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## NEWCASTLE PERMANENT VOLUNTEERS HELPING SICK KIDS EMBRACE THEIR INNER SUPERPOWERS

Newcastle Permanent Building Society employees are coming together to donate their time and just over \$13,000 to deliver more than 300 [Supertee](#) Marvel Edition medical garments to sick children in hospital, like eight-year-old Abigail Breeze from Newcastle.

Abigail struggles with a daily battle few others have to endure, having been diagnosed with Henoch-Schönlein purpura at just two years of age - a rare disease which causes the small blood vessels in your skin, joints, intestines and kidneys to become inflamed and bleed.

Abigail's mum, Nicole Breeze, said in the early days of Abigail's diagnosis it was overwhelming for her and their family.

"Despite being so young, Abigail was amazing in confronting the fear and uncertainty of hospital stays, but drips and tubes would get in the way of simple tasks like getting dressed, not to mention the dreaded green hospital gowns!" said Ms Breeze.

Comfort came for the family in the form of Abigail's Supertee: Marvel Edition, a practical medical garment that looks like a superhero t-shirt.

Supertee is the brainchild of Jason Sotiris, a tradesman whose daughter was diagnosed with cancer at just one year old. Like Nicole, he noticed his daughter would become distressed when her clothes became tangled in the lines attached to her tiny body.

"The idea for the Supertee came to me while comforting my daughter Angela who was being treated for a cancer called Langerhans Cell Histiocytosis and I felt helpless not being able to do the simple task of putting clean clothes on her with IV drips, chest monitor cables and central lines making it impossible," Mr Sotiris said.

So Mr Sotiris invented a medical garment especially for children: the Supertee.

"When we heard about Supertee, we were blown away," said Chris Cockburn, Chief Strategy & Governance Officer at Newcastle Permanent Building Society.

"Having been taken through all the garment's features - the open underarms for thermometer access, press studs evenly spaced for bypass tubes and lines, as well as being PET scan and MRI friendly - Supertee is clearly a really practical way to help sick kids.

"But more than that, Supertee encourages children into the world of imaginative play, which is a wonderful gift for a child in the sometimes distressing and often long hours spent in hospital."

Thanks to Newcastle Permanent's Community Assist Employee Donation Program, more than \$13,000 will enable 311 children in hospital to receive a free Supertee.

Each year, employees donate around \$60,000 via payroll deductions and nominate charities they believe deserve support. Employees then vote to select four a year to receive funding.

“But we also asked how we could make a difference beyond our donation,” Mr Cockburn said.

“And the answer was to get hands-on through a Supertee packing event. Newcastle Permanent provides two days paid volunteering leave to support charities or community groups and this was a great opportunity to get directly involved.”

On 10 August, 25 Newcastle Permanent employees will pack the Supertee garments into their individual tins - each containing a hand-written note to help inspire a child and their family - to be delivered to kids in hospital.

As for Jason, his dream is simple: “To have a Supertee available for every child that needs one.

“So far more than 13,000 Supertees have made their way into hospitals around Australia giving already brave children additional courage, but our dream is to help bring out the Captain America and Captain Marvel in all children in hospital,” said Mr Sotiris.

## DETAILS

- The Newcastle Permanent packing event is happening on the 10th August at Northern NSW Football’s facilities, Speers Point, at 9:30am
- Individuals and businesses wanting to help get Supertee Marvel Edition medical garments to sick children in hospital can visit <https://www.supertee.org.au/> for more information.