



NORTHERN BEACHES

On their bikes for brave kids

PARENTS WILL CYCLE TO HELP FIGHT CANCER

Julie Cross

TWO children who are now “besties” after meeting in hospital while battling cancer, have inspired their parents to find a cure for the disease.

Ted Barnett, 5, and Isla Batchelor, 6, were diagnosed with the most common form of childhood cancer, acute lymphoblastic leukaemia, 18 months ago when they were both aged four.

Their beds at Sydney

Children’s Hospital were next to each other during their initial chemotherapy treatment and, subsequently, they asked to be in the same four-bed ward whenever they were in hospital for treatment, because they loved being together.

Coincidentally, their parents are police officers, and now two of them work on the same command.

Darrin Batchelor, 46, of

Belrose, said the pair were great mates.

“They definitely have a special bond,” said Mr Batchelor, whose wife Sarah, 41, is an officer on the northern beaches. They have four other children.

“They went through intense treatment at the same time. They even lost their hair together.

“I think it helped them to have each other and it

helped us parents to have each other to talk to as well.”

Ted and Isla have a few months left of treatment and are receiving oral chemotherapy at home.

They have also both had numerous lumbar punctures and steroids. Ted’s treatment is due to finish in August and Isla’s in October.

Ted’s mother Natalee, 34, who lives in East Hills with

husband Andrew, also 34, said the children were able to discuss what they were going through with each other, which was like a form of therapy for them.

“They know all the medical jargon and we’ve heard them discussing their treatment together,” she said.

Now, Mrs Barnett, who also has another son, Oscar, 7, and Mr Batchelor are part

of a team of seven entering Endure For A Cure, a 12-hour endurance cycling challenge at Sydney Motor-sport Park, Eastern Creek.

Their team, Two Little Legends, named after Ted and Isla, will pedal as many laps as they can endure from sunrise to sunset on May 5.

They hope to raise funds for the Children’s Cancer Institute, the only independent medical research institute in Australia dedicated to putting an end to childhood cancer.

“We’ve benefited from previous research and we want to help other families who have to go through this in the future,” Mrs Barnett said.

Mr Batchelor said although the survival rate for leukaemia was 80 per cent but they were hoping research would change that.

To sponsor Two Little Legends or enter your own team go to endureforacure.org.au.



Isla and Ted in hospital.



Natalee Barnett and son Ted, Darrin Batchelor and daughter Isla.

Picture: MARTIN LANGE

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LYMPHOBLASTIC LEUKAEMIA

- It is a cancer that affects the blood
- It is the most common form of childhood cancer but it also affects adults
- It can occur at any age but is more common in children
- Sixty years ago the survival rate was nil, now it is more than 80 per cent