



MEDIA RELEASE

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Generosity gives Joy new lease of life

Thornlie's Joy Mewburn will never again underestimate the generosity of the human spirit.

Blind from birth, Joy was diagnosed with Meniere's disease in March 2008 and this had a significant impact on her hearing, orientation and her mobility. No longer confident using her cane, her once active and independent lifestyle was in serious jeopardy.

Following a medical assessment, Joy was advised that her best option for full function was a hearing aid system which cost \$10,000. But despite receiving a Lotterywest grant for almost half the money, she simply could not afford the balance.

Having almost given up hope, Joy was interviewed by a radio station about her situation. Her story touched the heart of Helen Leech, of Maylands, who called Senses Foundation and offered to fund the outstanding balance.

Senses' social worker Karen Wickham says thanks to Helen's amazing donation, Joy now has her new aids and is enjoying renewed independence.

"She really does have a new lease of life," says Karen.

In recognition of her incredible generosity, Senses Foundation has awarded Helen the 2009 Teresa Way Award.

This award is presented annually to recognise a person, business or community organisation who has made a significant contribution to a person or people who are deafblind and their families through;

- a non-monetary contribution to the Senses Foundation services for people who are deafblind or to an individual person who is deafblind,
- being a positive role model for people who are deafblind, or
- a financial contribution to the Senses Foundation services for people who are deafblind.

Chief Executive Debbie Karasinski says Teresa Way was the Clerical Officer for the WA Deafblind Association for seven years before her death. In 2004, Senses Foundation decided to name its highest award in her honour.

“Teresa Way was an amazing person with a positive attitude and an enormous sense of humour which triumphed despite her history of medical complications, several hip replacements and her deafblindness,” explains Ms Karasinski.

“She was totally committed to helping others and volunteered countless hours every week to WADBA and to the Royal WA Institute for the Blind.”

Senses Foundation was formed when the Royal WA Institute for the Blind - one of WA’s oldest charities - amalgamated with the WA Deafblind Association.

The Foundation provides services to people with disabilities and is WA’s primary advocate and service provider for people who are deafblind, providing highly specialised programs and services to improve communication, socialisation, mobility and quality of life for both adults and children.

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