

The Longest Rally in Support of Sands

29.10.17



A year ago, tennis coach Lynton dreamt up an idea of running a tennis event to raise funds and awareness for Sands Victoria. He and his wife Cara wanted to do something to honour their precious angel Jonty and every other baby who has gone too soon. "We wanted to share our story and in turn help other parents who have experienced the loss of a baby", Lynton said.

So the planning for the big day began. Before long, an event called "The Longest Rally in Support of Sands" became a reality. Support for the event grew as major sponsors were secured. The local tennis community at East Coburg Tennis Club rallied behind Lynton and Cara to

ensure the day turned out to be a success. And what a success it was!!!

Securing a major sponsor in Ray White Coburg really set the tone for the event and got the ball rolling. A big thank you goes out to Nazih and the crew at Ray White Coburg for showing their support with sponsorship and coming along to share in the fun on the day.

The day finally arrived; the sun was shining and although there was some wind about, we were generally lucky with the weather. Adults and children alike turned up with their tennis shoes on and rackets in hand ready for a hit on the courts. Close to 500 people showed their support on the day which exceeded expectations and made the day even more enjoyable.

Tennis coaches volunteered their time to run a variety of different tennis programs on the courts (with trophies awarded of course), while others enjoyed the face painting, jumping castle, a yummy BBQ, gift bags, remembrance candle give-aways, raffles every hour and a fantastic silent auction. Speed artist Joe Zapp knocked up a painting of Roger Federer which was a highlight of the day, especially when it was auctioned off for \$1400!! Guests were encouraged to remember the little ones they have lost by placing a personalised craft butterfly in the butterfly garden which added a really special touch.

"I found the process of helping organise the event healing (cutting all the cardboard butterflies for kid's craft was very therapeutic). We were really just blown away by the support and donations we received from local businesses and tennis families." Cara said reflecting on the day.

A welcome ceremony was held on court where I was given the opportunity to thank Lynton, Cara and their amazing team of volunteers and sponsors who made the event a roaring success. Two beautiful cakes were donated by Ferguson Plarre Bakehouse and were cut to officially welcome everyone to the event. On behalf of Sands Victoria, I spoke about the work that Sands Victoria does in the community and how much it meant to me and my husband after we lost our little girl Stella last year. I was truly honoured to be part of such a special event.

Lynton and Cara mentioned that creating awareness of Sands and the peer support networks that are available, was very important to them as well as opening the conversation up about pregnancy loss. They even went to the effort of creating some wonderful event t-shirts which raised much needed funds as well as awareness about the cause. They were an absolute hit, with 43 t-shirts sold on the day and many guests choosing to wear them proudly while out playing tennis.

Most amazing of all was the fundraising success of the event. The total funds raised on the day was \$9302.18 which is just phenomenal effort!

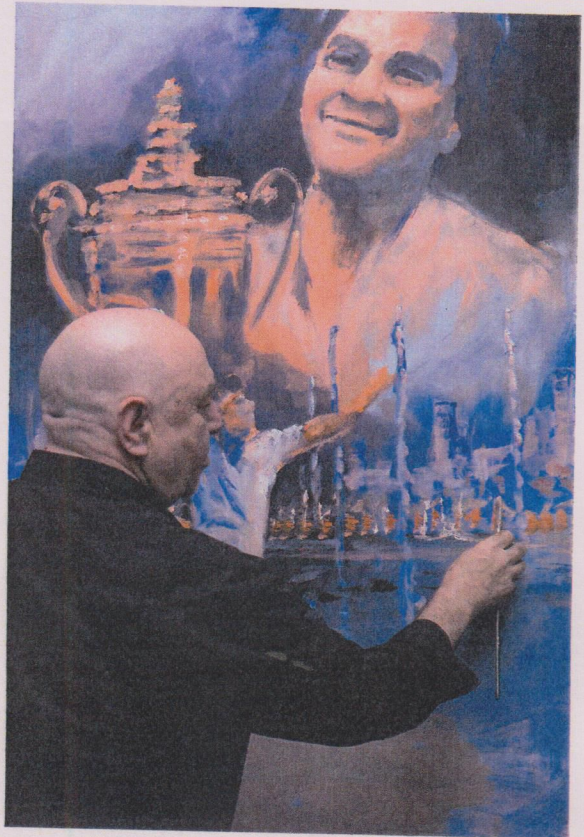
A closing message from Cara, "Lynton and I would like to acknowledge the wonderful community and tennis club support we received for the Longest Rally in Support of Sands. We are grateful for all the kindness and generosity to help us give back to Sands."

And right back at you guys, Sands Victoria would like to sincerely thank Lynton and Cara for their passion, dedication and effort in putting together a wonderful fundraising event. Because of you, more people understand the important role that Sands Victoria provides in the community.

Your beautiful angel Jonty will be looking down on you, smiling with pride. You truly have made a difference!!

Written by Amy Hidge,

Committee of Management Member, Sands Victoria



Sands Victoria, along with event organisers Lynton and Cara, would like to thank all of the sponsors who contributed to the success of The Longest Rally in Support of Sands:

Major sponsors:

Ray White Coburg, East Coburg Tennis Club, Moreland City Council, Tennis Victoria, Gladiator Cranes, Tee Shirt Company

Additional amazing sponsors:

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