

# My walk to save Mum

Humour helped *Kenny* star Shane cope with his mum's devastating news

**W**hen *Kenny* star Shane Jacobson became an unlikely box-office hero he paid special tribute to his mum, describing her as truly inspirational.

But nobody realised the full extent of Shane's praise for Jill Goss, 69, who was battling Parkinson's disease with the 'spirit of Muhammad Ali and the humour of Michael J. Fox'.

Now celebrating his new movie *Charlie & Boots*, in which he stars alongside his favourite actor Paul Hogan, Shane opens his heart about his mum's seven-year battle with the degenerative condition.

'Her diagnosis was a huge shock,' he recalls. 'Apart from raising four children and being a breadwinner with her Calisthenics school, she'd always been active. It was completely unexpected.'

## STRONG FAMILY TIES

Jill, whose brother Les also has Parkinson's, had already had two serious health scares.

'Mum suffered a brain haemorrhage,' Shane says. 'Then she'd been told she might not walk due to disc problems in her back. Yet while she'd beaten everything and anything, this time we realised she was on a different mission. I kept thinking this was the disease that had knocked the fight out of Muhammad Ali and wondering what that meant for Mum.'

'Parkinson's doesn't get the attention that cancer or multiple sclerosis attracts,' Shane says, 'but it affects one new Australian every hour and there's no cure.'

Jill was diagnosed in 2002 after consulting a neurologist because she was worried about her shuffle while she walked and the tremor in her hands.

The close-knit family dealt with the news of Jill's condition as they always did - with humour.

'Four days later, Shane announced we'd throw a cocktail party and I'd get to shake the martinis,' Jill smiles. 'I said they might have given me more than four days of their love and pity before the jokes started!'


## HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

There's no cure for the progressive disease, but Jill takes dopamine medication, which has controlled her spontaneous shaking.

'I do daily exercises from Michael J. Fox's program and I run the Avonde Calisthenics College and keep active,' she says.

She's also an ambassador for Parkinson's Victoria and is fighting to raise awareness of the illness.

'Mum's always been there,' says Shane, who can't wait to join her on a charity walk to highlight the struggle of the 80,000 Aussies who suffer from the disease.

'She's always been a rock.' 

• The walk will be held in Sydney and Melbourne on August 30. For details, call 1800 644 189 or visit [www.unitywalk.com.au](http://www.unitywalk.com.au).

By Megan Norris  
Pictures: Lisa Saad

