

# family focus

While coming into contact with families when fulfilling dreams, we realised that our families were under tremendous strain due to the illness of their child. Parents try to remain strong and do not always share how they feel. Husband and wife spend very little time together. Often siblings, especially the teenagers, will act out while the younger siblings remain quiet about how they feel. Due to the huge financial strain on the family, many of them have not been on holiday, since the child was diagnosed; while others have never been away together at all.

Family camp and family special events both form part of our Family Focus programme. These organised events affords the families the opportunity to spend quality time together. Families have an opportunity to rebuild their relationships and to meet other families facing similar challenges. Recreational hours allow children to relax and enjoy the simple pleasures of childhood while their parents find quiet moments and reaffirm their support for one another. In addition, games and events are designed to foster family involvement, encouraging families to laugh and play as a unit. They have time to bond and build precious memories. This approach builds a new foundation that the family can take with them when the camp is over, to unite them during the darker times that they may have to face.

Often the family focus is shifted towards ensuring that the life-threatened child is as comfortable as possible; inevitably the psycho-social wellbeing of the rest of the family is neglected resulting in tremendous strain on the family relations.

Reach For A Dream recognised the crucial need to provide the families of life-threatened children with an outlet for these suppressed emotions. Family camp and family outings are part of our Family Focus programme aimed at giving families a chance to reconnect in a relaxing environment.

