

Press Release - Why My Mummy?

10th March 2016

Terminally ill Sunshine Coast mum writes book to help her son and other families fighting cancer

Forty-two year old mother of two Donna Penny is living on borrowed time. Diagnosed with breast cancer at just 35 years of age and undergoing a double mastectomy, Donna was given the all clear until the cancer returned five years later and she was given the devastating news it had spread to other parts of her body and was given just two years to live.

One of the biggest hurdles Donna has faced since her terminal diagnosis has been trying to explain to her nine-year-old son Kai that the cancer is never going to go away.

"Kai asked the question, "Why out of all the mummies in the world does this have to happen to my mummy?" said Donna.

"How do you explain to a child what terminal means? Why your hair is falling out? That you're not going to get better?"

Having searched high and low for books that were suitable for her son, Donna found they were all too sad and "morbid" so she decided to write her own book to explain her situation to Kai, penning a heartfelt children's book called ***Why My Mummy?***

"I couldn't find anything that wasn't doom and gloom. I wanted to create something bright that would be child-friendly, using language he could understand. The book explains that mummy's cancer will never go away but doctors are keeping the cancer sleeping with special medicine," she said.

"He doesn't really understand full impact of cancer but through the story he has more of an understanding of what his mum goes through. The book has really helped his understanding of the condition."

Sunshine Coast Creative Design Agency What The Fox has made the book possible by donating their time to design and market the book, which as had an overwhelming response.

"They have looked after me and helped me handle the craziness," Donna said.

"We have been working together on a crowd funding campaign and I am so overwhelmed and grateful for everyone's support so far. I love the book and I was just hoping the world would love it and embrace it too."

In the first five days of the crowd funding campaign, they reached their goal of raising \$10,000, and have now more than doubled it. The campaign has another two weeks to go, and the more money that is raised, the more books that can be published and in turn – the more families it can help.

Having been touched by cancer herself, with the loss of her first husband to brain cancer, *The Project's* Carrie Bickmore was so moved by Donna's story she flew to the Sunshine Coast to meet her and share her story on the show.

Donna's aim is to leave a legacy for her family to remember her by. She wrote the book in the hope it would help other parents talk to their children about terminal illness and is the first of many in a series she intends to write to support families at different stages of the cancer journey.

"I want families who are going through this to be able to read it together and not be intimidated by it because it doesn't use big intimidating words, it's just explaining cancer the way we explain it in our family."

For more information about Donna Penny and Why My Mummy? Contact Natashya@whatthefox.com.au.

Crowd Funding Campaign: <http://www.pozible.com/whymymummy>

Facebook Page: <http://www.facebook.com/whymymummybook>

