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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **SWIMMING FOR A LOST FRIEND**

Jackie Gardiner and Natalia Vollrath achieved a triumphant goal on Saturday, 20 February by swimming as a duo in the 2010 Rottnest Channel Swim in dedication of their friend Sarah Mitchell who sadly passed away in 2008 after a long battle with breast cancer. They reached Rottnest Island in 7 hours 38 minutes and 59 seconds where many family and friends, including Sarah's mother Liz and husband Steve, were dressed in special 'Swim for Sarah' t-shirts waiting to welcome them in.

Both Jackie and Natalia came up with the idea of the swim when chatting at work, and once they had made the commitment to do it, they also decided they wanted to raise funds for the SolarisCare Foundation, the organisation that provides Cancer Support Centres for people undergoing cancer treatment. Natalia said "Our friend Sarah was a great supporter of SolarisCare and was greatly supported by the organisation throughout her illness and we wanted to do something positive to help them continue to provide these free services to other cancer patients and their carers."

Jackie and Natalia set themselves a target of \$5,000 and so far they have raised over \$8,000 which has them listed as the top team fundraiser for the Rottnest Channel Swim. These funds will ultimately be used to put towards the SolarisCare goal of having a room at Aspire Fitness gym in Claremont dedicated to Sarah – The Sarah Mitchell SolarisCare Suite. SolarisCare in partnership with Aspire Fitness runs special gym classes at their Chemo Club each Tuesday and Thursday morning for people who are undergoing cancer treatment. Sarah Mitchell used to attend regularly as she found that through exercise, she was able to reduce the side effects of her cancer treatment but it was also a place where she could meet other cancer patients and feel like she was not going through this difficult journey alone.

Both Jackie and Natalia are paediatricians working in the Newborn Emergency Transport Service of WA which is attached to the neonatal clinical care units at KEMH and PMH. Sarah Mitchell was the director of this organisation and both ladies agreed she was a great inspiration in work and in life. By completing the 19.7 km swim they feel they have done something inspirational in her memory. On crossing the line, Jackie stated "Saturday was such an amazing day – I would do it all again tomorrow. Well worth the sore arms and a bit of sunburn. I loved every minute."

Jackie and Natalia would like to express their thanks to everyone who has made a donation in support of their swim. If you would now like to make a donation in recognition of their magnificent achievement, go to <http://www.everydayhero.com.au/swimforsarah> 9.

## **BACKGROUND ON SOLARISCARE**

SolarisCare was formed in 2001 by Haematologist Dr David Joske. SolarisCare offers 'complementary integrative therapies' for cancer patients and their carers. Integrative therapies focus on individual patient care and combines the best conventional western medicine and complementary therapies from many cultures, working together to provide the best patient outcome. During 2009, over four thousand patients received treatments at SolarisCare Centres at Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital and St John of God Hospital Subiaco.

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**Photo:** Caption:  
Swimmers Natalia Vollrath (middle) and Jackie Gardiner (right) at completion of the Rottneest Channel Swim celebrating their achievement with Steve Cartledge, husband of the late Sarah Mitchell.