



# All the right moves

**By Tania Martin**

AN INTERACTIVE puppet show has helped a Cockatoo boy share his story of survival.

Jack Baumgarten, 11, has spent the past four years in the battle of his life after being diagnosed with leukaemia.

He is now coming to the end of his treatment.

Cockatoo Primary School students recently got a glimpse of what Jack's life was like over the past few years.

This followed a visit from Camp Quality's interactive puppet show.

The show aims to help children understand what it means to have cancer and looks at issues such as hair loss and amputation.

Jack's mother, Tracy Johnson, said the puppet show was important to make other children understand the impact

cancer can have on a person's life.

"It's a great way to let a whole bunch of kids know about it without pointing to anybody," she said.

Ms Johnson said Jack was finally on the road to recovery after a long four years.

He was first diagnosed when he was just seven.

Jack woke up one morning with a blood nose which bled for more than three hours.

His father took him to the hospital and Jack was diagnosed with leukaemia.

He was staying at his dad's house in Gippsland when it happened and was rushed to the Royal Children's Hospital.

Ms Johnson said although she didn't realise it, there were signs that Jack was sick months before his diagnosis.

Several months earlier Jack would complain about being tired a lot and would bruise very easily.

"I would nearly get home from school and I would just want to collapse," Jack said.

"We just didn't think anything of it but now I look back and a few times he just didn't look well," Ms Johnson said.

Despite the shock, Ms Johnson said it was important to find out what they had to do to get Jack better.

Jack said the hardest part was having the needles.

For the first few weeks he was stuck in hospital undergoing a battery of tests.

Ms Johnson said it was still not known what caused Jack's cancer.

But it was only lucky he had that blood nose.

"He was very sick and they told us he would have died within 24 hours if it was not picked up," Ms Johnson said.

Ms Johnson said it was a really difficult time for the family as they had just moved to Cockatoo and didn't know many people in town. "We didn't have any real support networks," she said.

Ms Johnson said Camp Quality had been a big help, providing everyday activities for Jack such as going to the movies, or barbecues.

"It gave Jack and me the opportunity to do something and get out of the house," she said. "It was also a chance to meet other families in the same situation."

Jack has now been given a clean bill of health but still has to have regular tests every 10 weeks.



**Left: Jack Baumgarten and his mother, Tracy Johnson, tell how Jack came close to death.** 34905



**Below: Camp Quality's puppet show recently visited Cockatoo Primary School.**