



Every penny: a history of our early fundraising

An exhibition curated by Emily Collins
(Museum Consultant, WCHN History & Heritage Collection)





Image: Detail of floral teddy created by Children's Hospital Auxiliary, c1960s

In the early days of the Women's and Children's Hospital, every penny was carefully counted. Every penny was appreciated; every penny was put to use. Prior to being declared public hospitals, the former Adelaide Children's Hospital and Queen Victoria Hospital raised most of their own funds in order to provide healthcare services.

From the beginning, the Children's Hospital maintained a close relationship with newspapers to promote its needs and fundraising activities. One early advertisement implored, "One penny keeps the Hospital going for two full seconds. Can you spare a couple of seconds?"

Some ads featured adorable 'talking' babies, uttering statements like: "Hey! We desperately need more wards, a new surgical block and equipment, and Oh Boy, do we need money!"

Children directly supported the care of their fellow children. Thousands subscribed to the Children's Sunbeam Society of South Australia, raising money for the Hospital through juvenile balls and bazaars.

Just as significant were the contributions of the Hospital's own staff, who took on fundraising on top of their demanding professional roles. In the early days, all workers were required to help run the garden fetes the Children's Hospital held on its lawns.

Some staff contributions were novel and involved a healthy element of fun and hard yakka. Consider the cot races of the 1960s. Members of staff, from the Hospital's Finance Department to its Boot Shop, joined together to push a cot on wheels all the way from the Adelaide Town Hall to Victor Harbor – a marathon distance of 85km!

As was often the case, logistics and collection of donations for the event were handled by one of the Hospital's dedicated Auxiliary groups. This exhibition introduces the Auxiliary and Charitable Organisations story, but hardly does justice to their contributions since the late 1800s.

Primarily, the exhibition *Every Penny* is shaped by visual evidence of major fundraising activities in our history, such the 1960s Children's Hospital Building Appeal.

The exhibition also features evidence of 'entertainment aid': entertainers applying influence to bring in funds. From 1951 to 1983, the Good Friday Appeal was a major annual event. Initially broadcast on Radio 5AD, from 1962 it also aired live on Channel 7. Radio personalities such as Dick Moore, together with a changing cast of guest comedians, singers and other stars, volunteered their services for the children's cause. With the Women's & Children's Hospital Foundation, in recent years the event made a comeback as the Easter Appeal on Channel 9.

Not to be outdone, staff of the former Children's Hospital developed their own brand of entertainment aid. The 1980s saw a motley cast of Hospital staff treading the boards of the old stage in the Samuel Way Building basement, in a series of Christmas pantomimes. Typically the shows were comedic parodies of well-known plays. A modest fundraiser, they doubled as a form of Arts in Health for participants and their in-house audience. The stage still stands – might we see a revival?



Image: Detail of Children's Hospital pharmacist at his fete stall, c1948



Image: Detail of Children's Hospital lawn fete, 1918



Image: Detail of Doorknock Campaign, Children's Hospital Building Appeal, 1960



Image: Detail of Sunbeam cot, c1908

The research process for *Every Penny* unearthed intriguing gems from our fundraising history. In 1968, three men from The Sophistikats fundraising group starred in a magazine fashion shoot, attempting to launch a new trend ahead of their upcoming benefit ball. Their signature statement was dress suits, with the pants cut off well above the knees! For the exhibition, this item proved a neat counterpoint to the glamorous Girl of the Year Quest entrants depicted.

Throughout all of this activity, the Queen Victoria Hospital was relatively quiet on the promotion and fundraising front. Like the Children's Hospital, during the 1940s the institution ran annual badge-selling days. In 1979, the Queen Vic's Nursery organised a Walkathon through the city parklands to fund a new cardiac and respiratory monitor for ill and premature infants.

The Queen Victoria Hospital didn't hit its stride, however, until The Friends of the QVH launched the 'Save the Queen Vic' campaign in 1980. They appointed their first dedicated Public Relations Manager (Karyn Foster) two years later, embarking upon a new era of community awareness and support to raise funds to meet the Hospital's additional needs.

A new relationship with the media – and promotional photography – flourished. While the Hospital's annual report of 1981 was bereft of images, the 1982 document was entirely different. The cover was emblazoned with a mother-and-baby portrait



Image: Detail of Children's Hospital cot race team, c1963-64

in soft focus. Photos of hospital scenes were studied throughout. Most importantly, there was an undeniable surge in the number of donors and subscribers listed. Auxiliaries and other Charitable Organisations had started forming all over Adelaide, with former trainees, staff and patients joining the fundraising effort. That same year, the Hospital had its first Telethon campaign.

In his quest to establish a world record for playing keyboard, in October 1985 David Scott delivered a marathon music session at the South Adelaide Football Club to benefit the Hospital. The Queen Victoria Hospital got a unique marathon of its own.

Philanthropists and fundraisers from the community have worked together to raise funds in support of the Women's and Children's Hospital ever since. Through this partnership, organisations such as our namesake, the Women's & Children's Hospital Foundation, now work closely with the hospital community to regularly support and raise funds for anything from equipment and facilities to Arts in Health programs.

Every Penny is packed with fundraising tales from the early years. And there are many more to tell. While you read this, new fundraising stories are being created for our Hospital. As with the business of providing health care, the job of fundraising to contribute to healthcare is never done.

Emily Collins

This exhibition was planned and exhibited on the lands of the Kurna People. We pay our respects to the Kurna Elders past and present and to the Elders of the lands this brochure reaches.

The Curator wishes to thank: Jill Newman and Lauren Simeoni from the WCH Foundation, the WCHN History and Heritage Group, Marg Lea and Vivek Kadam, Don Ransom, Sylvia Neale, Jared Thomas, Tim Boord from WCHN Corporate Communications and the WCH Foundation Gallery Management Committee members: Alison Russell, Lis Brittan and Jackie Barreau.

History and Heritage Collection

The Women's and Children's Health Network has a collection of historical artefacts which is managed by the WCHN History and Heritage Group. This was originally formed as the ICONS Group in 1995 by retired Adelaide Children's Hospital Staff. The WCHN History and Heritage Group aims to preserve, collect, collate, catalogue, store, display and interpret items of historical significance to the Women's and Children's Hospital and its predecessors the Adelaide Children's Hospital, the Queen Victoria Hospital and associated institutions.

Women's & Children's Hospital Foundation Arts in Health program

The WCH Foundation Arts in Health program coordinates five galleries in the Hospital, providing a space away from the stresses of treatment to distract, entertain and inspire, improving the visual environment. The Arts in Health programs integrate art into the life of the Hospital to improve people's health and wellbeing. We try to make the environment more 'child-friendly', making it look better and helping to make the time spent in hospital 'feel better'. The Yellow Heart Gallery provides a platform to share the WCHN History and Heritage Collection with the Hospital community and explore the significant people and events that shaped the Hospital today.

Every penny: a history of our early fundraising is on display in the Yellow Heart Gallery (Level 1, Zone F) at the Women's and Children's Hospital from February until the end of April 2019.

Cover image: Every Penny Helps Sign



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