

Cancer survivor's inspired campaign



WELCOME BREAK: Homely Retreats charity founder Jay Chapman with her son Max, 9.

Picture: NIKKI DAVIS-JONES

MERYL NAIDOO

LAUDERDALE'S Jay Chipman is no stranger to struggling, after her ordeal with cancer left her feeling broken.

The 35-year-old mum is now determined to give back, and young Tasmanian families affected by cancer now have access to the new service that she has built — Homely Retreats.

The service supports families under stress from the debilitating impact of cancer.

"It provides the hope that they need to get them through this time," Mrs Chipman said.

"This break away is bonding time and rest that they need to soldier on through the treatment."

It currently offers a weekend getaway for families with a parent undergoing or recovering from cancer treatment.

This includes two and three nights' complimentary accommodation, along with vouchers to supplement travel expenses.

Mrs Chipman was diagnosed with cancer in late 2014.

She had celebrated her 30th birthday months before, been married, gone on a honeymoon, and was looking forward to a road trip to Queensland with sons, Jack and Max, and husband Daniel.

"It was a massive shock to us all, and our lives were immediately put on hold," she said.

She began an intense treatment regimen of 24-hour in-

travenous chemotherapy treatment in hospital, for six days at a time.

"It was a difficult time in every way, physically, emotionally, mentally, spiritually, financially and logistically," she said.

She completed the treatment and was given the "all clear" in mid-2015.

"I was completely drained," she said. "It had taken every bit of my energy to survive the medical treatment, and I was left feeling bald and broken."

Some time after, she thought about what she could have benefited from during her cancer journey.

"Due to the financial strain of extensive medical expenses and my not being well enough

to work for a year, we were not able to take a break when we needed it most," she said.

Homely Retreats is now fundraising to help promote quality family time as a key ingredient for recovery, and it has already sent 13 families on holiday this year.

The aim is to send 40 to 50 families for a much-deserved break each year.

The not-for-profit organisation is run by volunteers, and the latest fundraiser is through the sale of 1800 \$10 raffle tickets, with a family holiday to the Gold Coast as first prize.

All funds go towards funding the weekend getaways. Get tickets at rafflelink.com.au, HomelyRetreats, or visit www.homelyretreats.com.au