

# Thrive



NEWS FROM LIMBS 4 KIDS

**MEET HARRY  
& THE MITTEN  
FAMILY**

**MEET TWO  
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**TRAIN TO BE  
A PARENT  
PEER SUPPORT  
VOLUNTEER**

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## Harry, the little boy who just happens to have an arm limb difference

Jen and Peter Mitten are great supporters of Limbs 4 Kids and have two young children, one of whom happens to have a limb difference.

Jen and Peter are parents to Harry, who is two and half years old, and Tobey, who is three months old. Harry is taking to the role of 'big brother' with aplomb; has given his baby brother his own special name "Bubba", is extremely affectionate showering his baby brother with kisses and already encouraging him to play with his precious toy cars.

Harry himself is, as his parents describe, "a cheeky, happy, sociable child who is at the wonderful stage in his life where the world is starting to make more sense and is full of wonders and new discoveries". Jen said that "Harry loves playing with adults and other children, but also enjoys his own quiet time where he can be found exploring colours, playing with his toys and learning about numbers". Harry also attends crèche and has just started playing 'Little Kickers', a weekend introductory soccer program for young children.

Harry also has a limb difference; born missing his left forearm below the elbow. But as Jen and Peter said "Harry is Harry first and foremost, his limb difference is just a small part of who our little boy is turning out to be". "Harry's personality is such that

people often don't notice his limb difference, as he captures the attention of others by performing tasks and playing in the same way as other two and half year old children do", said Jen and Peter.

Harry's limb difference was discovered during the 20 week pregnancy scan. "We went in for the ultrasound scan, heard that our baby was developing well until the final part of the scan when we were told that it looked like his left arm was not fully formed", explained Jen. "This might sound silly, but my immediate response was to ask "so when will that arm start developing" and of course I was told that his arm wouldn't continue growing and form", said Jen. "The radiographer was so compassionate and gentle delivering us the news and arranged for us to immediately meet with our Obstetrician", recalled Peter.

Within minutes Jen and Peter were taken to see their Obstetrician, Dr Grant Saffer who was incredibly supportive and "on the ball" explaining to them what the test revealed and what it meant for their baby. "Our Obstetrician immediately arranged for us to meet with Dr Leo Donnan, a Melbourne-based expert in childhood limb difference", said Peter.

Meeting Dr Donnan allowed for Jen and Peter to ask all the medical questions foremost at



their minds as well as practical ones such as “will our baby be able to tie his shoelaces and will he be able to ride a bike”. Dr Donnan assured Jen and Peter that their baby would be fine and said that their ‘baby will end up teaching more to them than they will teach him’; something that they agree is not only a great motto but an accurate description of what has happened since Harry came into the world. Jen and Peter are incredibly grateful to all the staff, from the radiographer to the various doctors, who treated them with such compassion on the day they received news about Harry’s limb difference. Jen emphasised that “It made such a difference to have a team of incredibly supportive and positive professionals caring for us; giving of their time and knowledge to ensure we were OK and understood what the diagnosis meant. We never felt alone.”

After receiving the news Jen and Peter said “we operated in a blur for a little while, and we did share tears but it wasn’t long before our rational ‘we can cope with this’ minds kicked in”. On the day that Jen and Peter learned their child would have a limb difference they started letting family and friends know. “We didn’t want to hide our news, and we have such supportive family and friends we wanted them to be part of the journey we were now starting on”, explained Peter. “Obviously our parents and family members wanted to learn about the diagnosis, but after realising that our baby’s limb difference was something we and our child could cope with, it wasn’t long before my soccer mad family were more concerned with which English team our child would be supporting!”, said Peter. Both Jen and Peter felt that because they

had a positive attitude about their baby’s limb difference diagnosis it meant that family and friends felt the same way too.

Harry’s birth was an exciting event for Jen and Peter. Peter recounted that “myself and another new father stood side-by-side while our new babies were being weighed and we just looked at each other in amazement about becoming new Dads”. After Harry was born the staff conducted a few more tests to ensure that there wasn’t any additional developmental

delays or issues; with none discovered. So, Harry and his new parents headed home a couple of days later. Jen laughingly recalled that “Peter put Harry into the baby-seat with such trepidation, drove home at 20kms under the normal speed and drove over any bumps at a walking pace”.

Harry doesn’t attend any specialist appointments at this stage, but will likely begin attending some as he gets older. Jen and Peter said that “as Harry gets older we will explore the need



for occupational therapy or other supports, but at the moment it isn’t required”. Similarly, Harry doesn’t use any prostheses or other assistive devices at present and his parents have decided that they will look into in the future in conjunction with an older Harry. What has amazed Jen and Peter most is what Harry is able to do, despite missing his left forearm. “Harry’s dexterity in his right hand is extraordinary and he has developed high fine motor skills; in fact we call it his ‘super hand’”, Jen marvelled.

To date, by and large, the responses from community members about Harry’s limb difference has been very positive. Jen said that “some people don’t notice that Harry has a missing forearm whereas others, both adults and children, are curious and will ask about his limb difference”. Indeed, Jen and Peter prefer that people ask questions as they are happy to explain Harry’s limb difference to others “because it’s a way of normalising it and educating people”. Jen recounted one situation where a parent stopped her in the supermarket asking whether it would be OK to enquire about Harry’s missing hand as this other parent’s child had noticed and was curious. “I was really pleased that she did so as I was able to talk to both her and her child, after which her child wandered off with a better understanding and back to the important role of choosing the fruit he wanted”, related Jen. “I certainly prefer it when people ask questions on behalf of their children rather than “shushing” them and telling them to look away”, said Jen.

The only negative experience was encountered in a local playground where a group of older children

followed Harry while he played; pointing and staring at him. Jen felt that the children, “who were old enough to know better”, were being rude and inappropriate so she took the opportunity to let them ask questions and remind them “it’s rude to point and stare at anyone”. Their questions sated, the group of children wandered off and took their attention away from Harry.

Both Jen and Peter have found facebook, blogs and other resources to be extremely beneficial. “The Limbs 4 Kids facebook group and other pages have been fantastic as, when you have a child with a limb difference, you can feel like you’re the only one and social media helps you to realise that there is a whole community of families experiencing the same things,” said Jen.

In terms of blogs, Jen and Peter can recommend ‘One Little Fin’ and ‘Living One-handed’ to be good for learning about limb difference and reading the stories of children and families. Indeed Jen and Peter are looking forward to receiving their copy of Ryan Haack’s new book ‘Different is Awesome’ and plan on giving a copy of the book to their local library also. Peter, who describes himself as “sports mad”, also recommends Jim Abbott’s inspiring and informative autobiography, ‘Imperfect – An improbable life’. As Peter recounted, “Jim went on to play baseball with the famous Yankees team and win an Olympic medal, despite having a missing hand”. Both Jen and Peter believe that everyday individuals and well-known persons with limb difference can act as role models and help families to see a positive future for their child; something

that they feel social media and other resources facilitates well.

In thinking about their approach to parenting, Jen and Peter feel that it is “important to enjoy your children and try not to stress”. “We believe it’s important that children fall over, learn how to climb, learn how to make friends, provide them with opportunities and let them experience challenges along the way”, said Jen and Peter. In terms of Harry, Jen and Peter feel their job “is to make our little boy a well-rounded person who is positive and open, with his limb difference being just a small part of who he is and will be.”

Jen and Peter want to thank their families, their friends and all the others who have supported them since Harry, and now Tobey, have come into their lives. Jen and Peter also want to thank the Limbs 4 Life community of families for being so welcoming, open and willing to share their own experiences of bringing up children with limb differences.

**Limbs 4 Life would like to thank Jen and Peter for sharing their story and for being great advocates of the Limbs 4 Kids program.**

**In addition, Limbs 4 Life would like to thank Peter’s mum Mary and her colleagues at [fellaHamilton](#) for fundraising and raising hundreds of dollars for the organisation earlier this year.**





## Meet a Prosthetist

Cameron Ward, APC Prosthetics

### What are your qualifications?

I completed a Bachelor Degree in Prosthetics and Orthotics at La Trobe University.

### Why did you choose to study prosthetics and how long have you been working as one?

I wasn't sure what I wanted to

do when I finished school but, when investigating future careers during Year 12, my Careers Advisor identified prosthetics as a potential pathway for me. I then visited La Trobe University and decided that I might be suited to the profession. As it turned out I did love this profession from the outset. I undertook my final practical placement with APC Prosthetics in New South Wales

and was offered employment there upon my completion. I've now been working for APC Prosthetics for 16 years.

### Describe the clients you work with?

I work with people with upper and lower limb deficiencies, ranging in age from 6 months old to well into their 90s. While I enjoy working with all of my clients, supporting children is very rewarding because of their attitude and ability to try anything!

### What role does a Prosthetist play in supporting children with limb differences?

Prosthetists play a really important role in trying to match what the child needs and wants with a prosthetic socket and components that best enables them to engage in all the fantastic activities kids do. When a child wants to do something and can't because of their limb difference I see the Prosthetist's role as finding a solution that can allow them to achieve their goals.

### What is the step-by-step process involved in fitting a child with a prosthesis?

The first appointment is usually to take a cast, followed by a first fitting and any follow up adjustments that need to be made. Over the life of the prosthesis it often needs adjustments such as lengthening as the child grows. Once these adjustments are no longer possible then a replacement socket or entire new limb is made depending on the condition of the components of the prosthesis. As children are very active and

adventurous, their componentry never lasts very long as they are always outgrowing them or breaking them!

### What role do you play in supporting the families of children with limb differences?

I'm there to answer the many questions parents and family members have. Information is critical as are providing chances for children and families to connect. The new Limbs 4 Kids program and publications are great as it provides a great mix of information, individual stories and chances to connect.

### What multi-disciplinary healthcare professionals do you work with to support to children with limb differences?

I work with an array of experts that generally include a Paediatric Rehabilitation Consultant, Physiotherapist, Occupational Therapist and others as required.

### Why is early-intervention support important for children with limb differences?

The earlier a child uses a prosthesis the more likely they are to accept it and use it throughout their life. In congenital limb differences cases, regardless of whether it is upper or lower, early-intervention can be really important to help the child meet their milestones and keep their spine symmetrical; which enhances their lifetime physical wellbeing.

### What information do you give to all children with limb difference and their families?

I recommend that they keep seeing the rehabilitation team because even if the prosthetic side of things are sorted, there are often other areas of a child's health that the clinic can assist with.

### What current developments in the field of prosthetics excite you?

I'm excited by three key things – the NDIS, running prosthetic advances and myoelectric hand advances.

As the NDIS is rolled out, the funding should provide children with more appropriate prosthetic technology. As the NDIS will cover all people under the age of 65 we should see funding for secondary recreational or waterproof limb being available. As we are based in NSW, where the NDIS is being trialled in Newcastle, my organisation is already seeing some fantastic outcomes for amputees and people with limb differences in that region.

Carbon fibre feet and running blades have come a long way in the last 10 years and, even more excitingly, they have become more accessible to everyone wanting to run and not just athletes. This is particularly important for children because it gives more opportunity for children with limb differences to keep up with (and sometimes beat!) their mates at school.

There has been considerable research and improvement in myoelectric hands in recent years, and I am really excited about the significant opportunities this will present for children and adults with hand limb differences in the future.

### What is the Bandaged Bear Appeal?

Five years ago APC Prosthetics decided to hold an annual Bandage Bear Breakfast fundraiser which raises funds for the limb deficiency clinic at the Children's Hospital at Westmead (Sydney). It is a fun morning where we try and have as many of our kids come as possible. We try and have a Bandage Bear Ambassador and this year had the bandage bear himself! APC Prosthetics provides the catering, face painting and venue. Each year we raise close to \$10,000 and are always looking for more people to attend and donate. Our 6th Bandage Bear Breakfast will be held in March 2016 and we hope some of the Limbs 4 Kids community can join us.

### Any other tips for families?

Yes, one of the things families should look out for is the AMP Camp, which is held in NSW in March of each year. It is a camp that the Amputee Association of NSW help to support and allows children with limb differences between the ages of 12 – 18 to meet one another and participate in a range of activities. One of our older above-knee clients organises the event and I volunteer as a leader each year. It's a fun social event and many of the teenagers return each year to catch-up, participate and some have gone on to become leaders themselves.



# Ben Swain

From lawyer to Australian Cycling Champion



Ben Swain is a man of many personal and professional successes. Ben was also born with congenital limb differences affecting his hands and one foot. In this article Ben shares with us his story of living life with limb differences highlighting that, while this has brought some challenges, it has not marred his ability to achieve career and sporting successes.

Ben is 36, resides in Newcastle in New South Wales and combines a busy workload as both a lawyer and an award-winning para-cyclist. Ben was also born with a congenital limb difference.

"I was born with Split Hand and Foot Malformation, a genetic disorder that is characterised by the complete or partial absence of fingers or toes. I have a thumb and forefinger on my left hand and my right arm is malformed from the elbow. I was also born with a malformed left foot", explained Ben. Ben underwent corrective surgery during his childhood aimed at mitigating the impacts of his limb differences and enhancing his physical abilities. "When I was about two years old I had an operation to remove a toe and to close the cleft on my left foot so I could wear a shoe. I also had some tendons released in my left hand," said Ben.

Presently, Ben and his family are trying to identify the gene that has caused his limb differences with the help of researchers at the Greenwood Genetic Centre in the United States of America.

"We understand that genetic researchers have identified four of the seven different types of genes that cause Split Hand and Foot Malformation. Unfortunately, the gene causing the limb differences in my family has not yet been

identified. We don't know what has caused it, other than that the gene first presented with my father. My brother does not have any limb difference and has two young children that are identical twins. What is especially remarkable is that despite being genetically identical, one of the twins was born with a limb difference of his left arm (ulnar longitudinal deficiency) that is very similar to my right arm, whilst the other twin does not have any limb difference. This shows the complexity of research into genes and "gene expression". The research team at the Greenwood Genetics Centre are doing fantastic research into Split Hand and Foot Malformation and we are extremely grateful for this."

As a child Ben didn't wear a prosthesis, was encouraged to try everything and learn to make personal adaptations that would facilitate social and physical participation. As Ben expressed, "I grew up on a farm with my brother. Our parents did the best thing for me by treating us both the same way. I did everything my brother did and was brought up to believe that anything is possible if you want to do it".

Ben highlighted that "it wasn't always easy when I was growing up" but he utilised resources and adopted new approaches that accommodated his limb differences. "When I was young I did use some assistive devices, including electronic scissors which all my school friends wanted to use," recounted Ben. "But overall I achieved most things with just a little bit of determination and sometimes developing my own way of doing things, like how to tie shoe laces or serve one-handed when playing tennis", shared Ben. In reflecting on both his childhood and adulthood, the response of others to Ben's limb difference has

generally been positive. Although Ben has also experienced the occasional undesirable response, he has a philosophical and pragmatic approach in these situations.

"Growing up I have learned that people always remember you when you have a limb difference. The majority of people have responded positively to my disability. I have always been a confident person, which I believe has really helped when meeting new people, as my disability is only a very small part of who I am and does not define me. Unfortunately there will always be some people who make inappropriate comments, however these people aren't perfect themselves and are different in their own way. Changing the topic or putting the focus back on them usually helps to address any inappropriate or negative remarks," shared Ben.

At the age of 16, after attending the family solicitor with his family, Ben realised that he wanted to be a lawyer. Ben's pathway into this field saw him combine both full-time work with tertiary studies and relocate from the country to Sydney to pursue these opportunities.

"Once I finished school I commenced working in a law firm in Sydney. For almost ten years I worked as a paralegal whilst I completed a Bachelor of Business and Bachelor of Laws at the University of Technology Sydney. Since being admitted as a lawyer in 2007, I have specialised in planning, environmental, and local government law," said Ben.

Ben's studies and professional work have assisted him in developing new abilities and ways of overcoming any challenges that present. "I taught myself to type through university, and whilst I type

with two fingers and my elbow, I am quite quick!" laughed Ben. When there is a lot of typing Ben's "wonderful secretary" assists him by typing his dictations.

Ben acknowledges that his limb difference has limited him from pursuing some goals, but in other ways it has opened up new opportunities. "You know, I thought that I might like to learn to fly a helicopter and when I was young I was interested in becoming a doctor but I didn't feel these suited my abilities so have chosen a legal career path that both suits my abilities and is something I really enjoy," said Ben. Equally, Ben was quick to say that "I'm sure it wouldn't be impossible to fly a helicopter or become a doctor and one day I might end up giving these a go too".

Sport featured prominently in Ben's childhood and while he thought he couldn't pursue some of these sports competitively when young he is now doing just the opposite. More than that, Ben is actually now an Australian Champion para-cyclist.

"I used to ride a mountain bike as a child with my brother who also raced road bikes, but because of my disability I couldn't handle the mechanical gearing on a road bike or the brakes. Although I always wanted to race road bikes, I instead played competitive tennis for 10 years throughout my schooling years," explained Ben.

In recent years, however, the opportunity to pursue the goal of competitive road cycling has emerged for Ben. "About two years ago I attended a Talent Search Day with the Australian Paralympic Committee (APC) and was told that only wheelchair tennis was offered at the Paralympics however I had the physical attributes to compete





in cycling. Shortly after the Talent Search Day I met Paralympian Pete Brooks from the APC on a 'Try the Track Day' at Dunc Gray Velodrome in Sydney who helped me with my training and modifications to my road bike. Since then I've been racing with the Hunter District Cycling Club and training with the Hunter Academy of Sport and my track coach Glenn Lewis," explained Ben.

In a short period of competitive track and road cycling Ben has shown himself to be an outstanding competitor. During the last year alone, Ben has won numerous cycling medals. At the 2015 National Para-cycling Track Championships (C4), Ben won

the Gold Medal in the 4km Pursuit and the Silver Medal in the 1km Individual Time Trial. At the 2015 Union Cycliste Internationale (UCI) Para-Cycling (C1) Road Event, Ben won Bronze Medals in the 24km Time Trial and 72km road race. At the 2015 National Para-cycling Road Championships (C4), Ben set a new Personal Best in the Time Trial with 38.1km per hour average over 24km taking out the Bronze Medal, and also won the Silver Medal in the 72km road race.

With a raft of Australian medals under his belt, Ben said that he is "now training for the track season at the end of the year with the goal of competing overseas, such as a World Cup or World Championships". Ultimately, Ben

hopes to make it to a Paralympics and has his "eye on making it to Japan in 2020".

Ben is passionate about para-cycling as "it's an awesome sport with various classifications for different disabilities. It's also extremely competitive world-wide with pro-cycling teams now sponsoring para-cyclists", explained Ben.

Having had a limb difference for 36 years, Ben has witnessed significant positive changes in the community, social and sporting support available to children with disabilities and families over that time. "Even sporting bodies such as the Australian Paralympic Committee provide services that weren't offered when I was a child. I'd strongly recommend getting children involved in Paralympic sports, which can provide a sporting network of friends with similar experiences and disabilities", Ben advocated.

Ben is pleased that the Limbs 4 Kids program has now been established and hopes that it, and his own story, can assist children and young people with limb differences to pursue their goals in life. "While limb difference can present some challenges, it is important to remember that is only a small part of who you are. Having a limb difference can also make you more aware of your natural abilities and open up opportunities that you may not have had otherwise," enthused Ben.

Limbs 4 Life would like to thank Ben for taking the time to share his story and wishes him all the best with his professional and sporting careers. Indeed, we all hope to see Ben as a member of the Australian Paralympic team in 2020!



## Meet a Prosthetist

Pat McQualter, Orthopaedic Appliances

**What is your qualification and why did you choose Prosthetics as your post-school career pathway?**

I completed a Bachelor of Prosthetics and Orthotics at La Trobe University in 2005. I chose this field as I enjoyed subjects like woodwork and graphics at school and also wanted to undertake a health related course because I've always gained satisfaction helping others. Prosthetics allows me to use my hands, tap into my creative side while also helping to improve the quality of life for others.

**Would you recommend this as a career to young people currently thinking about their post-school pathway?**

After graduating from University I worked as a Prosthetist in Sydney for two and a half years. I then returned to Melbourne and have been working at Orthopaedic Appliances in Fitzroy (Melbourne) for the past seven years. As was the case with me, future students have to prepare for the possibility of moving interstate for graduate employment. One of the advantages of the program is practical placements, something that allowed me to explore a variety of options and 'learn on the job' with a range of organisations. My employer Orthopaedic Appliances offers placements to students as we all believe it is important to support both La Trobe University and industry members of the future.

**Describe your clients?**

I work with upper and lower limb difference clients of all ages.



My youngest patient is a one year old and my oldest is 98, who had his foot amputated when he was just three.

#### **What makes working with children enjoyable?**

Kids always have such a positive attitude no matter what they have been through, and it never ceases to amaze me what they are able to achieve! I'm privileged to be a big part of their lives and watch them grow from kids into adults. Knowing that I've made a difference in the life of a child or young person is very rewarding. I also love and laugh at the very funny things kids say and do during appointments!

#### **How does working with children differ from working with adult amputees?**

The main difference between working with children compared to adults is that kids are still growing. This means more frequent appointments and new prostheses. You are also working with, and often communicating through, the parents rather than the one-on-one communications you have with adult patients. In general children and young people are also very active and therefore tend to break their prostheses a lot quicker than adults! Working with children does pose some challenges. Because of their size and the fact they are still growing we do have limitations in terms of the componentry available to children and reduced space below the residual limb to fit prosthetic feet. However, as children grow these limitations generally diminish over time.

#### **What role does a Prosthetist play in supporting children with limb differences?**

As a Prosthetist you become more than just a limb maker. As we see these kids and their parents so often we are also there to provide emotional support and advice. We can also assist in connecting children and their parents with other kids or adults with similar congenital or acquired limb differences. Often I will arrange appointments so that kids with similar limb differences can attend at the same time as this allows them to meet, share stories and relate to someone else who is in the same situation.

#### **How do Prosthetists and Technicians work together to build a prosthetic limb?**

The first stage in fitting a child with a prosthesis is to measure them up and take a plaster cast of their residual limb. The Prosthetist will then modify the cast and prepare it for the manufacturing stage. The prosthetic socket will be laminated by one of the five technicians we have at Orthopaedic Appliances. Any components, including knees and feet, will be ordered in from suppliers. The Prosthetist will then connect the socket to the components, align the prosthesis and fit it to the patient. A second cosmetic lamination is then often required before the child takes the prosthesis home. Many children will choose their favourite cartoon character, football team or artwork to personalise their prosthesis – so we support kids to bring their creative imaginations to life!

#### **How do you assist children who experience fears or worries during appointments?**

I try to have fun with the kids during their appointments and reassure them that they have nothing to be scared about. If all else fails the TV is a good distraction and lollies are a good bribe!

#### **What current developments in the field of prosthetics excite you?**

The constant advancements in microprocessor controlled prosthetic knees and ankles is very exciting, which will hopefully be more accessible to children in the near future.

#### **Why is early-intervention and the Limbs 4 Kids program beneficial?**

I think the work that Limbs 4 Kids does is of great value to all of my young patients and their families. The importance of early-intervention cannot be overstated as it allows kids to know they are not alone, enables them to share experiences and learn tips from each other.

#### **Is there any critical information or advice that you give to all children using a prosthesis (and/or their parents)?**

My main advice to parents is "Let them be kids!" Parents shouldn't be afraid of their child breaking their prosthesis as we can always make another one.



## **Local Parent Network Queensland**

Limbs4Kids in South East Queensland, in conjunction with the 'Uniting Limb Difference Families Australia' Facebook Support Group, held its first get together in July. Ella and Zachary (pictured), and their siblings Blake and Harrison, had a lovely time getting to know each other during a play date at a Brisbane play-centre, while their mums (Brooke and Michelle) enjoyed a coffee and a chat.

Our next play date is planned for 9am on Thursday 1st October at Chipmunks Morayfield (half-way way between Brisbane and the Sunshine Coast), 70 Michael Ave, Caboolture 4510.

**Please RSVP through the 'Uniting Limb Difference Families Australia' Facebook Group so that we know to look out for you. We look forward to meeting you soon!**

## **Are you interested in starting up a Parent Support Group?**



Limbs 4 Life is keen to assist parents or carers to establish informal Support Groups in their local communities. Support Groups allow for parents and carers of children and young people with limb differences to meet and socialise with others in similar situations. Limbs 4 Life can assist individuals to establish local Support Groups and provide a variety of tools to get one started.

To find out more or express interest in establishing a Support Group contact **Fiona** on **1300 782 231** (toll free) or **fiona@limbs4life.org.au**

## New Limbs 4 Kids Website Pages

We regularly update the [www.limbs4kids.org.au](http://www.limbs4kids.org.au) website with information and links of relevance to our community and you might want to visit our latest pages:

- The 'Books, Films and Toys' page is full of resources of interest to children and families.
- The 'International Links' page contains links to organisations who support children with limb difference around the world.



**limbs4kids.org.au**

## Limbs 4 Kids Facebook Group

Did you know that Limbs 4 Kids has its own Facebook group? This group is made up of parents, carers, young people and health professionals and is a great way to connect with others, share ideas, view articles and stay abreast of Limbs 4 Kids activities.

Visit Facebook and look for the group [Limbs4Kids](#) to join.



## Amputee Awareness Week 4 - 11 October Get your free ribbon

Amputee Awareness Week is coordinated by Limbs 4 Life annually and provides an opportunity to positively educate the Australian community about limb loss and limb differences.

If you would like to order a ribbon please email your postal address to [kids@limbs4life.org.au](mailto:kids@limbs4life.org.au)



## Become a Parent Peer Support Volunteer!



Would you like to become a Limbs 4 Kids Parent Peer Support Volunteer and support other families caring for a child with limb difference? If so, Limbs 4 Life is running **free** volunteer training via an online webinar from 8pm – 9pm on the 20th of October (Eastern Standard Time).

Parent Peer Support Volunteers can be parents or carers of a child with limb difference or an adult who grew up with a limb difference, and be located anywhere in Australia. The purpose of this program is to provide people needing support with access to a trained Peer Support Volunteer who 'knows what they are going through and can offer practical and emotional support'. Receiving knowledge and understanding from someone who 'has been there before' is a supportive and empowering experience.

Peer Support might be given over the phone, via an email, during a public meeting or online. The support may be given to someone who has just learned they are pregnant with a baby with limb difference, after the birth of a baby or during childhood or adolescence.

All volunteers will receive a detailed Program Manual and support from Limbs 4 Life staff. The program is a safe and secure one, so all volunteers will also be police checked.

Limbs 4 Life has won awards for its Adult Peer Support Program and we are thrilled to be able to offer a modified version to those who are interested in supporting families caring for children with limb difference.

If you are interested in taking part in the training or want more information please contact **Fiona** on **1300 782 231** or email [fiona@limbs4life.org.au](mailto:fiona@limbs4life.org.au)

### Jessica Smith

Jessica is a former Australian Paralympian swimmer who was born missing her left forearm. Jessica recently released her first children's book, 'Little Jessica Goes to School', which is about a little girl with one hand who goes to school for the first time and experiences what it feels like to be 'different'. The book contains positive messages about body image, self-acceptance, tolerance, difference, friendship and respect.

Jessica is a supporter of the Limbs 4 Kids program and recently presented at a Limbs 4 Kids event in Perth. For more information about Jessica and her book visit

[www.little-miss-jessica.myshopify.com](http://www.little-miss-jessica.myshopify.com)







**Limbs 4 Kids**  
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