



Sydney to Hobart favourite Comanche to honour late teen

Miranda Wood, Senior Writer, The Sunday Telegraph

December 23, 2018 12:00am

Subscriber only

- [‘Thieving’ train commuters targeted in crackdown](#)
- [‘Miracle’ drug for multiple sclerosis sufferers](#)

The crew of Sydney to Hobart favourite Comanche will be propelled by a personal mission when the starting cannon is fired on Wednesday.

They'll be racing for a "beautiful" 13-year-old boy named Harrison who took his own life at school four years ago.

The year 7 student is the late son of Scott and Amanda Riedel, close friends with Comanche crew member Martin Blake who is raising funds for the Harrison Riedel Foundation during this week's famous sailing event.

Determined not to let any other families experience the same crippling grief and heartache they felt after the loss of their "caring" boy, Mrs Riedel established the foundation to assist kids in asking for help.



Scott and Amanda Riedel, who lost their son Harrison to suicide, on board the Comanche super maxi. Picture: Tim Hunter.

THE 1998 SYDNEY TO HOBART TRAGEDY REMEMBERED

TRAGIC TOLL OF A PERFECT STORM

SKIPPER REMEMBERS: 'I CAN STILL SEE THE BOAT SINKING'

SOUNDS OF PANIC AND HYSTERIA HAUNT SKIPPER

"I firmly believe he didn't want to do what he did but he's a 13-year-old boy and I believe his hormones had kicked in early," Mrs Riedel told The Sunday Telegraph.

"He was a sensitive boy, without a doubt, but he was a happy boy — he enjoyed a joke and had good friends around him."

Mr Blake, the NSW chairman of KPMG, said Harrison's death on November 10 in 2014 was the "saddest thing that ever happened to me".

"The thing about it that is so unimaginably sad is that there is no explanation for it," he said.

"He was a lovely boy — he was a beautiful boy."

About \$70,000 of the \$100,000 fundraising target set by Mr Blake has been raised for the foundation and its new mobile app to help young people.

Due for release next year, the YourCrew app will enable at-risk teens to reach out to known trusted adults and friends — their 'crew' — to stop their small problems from becoming large, potentially catastrophic ones.

Mr Blake, who started sailing at age seven, said the foundation had helped his dear friends "enormously" with Mrs Riedel now devoted to mental health research.



Harrison Riedel

"It somehow put meaning into something that has no rational explanation or no meaning — it's completely random," he said.

"What she's done is extraordinary because she realised that basically other young people are like Harrison — they don't talk about what's going on in their minds."

Suicide is the leading cause of death in young people in Australia.

Comanche owner Jim Cooney and the crew of the world's fastest supermaxi are firmly behind the foundation's work and Mr Blake's fundraising efforts



Amananda and Scott Riedel with Comanche yacht owner and skipper Jim Cooney and crew member Martin Blake. Picture: Tim Hunter

Mr Cooney, a father-of-five, said Harrison will "be on our minds" during the race.

"I was more than happy to say 'well let's see if we can provide some support with the Comanche name'," he said.

"It's a brand that might help them add some value, plus there was the nice kind of synergy of we're a crew and you're a crew so it seemed a really natural fit and something I was delighted to be able to do for Scott and Amanda."

Mrs Riedel said she and her husband were "blown away" by the support.

"It's amazing — it's absolutely amazing," she said.