

Butterfly effect at Wall

Timely symbol in China as walkers raise \$55,000

Fundraising | Stacy Allen

OF all the amazing sights Jodie Black gazed upon while walking the Great Wall of China, it was a simple butterfly that had the most impact.

The Viewbank mum joined a team of nine who walked about 50km of the historic wall to raise more than \$55,000 for Blackburn's Taralye oral language centre for deaf children.

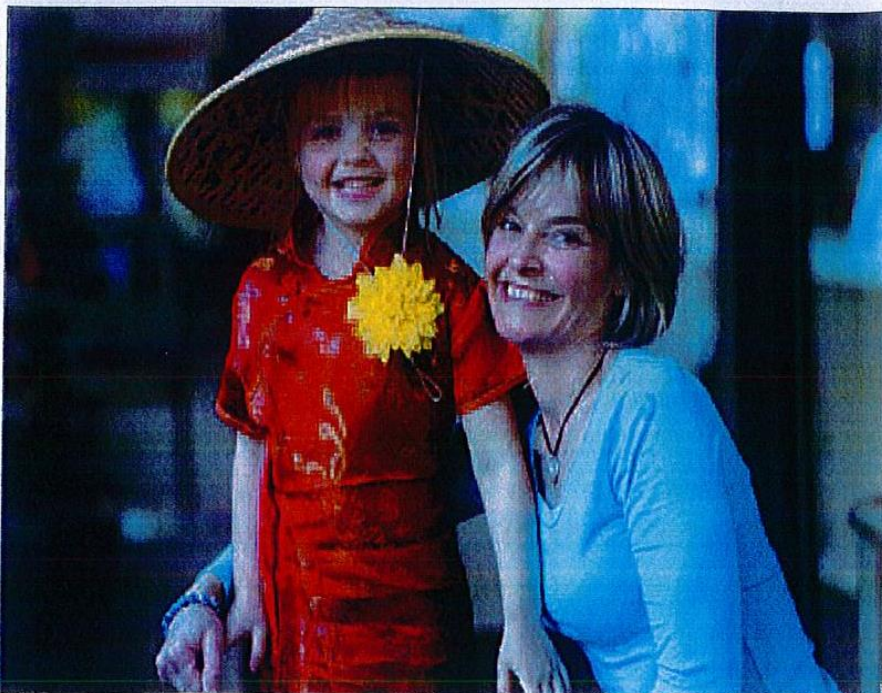
Ms Black's five-year-old daughter Elise has attended the centre since she was three months old and was the motivation for the walk.

Butterflies are the symbol for the deaf community — because they, too, are deaf — so Ms Black said it was moving to see one on her trip.

"I was walking along the wall and a butterfly flew past and it was a beautiful moment," she said. "I felt like my daughter was with me."

Elise was diagnosed soon after birth with a bilateral, severe to profound hearing loss and was fitted with hearing aids when three months old and had a cochlear implant last year. This year will be her last at Taralye — as she will attend a mainstream primary school next year — so Ms Black said the walk was her way of saying thank you to the centre.

Ms Black was joined on the four-day walk by her mother, Lesley



Jodie Black was inspired by daughter Elise to walk the Great Wall of China.

Picture: ANGIE BASDEKIS N13WH500

Giddings, several friends and Taralye's chief executive Therese Kelly. Ms Black said the trip, which also included several days in Beijing, gave her a real sense of achievement. "That sense of accomplishment (was a highlight) and getting

outside my comfort zone to physically achieve something and do it for such a personal reason," she said. "It was absolutely brilliant and exceeded expectations."

She said the money raised by the trip had also surprised them, but

they had always had high hopes. "If you don't aim high you don't achieve high," she said.

To donate, go to the website gofundraise.com.au/page/BlackJ

For more about Taralye, visit taralye.vic.edu.au