

CANCER SUN SHADE PRESS RELEASE DATED 22ND JULY 2008:

Invercargill's Michelle Nicol knows her late young son would have been thrilled to see cancer sun shades at the outside playground at Southland Hospital.

Alex Nicol died of leukemia 18 months ago when he was just 15-years-old but his memory will live on through the erection of cancer sun shade sails over the children's ward outside play area.

Mrs Nicol said the sun shades have been made possible thanks to a generous donation of \$10,000 from the Invercargill Licensing Trust, plus \$1500 raised in lieu of presents at a wedding of one of her friends.

"We spent a lot of time in the children's ward at the hospital with Alex and I know he'd be very chuffed about the sun shades," said Mrs Nicol, whose son battled with leukemia for six years. "We get such amazing support from the people of Southland and Invercargill, and especially the ILT, and I just think it's wonderful to be able to have something tangible that people can see what the money has gone into."

ILT chairman Alan Dennis said providing assistance for the building of sun shades over the Kew Road-facing children's ward playground at the hospital was a very noteworthy project.

"We all know how harsh the sun is in Southland, so protection for our young ones is important, especially at the hospital. These sun shades will provide that protection, as well as making the hospital's outside play area an even more comfortable environment for the children and their families."

Mrs Nicol also knows they could be life-savers. "Potentially they could be with melanoma and things like that to be aware of," she said. "Also, having the outdoor play area is actually quite unique to Southland because most hospitals _ especially if you think about Dunedin and Christchurch _ are concrete jungles. They don't have the luxury of having that outdoor facility, whereas our kids have got that."

Mrs Nicol said three sun shades would be built and they would be eye-catching.

"Because the hospital has got the paua shell colour scheme happening, we've chosen three colours that will blend nicely with that," she said. "So it should visually have quite an impact. "But it's not really about looks though. It is about shades."

It's also about the memory of Alex Nicol for his family and friends, who have driven the sun shade sails project. "But it's also the knowledge for us that so many kids will get the benefit from it," Mrs Nicol added. "That's the best part of it. "It's going to benefit all kids from Southland."

PRESS RELEASE ENDS