

I love my mum because...



EMBARGOED UNTIL 9.00 PM, THURSDAY, MAY 7

BERNADETTE BLACK OF TASMANIA NAMED BARNARDOS AUSTRALIA'S MOTHER OF THE YEAR FOR 2009

Bernadette Black from Blackman's Bay in Tasmania was today named Barnardos Australia's Mother of the Year 2009 at a gala dinner held at The Ivy Room in Sydney and attended by Maxine McKew MP, Parliamentary Secretary for Early Childhood Education and Child Care who presented the award on behalf of the Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd.

Bernadette was overwhelmed, humbled and honoured by the announcement and paid special tribute to her son Damien Oliver-Black who nominated her. Bernadette congratulated the other seven deserving finalists, making special mention of all their extraordinary stories.

This award acknowledges the achievements of an exceptional woman who exemplifies all the best qualities of Australian mothers. Bernadette's devotion to her family and her tireless work with young mothers won her acclaim amongst the judges and her heart-warming story is inspirational to all Australians.

When Bernadette unexpectedly fell pregnant at 16, she promised herself three things – that she would be a good mother, complete her education and write a book to help and encourage others in her situation.

Now at 32, Bernadette has fulfilled her promises. She has three children aged 15, seven and four and wrote a book called "Brave Little Bear", which is the meaning of her name. Bernadette is a regular speaker at schools and community events throughout Australia providing advice and support on teenage and unexpected pregnancy.

"When I fell pregnant I desperately searched for support and inspiration from others who had been in my situation but found none," says Bernadette. "So I wrote the book to show others that through perseverance and determination you can overcome life's challenges and fulfill your dreams."

"She works tirelessly to show single mums how life's adversities can be turned into positives and that with support and encouragement anything is possible," says her son Damien. "It's like she has a flame inside her that burns and burns to help people. But she also always has time for her own kids and makes us all feel very special – and she makes great chocolate chip cookies!"

Bernadette says it's crucial that children know they're valued. "If children have that belief in themselves then it doesn't matter what the world throws at them because they'll be able to handle it."

"The measure of who we are is how we care for our children," said Maxine McKew. "Barnardos has always understood this. I commend Barnardos' efforts in honouring all mothers through these national awards. In particular, I congratulate Bernadette Black in being recognised as Barnardos Australia's Mother of the Year 2009 and sharing her inspiring story."

As the 2009 Barnardos Australia's Mother of the Year, Bernadette receives a Ford Fiesta five-door CL Hatch, a three night Murray River Wetlands Discovery Cruise for two people from Captain Cook Cruises, a deluxe flower arrangement from EasyFlowers and a Lindt chocolates hamper.

The Awards gala dinner also represented the official launch of Barnardos' Winter Appeal, the aim of which is to raise vital funds to help the charity find stable and loving 'forever families' for abused and neglected children placed in their care. To find out more call 1800 061 000 or visit www.barnardos.org.au.

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Nominate her for Barnardos Australia's Mother of the Year
www.barnardos.org.au

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