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## Keynote: Life, Love & Awesomeness – Rethinking the Language of Disability

Rachel Callander

After loving and losing her daughter Evie who was born with a rare chromosomal condition, award winning NZ Wedding and Portrait photographer Rachel Callander turned her talent to capturing the beauty and abilities of other children with 'Super Powers'. Rachel has travelled the length and breadth of NZ meeting ordinary families being made extraordinary through the journeys their children are taking them on.

As a result of her travels, Rachel's insights and images offer a fresh understanding and language regarding disability. The stunning photographs of the children alongside the conversations with their parents are presented in the Super Power Baby Project, a photographic art book launched in 2014. The book is being used and celebrated in schools, neonatal units and by health professionals around New Zealand and the world, where it is making real changes in the way people think about and work with people with disabilities.

"The Super Power Baby Project is a life affirming work. It does not shy from the notion that genetic syndromes bring with them their share of challenge, grief and difficulty. The strong message is that there is much that lies beyond that. Rachel demonstrates that these children have much to teach us about themselves and ourselves, which is to be celebrated as truly exceptional." Stephen Robertson, Curekids Professor of Paediatric Genetics, University of Otago