



Sandra Oliver and her children Christian Parnemann, 4, and Georgia Parnemann, 2, who are both hearing impaired

Picture: MICHAEL ROSS

Butterfly appeal ensures clear message is heard

By MICHELLE LACEY
laceym@goldcoast.com.au

THE Hear and Say charity needs help raising vital funds for deaf babies during its month-long Butterfly Appeal.

The Hear and Say program teaches hearing-impaired children to listen, speak and communicate during their young developmental stages. Butterflies are deaf, hence the name of the appeal.

Robina mum Sandra Oliver has three children, two of whom were diagnosed with profound hearing loss at birth.

Mrs Oliver said she felt "very privileged" for her four-year-old son Christian and two-year-old daughter

Georgia to be a part of the Hear and Say program since they were four months old. "Everyone has been extremely supportive and it is amazing to see the children's progress," Mrs Oliver said.

"There is no reason why Christian cannot start mainstream schooling next year. He is speaking and communicating very clearly."

Both children had cochlear implants fitted before their first birthday. "It is so important to recognise a child's hearing problems at a young age, so you can do something about it," she said.

Hear and Say managing director Dimity Dornan said the service was Australia's first support and education program of its kind.

"Many families who have hearing-impaired children are relieved to finally have treatment and therapy for their children," Ms Dornan said.

"Young children are fitted with hearing aids or cochlear implants and taught to listen and speak using auditory-verbal therapy."

In Queensland, about one in 500 children are diagnosed with hearing loss at birth.

To support the charity, people can purchase \$3 butterfly brooches and pens, \$5 butterfly charm bracelets and keytags from Suncorp branches and KFC outlets from March 28 to April 28.

Phone 3870 2221 to donate or visit www.butterflyappeal.com