

Girl power

Mother and daughter team up to bring the United Nations to Brisbane

It was a "sliding doors" event that changed everything. Cathie Reid was happily going about her newly married life and following a career as a pharmacist. But that life path was flipped on its head when her high-school sweetheart marriage of less than two years ended abruptly. She was 26.

"My whole world came crashing down," Cathie says. "I was on a very different and much more traditional path, but suddenly everything was up in the air."

"My marriage break-up really changed the course of my destiny."

Cathie's destiny has seen her go on to become one of Australia's most successful businesswomen – a pharmaceutical entrepreneur whose business interests (with second husband of 15 years Stuart Giles) look set to turn over a cool \$300 million this financial year.

Their healthcare businesses encompass APhS Pharmacy Group which specialises in private hospital aged care and cancer care, and cancer treatment centres Icon Cancer Care.

Now 44, the Indooroopilly businesswoman and 2011 Telstra Business Women's Awards winner is passionate about "giving back" and "being a good citizen".

She says she has taken opportunities when they have come her way – as diverse as producing the recent fashion documentary *Uncovering the Brisbane Look*, directed by filmmaker Hailey Bartholomew. Now Cathie has turned her attention to a new project, this time with her 12-year-old daughter Sascha.

As part of a "pay it forward" challenge set for participants at a Dell Women's Entrepreneur Network (DWEN) conference in Turkey last year, Cathie is working on bringing the United Nations Foundation initiative Girl Up to Australia.

Girl Up (girlup.org) has more than 370,000 mostly American girl members who raise funds and awareness for UN programs to help adolescent girls in developing countries. In doing so, girls develop leadership skills. They hold meetings, plan budgets, write reports and take responsibility for events.

The big-picture hope is that the girls develop into a new generation of leaders capable of breaking the cycle of poverty and ill-health.

"There was no reason why Girl Up couldn't be as successful for Australian girls as it has been for American girls," Cathie says.

Sascha, a Year 7 student at St Peter's Lutheran College, Indooroopilly, set up the first Girl Up club in Australia with her friends. They launched it as part of International Women's Day festivities in March. For her efforts, Sascha was invited to New York in April to meet fellow Girl Up members and ended up attending a Clinton Foundation event where she met former US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and daughter Chelsea.

Sascha will also star in a short documentary used to introduce Girl Up to Australia, which she will also present to the upcoming DWEN conference in Austin, Texas, in June.

"Sascha has been invited to attend DWEN with me this year, in recognition of the work she has been doing in bringing Girl Up to Australia," Cathie says.

"She's also been invited to the Girl Up conference in Washington a couple of weeks later."

Girl Up will officially be launched in Australia at the upcoming G(irls)20 Summit, in Sydney in August, as a precursor to the G20 Summit.

Cathie credits her entrepreneurial flair to her late fitter-and-turner father Wally.

"Dad always had a very strong work ethic," says Cathie, who grew up in Gippsland, Victoria.

"While he was always an employee, he was also quite entrepreneurial outside of work."

"He was a frustrated farmer. He also had a fencing, a hay-baling and sheep-shearing business and all sorts of activities on the side."

Cathie and Stuart, who also have a son, Sam, 9, say that it's important their kids grow up socially aware.

"The last thing we want is for them to grow up with a sense of entitlement," Cathie says.

"It's really important that they understand the need to give back, to have a good social conscience. Part of being a good citizen is contributing back to the society you live in."

Part of being a good citizen is contributing back to the society you live in



PHOTOGRAPH Steve Pohner

43% of
St Aidan's
girls
achieved
an OP 1-5*

Science and Mathematics Scholarships **Years 7-11** for 2015

Scholarships are available to students who demonstrate excellence in the area of science and mathematics. **Applications for 2015 are NOW OPEN.**

Apply at www.staidans.qld.edu.au or call (07) 3373 5928

St Aidan's Anglican Girls' School
Prep to Year 12 with co-ed Kindergarten
Corinda • QLD • AUSTRALIA
A School of the Sisters of the Society of the Sacred Advent
* 2013 CRICOS CODE: 01194K

