

Brave mum gets on with managing a 'time bomb' in her head

I'm not waiting to die

Cheryl Critchley

SALLY White refused to sit back and wait to die when surgeons removed part of her brain tumour and warned it was a case of when and not if it would grow back.

The social worker and mother of two boys ended up seeing controversial Sydney brain surgeon Dr Charlie Teo, who gave her a 15 per cent chance of being cured.

Dr Teo, who stars in Channel 7's confronting new reality show *Last Chance Surgery*, conducted a risky operation that removed more of the tumour than had been possible.

"Charlie's so fantastic," Ms White said. "He's one of the few people who believe that brain tumours ever can be cured."

Ms White, 40, who lost her mother and uncle to brain tumours, was able to stop taking seizure medication and is now "95 per cent" fit.

More importantly, she no longer lives in absolute fear of dying.

"I felt like I had a time bomb in my head," she said. "I was constantly worried about if it would re-grow, when it would re-grow, what it would mean. My quality of life is so much better."

Ms White has written a moving book, *Three Quotes from a Plumber: How a second opinion changed the life of a woman with a brain tumour* (Michelle Anderson Publishing), urging others to seek second opinions.

She was diagnosed with a grade 2 (4 being worst) brain tumour in early January 2007 after suffering a seizure on New Year's Eve.

She had an "awake craniotomy" in March 2007, in which the patient must remain conscious to minimise complications. This removed most of a tumour the size of a small orange.

After being told it would eventu-



Life-saver: Dr Charlie Teo.

ally grow back, even if this took years, Ms White investigated alternative therapies and met Dr Teo at a Sydney conference.

He operated in July 2008 and gave her a 15 per cent chance of being cured.

Two MRI scans have since showed no change in what is now left of the tumour.

"I think he's potentially saved my life," Ms White said. "The medical profession can be intimidating."

"You feel like you're being critical and undermining what the advice has been so far. That's not the case."

"You need to be satisfied that you have got all the information that's necessary to make an informed decision."

The White family have bonded over Ms White's challenges, facing them with courage.



The White stuff: Sally White with her husband David and sons Ben and Josh. Picture: PAUL TREZISE

Husband David, 43, and his friends started Blackwood 8, which has raised \$80,000 for brain tumour research treatment. It has enticed Dr Teo down for this year's dinner next month.

Sons Josh, 13, and Ben, 11, have also been strong.

Ben will shave his head with fellow

Wonga Park Primary School students today to raise money for breast cancer after a schoolmate's mother died last month.

Ms White has remained philosophical, despite seeing her mother and uncle die of the disease she's now battling.

"I guess I've come to a point where

I accept that that's what's happened," she said. "I just try to create meaning and purpose from it."

Blackwood 8 will hold its "A Celebration of Hope" brain tumour fundraiser, featuring Dr Charlie Teo, at Croydon Golf Course on Friday, October 23.

Net link: www.blackwood8.com.au.

Rally against violence

VICTORIANS fed up with Melbourne's rampant street violence will take to the streets on Sunday.

The Walk Against Violence has been organised by People Against Lenient Sentences (PALS) to voice outrage at incidents including repeated inner-city bashings and the Brunswick stabbing murder of good Samaritan Luke Mitchell.

Speakers will include Paul McMurray, whose son needed repeated brain surgery after being bashed last year and psychologist Dominic Greco, a victims-of-crime advocate.

The rally will commence at 11am at Treasury Gardens and protestors will walk to the steps of State Parliament.



Good Samaritan: Luke Mitchell

\$20m suit pending

TWO senior insolvency professionals may be sued for \$20 million over their behaviour as liquidators of failed financier Octaviar, a court has heard.

The potential personal claim against Deloitte partners John Greig and Nicholas Harwood has been flagged by Queensland's Public Trustee, which represents noteholders owed about \$350 mil-

lion. The pair paid about \$20 million to US vulture fund Fortress and the fund has so far refused to return the money despite a court ruling its charge over Octaviar's assets was "void".

William Fletcher and Katherine Barnet, of Bentley's Corporate Recovery, were last week appointed liquidators of Octaviar.

SEARCH FOR THE SIMPSONS AND WIN

Lisa Simpson is on the run in today's paper. If you can find the Golden Lisa you will have the chance to win a copy of *The Simpsons: The Complete Twelfth Season* on DVD.

Simply look for the Golden Lisa Stick'em in the *Herald Sun* today and SMS the page number along with your name and phone number to 19 988 700.

SMS costs 55c inc GST. Competition closes 23:59 (AEST) 18/09/2009. Competition is drawn 10:30 am (AEST) 22/09/2009 at Salmat Interactive. For full terms and conditions see today's public notices section.

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