



Media Release

21 August 2018

Workers rally round boss to raise funds for sick niece

Barkly Regional Council workers from a remote community have rallied around their boss to help raise funds for his sick niece.

Ampilatwatja Area Manager Robert Smith and his wife Tracey have been trying to raise money for his 26-year-old niece, Jennah McCumber, who was diagnosed with a pineal brain cyst, a form of brain tumour, earlier this year.

Robert, who has worked for Council for more than four years, said he and Tracey were “stressing out over” how they’d reach the \$100,000 required for an operation when four of his workers stepped in.

Works Supervisor Marco Panuccio and municipal workers Don Simpson, Ellwyn Morton and Joas Turner have been going around the community picking up alloy rims, radiators and bullbars.

“All the metal they could get their hands on basically,” said Robert. “It was part of a hard rubbish drive.”

Then last week the works supervisor and his team said they’d donate the money they make from the scrap metal dealer in Alice Springs to Jennah’s GoFundMe page to help raise funds towards her life-saving operation.

“Tracey was in tears and I was really touched by their generosity,” said Robert.

“The guys didn’t have to do this and we really appreciate their contribution and their concern for our family. It’s a real measure of their respect and generosity of spirit,” he said.

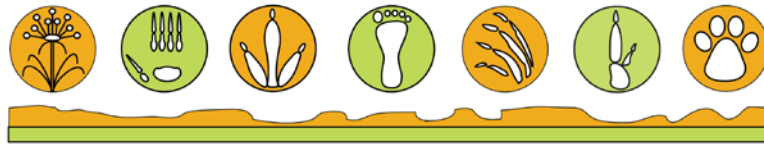
Robert’s niece Jennah lives on the Gold Coast with her fiancé Zac, and has three children under the age of five.

Back in February she started suffering from seizures, chronic headaches, memory and hearing loss, blurred vision, speech problems and insomnia.

“I had to give up my dream of studying to become a nurse. I could no longer care for my children on my own. I could no longer drive. There were days when I couldn’t even get out of bed,” she said.

Soon after being diagnosed with the deadly brain tumour Jennah and Zac travelled to Sydney in May to meet with neurosurgeon Dr Charlie Teo.

BARKLY REGIONAL COUNCIL



Dr Teo agreed to perform the life-saving surgery. However, it comes at a cost of \$100,000, not including return flights to Sydney and accommodation.

Jannah had written on a crowd-funding page: "Please find it in your hearts to help me raise the much needed funds for my life-saving surgery. Please don't let my kids grow up without their mum. My family need me."

Zac's employees at Frizelle Sunshine Group have also come to the family's aid, and together with Rotary, are raffling off a Fiat 500 Lounge 1.2 manual with six months registration.

Tickets are available at frizellesunshine.com/au/mccumber-family

Media Contact: Ktima Heathcote 08 89620027 or ktima.heathcote@barkly.nt.com.au