



A message for all Parents – Angela's Story

Hannah's Foundation – Drowning Prevention, Awareness and Support charity has met some courageous people who have helped to tell their own story about drowning and helped us raise more awareness. Angela's story is no different. This young mother relives the drowning events of her son Kale, on January 26, 2008. A day she never forgets. Angela is raising awareness to drowning with Hannah's Foundation by participating in fundraisers and hopes that no child or parent lives her nightmare.

This is Angela's story.

Nearly two years ago, very quietly and suddenly our life was turned upside down!

Our two year old had managed to gain access through our gate and into the pool. Our pool was full of floating toys, it was a hot day and we had all been in the pool just moments before. One of the toys had attracted his attention and then he was very quietly drowning. We were in the pool area at the time using the BBQ. It was about 6pm. No one heard a splash, no one heard a scream, nothing but silence. He couldn't swim. No one had taught him that adults get toys. The toys were known as fun when we were all in together.

The next thing I remember is my older son and daughter who are school age screaming, "He is Dead, He is Dead", I still hear that scream every day.

Our Baby boy was floating face down and he was Blue. I still remember that sight too.

My husband jumped into the pool and pushed him onto the side while I ran for the phone to call the ambulance. I dialled 000 and then found I couldn't get my words out. I was just screaming while my husband was frantically doing CPR. A neighbour jumped our back fence and took over the phone call. The ambulance arrived within eight minutes, also staying on the phone the whole time. Our baby had just started to get a heartbeat but he was not responding, no cries for help, and no eye contact. I honestly thought "we were too late". He desperately needed oxygen. He was taken to the Nambour Hospital and the ambulance stopped on the way to pick up an on call doctor.

After arriving at the hospital, his heart and lungs were x-rayed, and found not much water which was a real surprise. They asked us, if much water had come out when we were doing the CPR, and the answer was "no". He was alive but still so vague and not responding to voices. He had a heart monitor and machines attached to his lifeless little

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body, it wasn't until hours later that he just started to be his bubbly self and amazed everyone with his personality.

The doctors did a lot tests which were overwhelming and they told us that he didn't have any brain damage. It was also explained that with drowning the side effects are severe and he wasn't showing any of these so we were assured he was ok. I felt so so relieved but at the same time confused as so many children do drown and don't come back.

There is one charity in Queensland which helps people with support when facing such a tragedy or in our case the trauma. We need the awareness in the community to try and stop these tragedies. The charity is called "Hannah's Foundation". Hannah drowned in October 2007 while her mum was changing her little brother's nappy; she moved a chair to open the gate. There was no support group at the time so her parents Andrew and Kat have started this foundation.

I can tell you that they have helped our family and they are helping more and more families every week. They along with foundation members like us help spread awareness, so we can prevent this happening to anyone else.

I started my little boy, now three at the end of last year with a new swim teacher. He has just learnt so much in the short time. More importantly to me is he is not just playing games and learning to love the water, like his previous swim school. Playing games is great at home but when he is with his new swim teacher, he is in a learning environment. The big rule that she teaches him is that he doesn't get toys out of the water, Adults do. This is so very important.

If I could give anyone some advice, it would be this:

- You never think its going to happen to you
- Attending BBQs and lots of children swimming and 1 or 2 adults watching is not good enough
- You cannot watch every child at once. Please be responsible for your own child. So many drownings occur when an adult is present.
- We now have double locks on our doors and gates. Our pool gates are locked with keys, no one opens them but an adult.
- We have moved our BBQ furniture away and any pot plants as these are what children climb on.

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- No toys are ever left in our pool. It is too much of a temptation. Actually we don't like them at all in the pool anymore, but if you do, please make a rule they all come out.
- Children who can swim still drown, most children learn to swim in warm water but when they fall in the pool, it is cold and it can shock them. Please don't think because your child can swim, they won't drown.
- Every pool owner should know CPR and update their skills regularly
- Anything is better than nothing, do what you can until the ambulance arrives
- Please regularly check your gates and fences. Adjust the hinges of the gates and ensure that all self closing gates work properly

We are so very lucky to have our very healthy little boy. Every time I hear of a drowning, my heart aches for the families and I think to myself that I am one of the lucky mums but the trauma of what happened that day haunts me and still, today I relive every second and ask myself " what if, what could have been".

We need our community to be aware that it happens to anyone.

Hannah's Foundation supports all families who have suffered a water accident, whether that is drowning causing death, non fatal drownings with/out injuries or water accidents such as diving into shallow waters, boating accidents.

Donations can be directed to Everyday Hero or Qld Police Credit Union BSB 704 052 Account 1035885 Hannah's Foundation

Please this summer make sure your children are safe in and around waters.

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please contact Andrew or Katherine Plint on 07 5465 2000