Club and, in a few hours, the plane was given new Variety Club livery by artist/entertainer Rolf Harris and a team of young helpers.

Selected groups of 'special' children with their 'helpers' and medical staff, supervised by Dr. David Marsh, boarded the plane in Melbourne and flew to Sydney, where they were joined by more 'special' children and helpers. (Ansett even provided a second plane out of Sydney for a 'joyride' around the Sydney area for other disadvantaged kids.)

The main 'dream flight' continued on to the Gold Coast in Queensland where Pam had organized two days of entertainment at 'DreamWorld' and 'Seaworld' for around 100 children and one night's accommodation in several Gold Coast hotels for all these kids and their helpers. Absolutely everything was donated.

Seeing these kids having so much fun in the sunshine just once in their limited lifetime was a deeply emotional experience for all of us but there's one special moment I'll remember forever.

Ken Morgan, Melbourne 'street-kid' turned highly successful businessman, had been helping a teenager on one of the rides. Ken couldn't hold back the tears. I took him aside and asked him if he was OK. He turned to me slowly and replied softly "That young man just said to me 'It doesn't matter if I die tomorrow - I'm having the best time of my life right now'."

*Tony Hatch - Tent 36: Great Britain*

*Past International President*

*Past Chief Barker, Tent 36; Past Chief Barker, Tent 56*