

WA DEAF SOCIETY

WINTER APPEAL

2017

PATRICK'S STORY

Imagine that you are small, very small.

Imagine that everyone you know, everyone you love and everyone you see speaks a language foreign to you. You do not understand them, they do not understand you.

That was how life started out for *Patrick. Born profoundly deaf to a hearing family, the cold weight of silence was finally lifted only when Patrick and his family began to learn Auslan (Australian Sign Language). Before they could sign to talk to one another, Patrick would lash out in a fury of frustration at his family, whose hearts would break in despair of where to turn and how to help their son. Incredibly, Patrick was 3 ½ before he came to the WA Deaf Society and joined Auslan for Families, beginning his language journey.

Realising as a hearing person, that you have a deaf child means that suddenly all your "normal" life plans screech to a halt; the school you thought they might attend with their siblings, that music class you heard was great for toddlers... many things can seem totally impossible and out of reach for a parent who has discovered their child, is in fact, not able to hear. Parents like *Sarah and *Sean can feel really very afraid wondering what the future might hold for their little one.

Sean - "I remember sitting there one night, with my heart up around my throat and I thought, you just have to accept it, he's not like our other kids and he'll never amount to much. How can he? And yet in the end he was so capable with the right help."

In addition to attending LEAP- the WA Deaf Society's bilingual, bimodal playgroup, Auslan for Families was the best service for the Murphy family provided by WA Deaf. With Auslan for families, learning in the comfort of their own home, the Murphy family was finally able to understand one another.

Patrick has gone on to finish high school and enrol at TAFE. He is looking forward to completing his teaching diploma and is also continuing to look ahead at his very bright future.

At the WA Deaf Society we believe that deafness should never be a barrier to a full life. Imagine facing the same situation as Sarah, Sean and their family. You would want to know there was somewhere to turn. WA Deaf Society can help, but we can't do it alone.

Give the gift of understanding this winter and shine a warm light in the lives of Deaf children their families.



Please donate today >>