

Thursday, 7 July 2011



Damien Leith Believes in Children

This Sunday night Damien Leith dances for Barnardos in the grand final of Dancing With the Stars together with chef Manu Feildel and WAG Hayley Bracken.

Leith, singer, dancer and all round family man, is dedicated to caring for children.

Leith says, "Family is the most important thing to me. My children and my wife are more important than my singing, than Dancing with the Stars, than any success or fame that I have ever received – or could ever receive. None of these things matter at all in comparison to family. And that's why I'm dancing for Barnardos."

The Irish-born singer and finalist on Dancing with the Stars, has three children, Jarvis, 6, Jagger, 4, and three-month-old Kikki Bo with his wife, Eileen.

"In truth, I am doing what I can, but it's my wife, Eileen, who has to get up three times a night!" says Leith.

With three children under six, there's no doubt Eileen has her hands full. But she is adamant that she isn't the only one dedicated to caring for their children. "Damien is a very hands-on dad. He gives all of our children so much of his time no matter how busy he is, which is vital for their well-being and development."

Leith says, "Through my work with Barnardos, I've really come to understand just how crucial nurturing care is for babies. The first two years of life are the most important time in a child's emotional development. A baby who receives the appropriate care and affection from their parents or care-givers has the foundation to become a well-adjusted adult. I do everything I can to provide this for my kids, but there are many kids out there who don't have the care and nurture that they need. So I am honoured to be able to support Barnardos in the work they do for children and young people."

Current research proves just how true Leith's words are. Every year over 32,000 children in Australia are found to have been abused or neglected. That's nearly 100 children a day, every day of the year.* The physical, emotional and developmental consequences can be lifelong.

The grand final of Dancing with the Stars airs this Sunday on Channel 7 at 6.30pm. If Leith wins, a proportion of the funds raised from viewers texts and calls will go to Barnardos Australia. Leith will also hit the stage on Friday night for his sold-out Palms at Crown show in Melbourne, launching his national metro and regional ROY tour (see www.damienleith.com.au for further details).

Source: *Child Protection Australia 2007-2008, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2008-2009.

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For media enquiries or to arrange a photo opportunity please contact Chelsea Miller on 02-9218-2344, email: cmiller@barnardos.org.au

Notes for editors: Barnardos is a non-government, non-denominational child welfare charity that has been helping children in need for over 120 years. Barnardos Australia is one of the largest children's charities in the country, caring for children and young people at risk of abuse and neglect. The work of Barnardos Australia focuses on the prevention of abuse and neglect and entry into care. Children and young people of all backgrounds and cultural heritage are helped through a range of welfare programs including crisis care, family support, counselling and permanent foster care. *Our vision is that all children and young people will have caring families, in which they can grow up safely and reach their full potential supported by quality services and engaged communities.*

For more information visit: www.barnardos.org.au.