

DANNY'S SUPPORT INITIATIVE

Update 10th March 2015

Dear friends, family and the wider rugby community.

Danny Delport has recently been diagnosed with Motor Neurone Disease (MND). Many remember Danny ("Baldy" as he was nicknamed at school, due to his then ever-present crew-cut hairstyle!!). He was a Churchill boy and played scrum-half for the 1st XV around 1969-1970. He played on the wing for Natal whilst at University and then for Rhodesia upon his return. He is married to Sue, who is the sister of Tim Millett who was at Oriel Boys School.

A very big thankyou

We would like to begin this update with a very big thankyou to all of you, all over the world, who have responded and offered support in one way or another to Dan, Sue and family. It has been extraordinary and we have been overwhelmed by everyone's generosity and kind thoughts.

We know that the family has found this last couple of months particularly difficult, coming to terms with Dan's illness and their circumstances, but we also know that the calls, emails, and messages of support have been a major source of comfort and inspiration for them. The extraordinary generosity of friends and family has been very humbling for the family, but it has, importantly, allowed them to focus on their immediate health challenges and not to have to worry as well about financial issues. We are aware that the family will also be sending out a letter in the near future.

Some details on the illness

Dan, Sue and family are now actively engaged with the Motor Neurone Disease Association, here in Perth, where they have access to medical specialists, counselling, training and a range of other support initiatives. The Association, which is partly funded by the WA Government and partly funded through fundraising efforts, has been absolutely fantastic with the whole family.

Dan's condition is currently moving along an expected path, with increased difficulty in using his hands. His voice has been slightly impacted and swallowing is becoming a difficulty – and yet he retains that wicked sense of humour that we all know him for!

Sue is still nursing but is now also undergoing specialised carers training with the MND Association, with the objective of moving into this role when it becomes necessary. Sue's challenges ahead are numerous and will place a lot of pressure on her, but she has shown great determination in confronting these challenges.

Activities of the Committee

Dan and Sue's three children, Lucy, Sebastian and Ben, are now members of the Committee.

Lucy, who lives in Perth with her husband Justin and son Dylan has taken on the responsibility of liaison between the Danny Support Initiative and the MND Association. Amongst the issues under discussion is the possibility that the MND Association might "auspice" the Danny's Support Initiative. This would allow the initiative to have access to a more formal fundraising capability.

Ben, who is operating as a fly-in-fly-out worker on an island mine site off the Pilbara/Kimberley coast has recently set up a Facebook page for Dan and friends and family can make contact with him via this.

Sebastian returned to Perth from the UK last week (where he now lives with his wife Megan), for a brief visit and the Committee has had a meeting with him this week to discuss the initiative.

Sue has officially commenced a process with Centrelink to attempt to secure a carers support or pension allowance. The MND Association has signalled its intention to provide legal and other support to such an application - which will be extremely useful. We remain hopeful that a case can be made for some support from the government.

The family has been contacted by the J9 Foundation of Joost van der Westhuizen, and discussions on support from that Foundation and the possibility of trial medication, are underway.

Planned trip to South Africa

Dan and Sue are planning a short trip to South Africa in May, arriving on the 1st of May and leaving again on the 15th. During the visit they will take a short break to the Sabi-Sand game reserve on the edge of the Kruger National Park. Rugby colleagues are planning a gathering in Johannesburg on Sunday 3 May – details of which will be circulated later.

Sale of House

Dan and Sue are looking at moving closer to hospital services, medical specialists and the MND Association facilities. They have recently received an offer on their house in Baldivis, and will be making plans to move in the event that the sale goes through.

Ongoing Support

The Committee continues to gratefully receive financial, moral and other support offered to the Danny's Support Initiative and continues to operate the two accounts below for that

Bank account in Australia

Account Name: Danny's Support Initiative

Commonwealth Bank

BSB / Branch Number: 066 163

Account Number: 10654048

Swift Code: ctbaau2s

Bank account in South Africa

Account Name: Boyes B.E

Bank: Nedbank

Branch: Bryanston, Sandton Branch, Bryanston Shopping Centre – Code 197 105

Account Number: 1971050296

purpose

We are still trying to get a trust account established in South Africa to receive rand donations, and will let you know when this happens

We thank you all for your continued support.

Brian Boyes (Stroppy)

Chairman: Danny's Support Initiative

Dave Arkwright

Secretary

Dan is on Facebook, and Dan and Sue can also be emailed at Delportsx3@bigpond.com

Posted on www.rhodesian.com.au