

Helping those stretched



Warming up for Yoga4Dignity (from left) Carlie Ford, Sophie Brauer, Stuart Adams, Rachael Pole and Treena Francis.

Picture by Peter Lorimer

By CLAUDIA LONG

ROLL up your yoga mats and get your zen out next Saturday for Share the Dignity's first ever Yoga4Dignity event raising much needed awareness and funds for women's homelessness.

With thousands of Hunter

women alone faced with homeless indignities every year, yoga enthusiasts and beginners alike are welcome to meet at 8am at selected locations across the Hunter for a collective yoga class.

Treena Francis, yoga teacher and event organiser

for the King Edward Park meet, said the nationwide event was a chance to involve everyone.

"With several classes available across the Hunter area, anyone can register online through the website and join us to create awareness for an issue that is so prominent,

but unheard of," Mrs Francis said.

All profits made from the day will go directly to Share the Dignity's mission of providing access for disadvantaged women to sanitary items that would be costly and otherwise unobtainable.

"After reading there are

48,000 homeless women in Australia, with most every month going without these items, I wanted to create a movement which has now collectively made access to one million sanitary products for Australian women," Yoga4Dignity founding director Rochelle Courtenay said.

The Pinkbox dignity vending machines, which produce daily packs for women are being placed around Australia with local Kurri Kurri High School receiving one of the first vending machines which is helping to create a culture of access, discussion and empowerment.

Hope through song

By CLAUDIA LONG

PURE joy seeps from Centre for Hope's Drop In hub where disadvantaged local youngsters visit to be mentored and, really, to just be kids.

With the Charity and Social Enterprise Benefit Concert and Creativity Showcase set to hit Newcastle next Saturday, the all-age "One Voice Mob" choir have been excitedly practicing Bob Marley's One Love.

"For me, creativity is a wonderful healing aspect for the whole community with the ability to lift spirits, encouraging these kids to be the best version of themselves," creative director Bronwyn White said.

The benefit will run from 2pm until 5pm in Adamstown Uniting Church, showcasing the "living treasures" of the area and a celebration of the children's potential. Everyone is welcome.

With Newcastle grassroots organisation run by award-winning local woman, Geraldine Moran,



The One Voice Mob Choir rehearse at the Centre for Hope, Mount Hutton, for the benefit concert at Adamstown Uniting Church. Picture by Peter Clark

Centre of Hope has a local heart of gold that has only been possible by the helping hand of a rather dynamic and experienced team.

Working alongside Michael Riddell, who has worked with the likes of Rupert Murdoch, Ms Moran

said the event was an opportunity to demonstrate not only what the organisation did, but for the children to gain transferrable skills.

"We do things a little different and the event will really show this," Ms Moran said.

"We are creating a difference within the particularly difficult Windale suburb and beyond, providing mentoring and coaching for children who need help accessing the same opportunities as other Newcastle residents."

Unique gardens open to raise HMRI money

By CLAUDIA LONG

COMBINING a love for gardening and charity is at the heart of the Lake Macquarie Garden Club.

Next weekend marks their Open Gardens and Art Trail event in support of the Hunter Medical Research Institute (HMRI) with ten unique gardens open for the public to explore.

For Lynne Turner, pictured right, the long prepared event is more than enjoying the scenery, it is an opportunity to raise much needed funding for a "really special local research facility".

"We have so much to offer visitors who can go through one or all gardens, experiencing their beauty, speaking with owners and witnessing some great local artists at work while also donating to a great cause," said Ms Turner.

HMRI director Professor Michael Nilsson is



grateful for the support that they receive from community initiatives with "every dollar making a difference".

"We will invest this donation in developing new therapies for conditions such as cancer, asthma, heart disease, stroke, and more," Mr Nilsson said.

The event will be open from 10am to 4pm on both days with tickets starting at \$5 for access to one garden and \$25 for access to all ten available.