

I love my mum because...



April 6, 2009

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JEKA MALBASA NAMED BARNARDOS' SA MOTHER OF THE YEAR

In a special ceremony hosted today by **Barnardos Australia**, and presented by the Member for Florey, Ms Frances Bedford, **Jeka Malbasa of Parafield Gardens** was announced as the **South Australian Mother of the Year** in the **2009 Barnardos Australia's Mother of the Year Awards**.

Jeka will now attend the national function in Sydney on **Thursday, May 7** (just prior to Mother's Day) along with the other seven state and territory finalists where the **2009 Barnardos Australia's Mother of the Year** will be announced.

Jeka is a true survivor and a fighter for her family. Originally from Croatia, she and her husband had four children before tragedy struck. Civil war broke out and in 1994 her husband was killed. Jeka survived four years of a civil war that tore up her country on her own in a refugee camp caring for her four young sons who were all under 14 at the time.

Jeka worked in labour intensive jobs, found bomb shelters to keep them safe and often went hungry in order to feed her boys. She eventually managed to flee to Australia with her sons.

Her son Daniel, now 22, who nominated his mum said, "She endured hunger, poverty, sickness, disease and personal grief to come to Australia and provide a better life for her children."

Jeka now helps other Serbian migrants settle into Australia and has never remarried, preferring instead to dedicate her time to her children.

Jeka says she was shocked, humbled and honoured when she was announced as the **South Australian 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 South Australia."

"This year we had thousands of nominations for truly remarkable mums from around this country of ours," says Glynis Sequeira, Marketing Director for Barnardos Australia. "However Jeka's determination and devotion to care for those less fortunate won her acclaim amongst the judges."

State Member for Florey, Ms Bedford who attended the event on behalf of the Premier, Mike Rann said, "Barnardos commitment to strong families and their advocacy on behalf of mothers and children is admirable. Jeka Malbasa is an outstanding South Australian mother who has overcome great adversity and fully deserves the recognition that comes with this award."

As the **2009 Barnardos South Australian Mother of the Year**, Jeka was presented with a Johnson & Johnson gift pack, a motherInc.com.au pamper pack, a Lindt chocolate 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, a framed certificate and trophy to mark the event and flights and accommodation to Sydney to attend the national function.

The overall winner will receive a Ford Fiesta 5-door CL Hatch, a 3-night Murray River Wetlands Discovery Cruise for 2 people from Captain Cook Cruises, a deluxe flower arrangement from EasyFlowers and a Lindt chocolate hamper.

Launched in 1996 by Barnardos, the Awards aim to acknowledge the enormous contribution that mothers make in shaping Australia's future through their role in nurturing children.

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

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

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