

Send one down for Starfish

FOR children such as Alessia Acquarola, the Starfish HydroActiv program is a life-changer.

The water-based playgroup is an important part of Senses Foundation's early childhood program, providing a relaxed setting where children with a disability can learn sign language and play to develop strength, endurance, a sense of touch and expressive speech.

Alessia has Pallister Killian Syndrome, which has resulted in global developmental delay and deafblindness. She is unable to walk or talk and has limited motor skills.

Her father Nic says Starfish certainly helped develop Alessia's spatial awareness, flexibility and mobility. It also helped her get used to being in a social environment, which prepared her for the transition to full-time school.

"Alessia loves the water and she got a lot of enjoyment from the Starfish

ROLL-UP WILL HELP CHANGE YOUNG LIVES

program," Nic said.

Starfish will be the major beneficiary of Senses Foundation's annual fundraiser, a corporate bowls event called Senses On The Green.

Senses Foundation chief executive Debbie Karasinski said the day at Mosman Park Bowling Club would be a fun opportunity for corporate Perth to show its support, as well as being a great networking or team-building opportunity for staff or clients.

It also gives enormous help to the organisation that takes the lead in providing services to the almost 9000 people in WA who are deafblind.

"The specialist staff in our early childhood program work with babies, pre-schoolers and their families," Ms Karasinski said. "They use play to encourage movement, cognitive development and communication, and the Starfish playgroup is a major component of this program."

Senses Foundation is an advocate and service provider for people with disabilities that has special services for people who are deafblind.

THE CHARITY

This year's beneficiary is the Starfish program, a Senses Foundation water-based playgroup where children aged up to six sing and play to develop strength, endurance, a sense of touch and expressive speech. It also helps develop the sign language they will need to communicate as they get older.

Three reasons for the Starfish name:

- A starfish communicates without vision or hearing
- The legs of a starfish represent the human hand, which is fundamental to communication for a person who is deafblind
- A starfish thrives in water

SENSES ON THE GREEN

DATE: Friday, November 16

TIME: 11.30am-4pm

VENUE: Mosman Park Bowling Club

COST: \$750 + GST for a team of four
Includes: buffet lunch, drinks, raffles, silent auction, entertainment and, of course, lawn bowls

Registration, sponsorship and donation inquiries:

Dee de Vos on 9473 5437 or
event.coordinator@senses.asn.au



Nic and Alessia Acquarola at Starfish.