

Her dad's in there 100%

TRACEY FINDLAY

SAD news made nine-year-old Melissa Faehrmann realise how lucky she is to have such a great dad.

And this inspired the Cherrybrook schoolgirl to nominate him for the NSW Community Father of the Year award.

Last year Gerry and Joanne Faehrmann learned that two of their five children - six-year-old Grace and four-year-old Sally - had moderate to severe hearing loss.

It was particularly upsetting for Mr Faehrmann who has a hearing impairment.

"When Mum and Dad found out the two girls were deaf they were very sad," Melissa said.

"But before long they were taking the girls every week to the Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind Children at North Rocks.

"Dad said to Mum he did not want her to do all the work of helping with the girls' speech therapy. That's why Dad went every week on a Friday afternoon to take Sally for speech therapy while Mum went with Grace.

"From this we have all learned how to help the girls."

While busy with the speech therapy, Mr Faehrmann was also running his lawn-care business and managing his daughter's soccer team.



Dr Catherine Lennon, mother of one of the team members, said Mr Faehrmann had an amazing ability to get things organised.

"His positive attitude to life and a terrific sense of humour has such a positive affect on those around him, especially the kids," she said.

"He seems to foster their own sense of responsibility and diligence while maintaining a good level of discipline."

Mrs Faehrmann praised her husband for being very much a hands-on dad.

"He likes getting involved because that gives him time to spend with the children," she said.

Entries have now closed for this year's NSW Community of the Year award. The local winner will be announced next week's *Advocate*.



Gerry Faehrmann with his five children Melissa, 9, Lucy, 8, Grace, 6, Sally, 4 and Ben, 1.

Picture: PETER KELLY

Best present dad can get

BUY Dad the best present this Father's Day and help a deaf child hear the noises other children make!

Show Dad that he is "Father of the Year" or declare "I Love My Dad" with a pen or keyring that will help deaf children develop spoken language.

The money raised from the sale of merchandise will support five deaf children's charities across Australia including The Shepherd Centre in NSW and ACT.

The Shepherd Centre teaches hearing impaired children learn how to listen and speak so they can go to their local primary school with their hearing peers and reach their full potential in the hearing world.

Pens and keyrings are on sale from 8 August until Father's Day on Sunday 4 September. They are available from Big W, Best and Less, Lowes Menswear, Gowings and participating Medicare branches.

The brightly coloured pens (\$3) and keyrings (\$2.50) are a fun and thoughtful way to say happy Father's Day while helping give deaf children a brighter future.

Nivea has been a sponsor of the Father's Day fundraising campaign for the past five years.

Get involved and help give deaf children a voice by buying your dad a special gift this Father's Day.

For more information on how to support deaf and hearing impaired children through the Father of the Year Campaign, visit www.fatheroftheyear.com.au or to make a donation call 1800 020 030.