



MEDIA RELEASE

Teen with cerebral palsy realises dream of getting out of her wheelchair and walking into her high school formal

If your teenage daughter sees just one online video today, make it this one. She'll be forever grateful.

SYDNEY, 30 JULY 2014– I watched this and cried. Sitting at my desk at work, my headphones in, my eyes glued to my computer screen. I couldn't help it. I got chills, was covered in goose bumps, then my eyes welled up and tears spilled over and down my cheeks.

I have only met Lia once, quite a few years ago, at a fundraising event for Cerebral Palsy Alliance. But for some reason, her video - [Lia's Dream](#) - got me big time.

Maybe it's because I have teenage daughters who I see trying so hard to fit in, and be like everybody else.

Maybe it's because I remember my own angst about what I should wear or how I should do my hair or makeup at my very first high school formal (admittedly a few decades ago now!)

But maybe it's just because amidst the current political circus, the reality TV shows, and the relentless barrage of social media 'selfies', here was a teenage girl working her butt off to realise her dream.

Lia has cerebral palsy and has used a wheelchair for as long as she can remember. She has endured multiple surgeries and regular therapy sessions to stretch, straighten and move her limbs. Apart from that, she's like every other teenage girl. She goes to school, lives with her twin brother and parents in Sydney's inner west, and no doubt has the same frustrations, hopes and goals as every other girl her age.

But what sets her apart, is that she's really, really determined. She set herself a goal – to leave her wheelchair at home and walk into her Year 10 formal. And if you can see through your tears at the end of her video, you'll see she realises her dream in absolute style.

So why did I cry? I cried because Lia is strong, Lia is determined, and Lia is a girl. She showed that no matter what the circumstances, or the things that get in the way, no dream is too big. Lia had a dream and she chased it until it became her reality on the red carpet, in front of her cheering and crying family and friends.

That's a life lesson I hope every teenage girl (including my own) take from Lia's journey. Never give up on your dreams. You might fall down, there might be times when it all seems just too hard and the mountain too high. But never ever give in. If you fight hard enough, dreams can come true. Just ask Lia.

So what's next for Lia? She's just signed up to complete *STEptember*, where she will attempt to walk and do activity equivalent to 10,000 steps a day throughout September. By taking part, she'll also be raising money to help other girls with cerebral palsy chase their dreams.

Lia would love other teenage girls to grab some friends and join her at www.steptember.org.au

I know three girls who will be. *#Liasdream*

Lia and her trainer are available for interview, contact Jennifer Durante – (02)9975 8758 / 0419 802 602

