

# FRANKLIN ROUNDUP

## Megan's 'Flight Of Hope'

A year ago the Felton family of Pukekohe was living day-to-day, falling further into debt and despair as they focused on looking after the needs of their four year old daughter Megan, left brain damaged after a series of horrific birthing incidences. Turned down for help by ACC, the family was on its own. Then in June, the story of their plight featured in Franklin elocal magazine and on TV One's Close Up.

The response of the local community was fantastic. People helped in every way they could, with many touched by little Megan's story. Some spoke of how close they had come personally to having their child brain damaged during birth. Other families had experienced the same tragedy. Mike and Jackie had dreamed of one day being able to get Megan to Dusseldorf in Germany for stem cell treatment. It was her only hope, but the procedure had to be carried out as soon as possible. As Franklin rallied round, a fundraising event raised more than \$12,000. A donated diamond raised a further \$6700 at auction. The success of the fundraising concert boosted the total donated to the Feltons to just enough to fly Megan, her mum Jackie and

companion Sharon England to Germany. Last month, Megan's 'flight of hope' at last became a reality.

Sharon: "When we arrived at the clinic in Dusseldorf, Megan was taken to the theatre where bone marrow was extracted from her hip. This was taken to a lab to be filtered and processed, 2.5 million quality cells. Two days later, the exact volume was transferred back into her spinal column, to keep the pressure exactly the same as before. The stem cells act like a road repair gang, sensing repairs needed along the way. Some stop to make these repairs, while others carry on. Because our bodies evolve from stem cells, they can 'morph' into whatever type of cell is damaged, in Megan's case, brain cells. After her treatment, we could see the improvement in Megan within two days. There is a lot more direction, as instructions from her brain get through. Her right arm movements are more controlled, quicker and higher, while her left arm and hand, which previously could not be used, is now joining in the moves. Balled up muscle has relaxed so she has freer movements and her feet are straight when she stands, supported. She has more stability sitting



Megan under care after her stem cell treatment

and better head control and is able to get up on her knees, preparing to stand.

"Progress is expected to continue and with this success, Megan will need another treatment in six months to a year. At this stage, there is no big fundraiser planned, but Megan's bank account is still open and we will see where the future takes us. An appeal to ACC is coming up and if that comes through, the Feltons will be able to afford to get her second treatment. So much has gone into getting Megan to this point, but it's been totally worth the effort. A huge thanks to everyone who has made this possible."

**To make a donation, Megan's bank account is:**

Miss M J Felton BNZ Pukekohe  
02-0404-0038195-066 ■

## Search And Rescue Front Up In Emergencies

The striking backdrop of flora and fauna, along with the stunning array of insect, animal and birdlife make New Zealand an idyllic country for trampers to explore. But the climatic conditions, and often steep rugged terrain can prove challenging for

even the most experienced trumper, with the worst possible scenario resulting in police and volunteers being called out to search for those who are overdue. Auckland Search and Rescue is made up of members from all over the district, with

Ryan Hunt, Brendon Irwin, Mark Jamieson, Alana Raw, and Steven Shaskey residing in Franklin.

Location: Motunau Bay, Ponui Island. Briefing: The search is on for two female students due out at 0700hrs on Friday the 13th of November,

who failed to be at their pickup point. They have been staying in the green shed near the farm building, their gear is still there, and they have not been seen since Thursday. The women, both French nationals, have limited English and have been on the island researching kiwi. Neither has any known medical conditions, both are Caucasian, one is aged 18, the other 20.

2030hrs: Each team is briefed with their individual tasks. Team 2 4 is tasked to search the second ridge line commencing from grid reference 058775 to grid reference 052779 using sound and light sweeps. Two other teams are on adjacent ridgelines, and a further two teams have been tasked to different 'hot spots' on the island. Searching through a swamp then up the sometimes steep ridgeline before being stood down for the night to be ready to commence searching at 0800hrs the next morning. Graced with the sound



Patient welfare is of the utmost importance.