

to help others

Little girl taught all a lesson



Courageous: Eve asked for an early Christmas and a shopping trip to buy gifts for her family.

EVE van Grafhorst was a little girl with a mission — much too busy to die.

The child, who arguably did more for AIDS education than any Grim Reaper, finally succumbed to the disease on Saturday.

At 11 she had outlived even the most optimistic expectations.

Many put that down to her fighting spirit.

Born three months premature in July 1982, Eve was never expected to survive.

At Sydney's Royal North Shore Hospital 11 transfusions pumped blood into her veins. Ironically, it was those transfusions of unscreened blood that killed her.

It was not until she was nearly three that swollen lymph glands led to the AIDS diagnosis.

When parents at the Kincumber childcare centre in Gosford learned of Eve's illness they were struck by outrage and fear.

Eve had bitten at least one child and residents feared their children could catch the virus.

Gosford City Council banned Eve from the centre.

When the New South Wales Health Department

declared Eve was no danger to the other children, she was allowed back.

But when she turned up, all but a few parents refused to allow their children to go.

The trauma prompted Eve's parents, Gloria and John, to flee to New Zealand where Mrs van Grafhorst's family lived on the North Island.

A New Zealand newspaper launched a *Life for Eve* appeal and the \$15,000 raised helped the family to shift to Hastings on June 4, 1986.

But even in the tranquil north-east setting the family faced prejudice.

After more than 30 public meetings to explain Eve's illness, two or three families pulled their children out of the preschool. The van Grafhorst's marriage eventually crumbled.

AIDS expert Dr Don Grimes yesterday said Eve's life was not a waste.

"I think the positive thing about Eve is that I doubt if any community would now do what the Gosford community did then," Dr Grimes said.

Eve will be buried this week in Hastings.

*** All donations \$2 and above tax deductible. Please send to:
Australian Aids Fund, P.O. Box 1347, Frankston, Victoria, 3199**