



Michala (front left), Simone (centre) and her 10-year-old son Tane (far left) joined the wet and wild pool party.

Our gift to Bali's orphans

Former *Neighbours* stars Simone Buchanan and Michala Banas reach out to Balinese kids



Everybody needs good *Neighbours*, as a group of excited Balinese children discovered at a pool party.

Staged by former *Ramsay Street* stars Simone Buchanan and Michala Banas – with gifts donated by the *Neighbours* cast and crew – it was a special treat these children don't often see.

Former *Hey Dad..!* favourite Simone, is a long-time patron of Denpasar's Jodie O'Shea Orphanage, named in honour of a Bali bombing victim and run by Alison Chester.

'The kids have been through terrible times,' says Simone, who played Samantha on *Neighbours*. 'But they're beautiful, well-adjusted, loving children, which is a testament to Alison's care.'

'While we were there, quite a few of them had birthdays, so we decided to throw a pool party at The Villas Bali, Hotel & Spa.

'It was overwhelming. There was a lot of laughter, but both of us were in tears. I always come away so humbled,' Simone, 41, says.

The actors also took the kids to the Bali Elephant Safari Park in Taro with Simone's son Tane, 10. 'I don't know who loved it more, me or the kids,' Michala, 30, laughs.

Moved by the kids' musical ability, the two TV stars bought

them electric keyboards, a guitar and an amplifier. 'The kids sing like angels,' Simone says.

'Visiting and meeting the children was one of the most unique experiences of my life so far,' Michala says. 'It was inspiring to see how safe, well looked after and happy they all were.'

By Jenny Brown
Pictures: Yaeko Masuda

The Elephant Safari Park in Taro was a huge hit with the kids.



With cakes and presents, this is one birthday Simone hopes the children won't ever forget.