SNUG
Retreats Connecting Families

"During the retreat our little family felt like we are now a part of a much bigger family"

SNUG is run by the Family Action Centre (FAC) at The University of Newcastle. The FAC is a research, teaching and practice centre focused on families and their communities. It has a 30-year track record of innovative, dynamic and enduring work that aims to strengthen family and community wellbeing. At FAC we are committed to addressing the factors that affect the health, wellbeing, social and educational paths of families, particularly for those challenged by increasingly complex vulnerabilities.

The Family Action Centre
THE UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE • AUSTRALIA

SNUG is supported by the Steve Waugh Foundation whose goal is to be 'somewhere to turn' for families of children with rare diseases. Since 2009 the Steve Waugh Foundation has proudly supported the SNUG program helping countless families enjoy a break from the day-to-day challenges that often come with a rare diagnosis. The only stand-alone Foundation of its kind in Australia, the Steve Waugh Foundation is dedicated to being 'somewhere to turn' for children and young adults living with the rarest conditions. The Foundation is committed to helping build connections and support networks through supporting the SNUG program, funding life-changing and life-saving grants, and playing a lead role in the promotion of World Rare Disease Day.

STEVE WAUGH FOUNDATION

"This retreat has given us the time and space to truly reflect upon what's important in our lives and appreciate what we have and how together we move forward as a family. We were fortunate enough to conquer many firsts and therefore this trip will be forever in our hearts and minds"

THE FAMILY ACTION CENTRE, UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE NSW AUSTRALIA
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SNUG
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A Residential program for families of children with rare and special needs

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STEVE WAUGH FOUNDATION
The Family Action Centre
THE UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE • AUSTRALIA

"The support, guidance and recognition offered by the group was both heart-warming and educational. We don't feel alone in our journey anymore"

About SNUG

Since 2009, SNUG, with the support of the Steve Waugh Foundation, has held over 66 retreats for families caring for a child (or children) with a rare medical condition. This means that 332 families – over 1287 people living with the challenge of a rare condition have been able to enjoy the benefits of spending quality time together & meeting others facing similar challenges

SNUG retreats enable families to participate in a wide range of fun, multi-sensory, accessible activities, designed to identify and celebrate the skills and strengths of all family members, with the aim of improving wellbeing, connection, communication and resilience. SNUG retreats also provide a safe and supportive atmosphere for family members to develop confidence in sharing family experiences, knowledge and resources with others who are experiencing similar challenges, in this way developing lasting friendships and support networks with their peers.

Why Retreats?

Families who have children with rare, chronic and complex conditions experience significantly impaired family wellbeing, social isolation, and exclusion. The significant caring responsibilities, financial burden, isolation, trauma, and uncertainty associated with having a child with a rare condition result in all family members experiencing significant difficulty in accessing appropriate family activities, and finding a social network that shares similar challenges and experiences.

“As tough as life is caring for a child with a disability, there are others in similar situations. We are not alone!”

SNUG is for children with rare conditions...

“It’s the only place my son gets to meet someone born like him.”

... their siblings...

Our older children have developed a greater insight into the needs of their sister, and that they are important to our family structure in raising their sister. Prior to SNUG I think they saw their role as more observers, but seeing other siblings help out has redirected them.”

...their parents...

"It’s nice for the parents to be able to get advice and be able to vent about their frustrations throughout the process. A lot of the time, parents feel they need to keep it together for their children and it’s nice to be able to see them let their guard down.”

“I think the network of friendships and the emotional support it provides is THE most valuable aspect of SNUG. Raising a child with disability is lonely and hard work. Having that 'same boat' network to debrief is a lifesaver."

...their family unit...

"Finally we have a voice and we are all singing the same tune. We can’t thank the Steve Waugh foundation and the SNUG staff enough for what you have done for our young family. It has given us the building blocks to start forging our own pathway"

...and their community.

During the retreat our little family felt like we are now a part of a much bigger family and it is here where all the children big and small get along regardless of their diagnoses"”