

Media Release

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MONIKA SCHAEFE NAMED BARNARDOS' NT MOTHER OF THE YEAR

In an emotional ceremony hosted today by Barnardos Australia, Monika Schaefer of Moulden was announced as the Northern Territory Mother of the Year in the Barnardos Australia's Mother of the Year Awards 2010. She was presented with her award by the Hon Kon Vatskalis MLA, Minister for Children and Families.

Monika will now attend the national announcement gala dinner in Sydney on Thursday, 6 May 2010, just prior to Mother's Day, at The Ivy along with the other seven state and territory finalists where one of them will be named the Barnardos Australia's Mother of the Year 2010.

Monika is single mum to eight biological children, now aged eight to 30, however she has also raised many more children. Whether they were street kids who needed somewhere to stay, whether they stayed for a few days or many years, Monika never turned anyone away no matter how tight money was. On some occasions food has been so limited that they had to survive on Weetbix for four days but the togetherness of the family pulled everyone through.

Her daughter Sherrona who nominated her says her mum's generous and giving nature is unconditional. "She would sleep on the floor, so the children could have a bed and has gone without any luxuries all her life to make sure all the children in her care have food and clothes. She is non-judgemental and is patient and accepting of everyone."

Monika now works as a Psychological Rehabilitation Worker at TEAM Health (the Top End Association for Mental Health) and is active in community work within the local church assisting with her time, support and services when required.

Monika says she was shocked, humbled and honoured when she was announced as the Northern Territory 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 Northern Territory."

The Barnardos Northern Territory Mother of the Year 2010 announcement was proudly sponsored by the Northern Territory Government.

"These awards are a wonderful way of providing some well deserved recognition to just some of the millions of unsung heroes that are the mums of Australia," says Minister Henderson. "The awards play an important role in recognising and promoting positive parenting and we wish Monika all the best at the national awards."

"It was very difficult for the judges to narrow down the entries, as there were so many remarkable mothers who deserve to be recognised," says Deborah Macmillan, Senior Manager, Barnardos. "However, Monika's devotion and determination to care not only for her own family but to also open her heart and home to many other children in need won her acclaim amongst the judges."

As the Barnardos Northern Territory Mother of the Year 2010, Monika was presented with a Johnson & Johnson gift pack, a Telstra digital tutorial and a Samsung phone and prepaid card, a Captain Cook Sydney Harbour Cruise, an ALMAY cosmetics hamper, a Lindt chocolate hamper, EasyFlowers.com.au flower arrangement, a copy of Paul Mercurio's book Mercurio's Menu, an autographed copy of Damien Leith's latest album Remember June and his book of the same name, a framed certificate to mark the event and flights and accommodation to Sydney to attend the national announcement gala dinner.

Celebrating its 15th year, Barnardos Australia's Mother of the Year Awards is the only national event that recognises the achievements of mothers and their enormous contribution to the Australian community.

The awards also aim to raise public awareness of the nurturing role Barnardos plays in the lives of thousands of children in Australia each year.

For more information contact Sofey Youssef, Awards Publicist, Barnardos Australia on 02 9743 2790 or 0419 272 237 or email sofey@bigpicture.com.

Barnardos Australia's Mother of the Year
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