

MEDIA RELEASE

****EMBARGOED UNTIL 11.30 am Tuesday, April 1, 2008****

TUESDAY, APRIL 1, 2008

SANDIE O'CONNOR NAMED BARNARDOS' ACT MOTHER OF THE YEAR

In a special presentation ceremony hosted today by Children's Charity *Barnardos Australia*, **Sandie O'Connor from Gordon** was announced as the **ACT Mother of the Year** in the **2008 *Barnardos Australia's Mother of the Year Awards***. Sandie's determination and devotion to fight for her family won her acclaim amongst the judges.

Sandie will now attend the National Function in Sydney on **Thursday, May 8** (just prior to Mother's Day) where the **2008 *Barnardos Australia's Mother of the Year*** will be announced.

Glynis Sequeira, Marketing Director for Barnardos Australia says "it was very difficult to narrow down the entries, as there were just so many remarkable mothers who deserve to be recognised. However, Sandie is true example of Australian motherhood and is extremely worthy of her Finalist position."

Sandie says she was shocked, humbled and honoured when she was announced as the **ACT Mother of the Year**. "There are so many amazing Mums out there doing incredible work and I feel very privileged to have been chosen to represent the ACT."

Whilst most 19 year olds are carefree, at that age Sandie's primary concern was to gain custody of her three younger sisters. Sandie already had her own baby but she fought hard to ensure that her sisters would receive a safe, secure and loving family environment.

She successfully received full custody of her sisters a few years ago. They were aged 8, 6 & 5. Now, at 23 she is a mother to five young children (11, 8, 7, 3, 2) and also regularly cares for 2 boys every weekend and fosters many others.

Sandie's nominator and friend, Tamara says she looks up to her and is in awe of how well she has handled everything she's gone through."

Sandie's top tip is to "let kids by kids."

As the **ACT Mother of the Year**, Sandie was presented with a Johnson & Johnson gift pack, a motherInc.com.au pamper pack, a Cadbury Roses gift hamper, a Canon digital camera, a 12-month subscription to Practical Parenting magazine, a Captain Cook Sydney Harbour Sightseeing Coffee Cruise, a deluxe flower arrangement from EasyFlowers, and a framed Certificate and trophy to mark the event.

Barnardos provides comprehensive support to the neglected children of our community. With a holistic, results-oriented approach Barnardos makes no assumptions about the children in their care and uses no guess-work when directing thousands of young and vulnerable lives to a more positive and promising future. To find out more call 1800 061 000 or www.barnardos.org.au

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