



STOP THE VIOLENCE

KIDS LEARN TO TRUST AGAIN

STEPHANIE is just 10 years old but already her world has been torn apart.

Alcohol and drug use sparked domestic violence in the very place she should feel safest, with disastrous results.

Last December, she and her two siblings were removed from the home.

At first in temporary care and now in the care of a relative, Stephanie wonders if things will ever go back to 'normal'.

To her shame, she now regularly wets the bed and suffers nightmares.

But in January Steph will get to attend a special camp geared just for her needs.

Southern Cross Kids Camps launched in Melbourne in 2000 and are now held in three states.

Each camp has a one-to-one camper-to-adult ratio. Each adult is interviewed, checked and trained to show unconditional care and acceptance, and to show the kids that it's safe for them to trust again.

Alongside the adult buddies are professionals - nurses, counsellors, social workers, activities directors, and even camp grandparents.

Southern Cross Kids Camps aim to bring some joy and laughter back into the lives of child victims of abuse.

Organisers said feedback from parents, foster parents, carers, social workers and school chaplains was that the camps made an incredible difference in the children who attended - a growth in confidence and trust, modified behavioural responses, and better social skills were just some of the benefits seen.

Camps are held in the Yarra Ranges, and other Melbourne areas, for children aged between seven and 11 years who are referred through the social welfare system.

Activities range from sports and obstacle courses to group games, craft-work and pamper days.

But Southern Cross Kids Camps desperately needs funds.

Visit www.sckc.org.au for more information, or drop into the office at 2/246 Dorset Road, Boronia.

SELF-DEFENCE BUILDS SELF-ESTEEM

By Casey Neill

SELF-defence classes can give women and children the confidence and skills they need to escape from violent situations - and even to avoid them in the first place.

Current and nine times World Self Defence Champion John Gill wants every woman and child to have free access to self-defence training and personal safety advice.

"It's becoming a necessity, really, he said.

"What I'm trying to do is bring this in permanently through the government or private sponsors."

So to coincide with White Ribbon Day, 25 November, Mr Gill is holding classes in Fern-tree Gully for women and children aged seven years and up.

They'll be at Australian School of Self Defence, 5/772 Burwood Highway, Fern-tree Gully, from 4.30pm to 6pm and 7pm to 8.30pm on Wednesday 7 December, and 10.30am to noon on Saturday 10 and Sunday 11 December.

The classes are free, but Mr Gill would appreciate donations to the White Ribbon Foundation. The organisation promotes prevention of violence against women and children - a cause he is passionate about.

News about women and children being attacked or killed is particularly difficult for him to hear, because he knows how it could have been avoided.

"I get really distressed hearing about that stuff, because I know there's a solution," Mr Gill said.

"Everyone should take a basic course.

"We're not learning to fight, we're learning to defend.

"You don't use strength against strength - it's technique and leverage and moving your body in the right way."

Mr Gill said the workshops were practical, simple and fun, and focused on how to defuse violent situations, block attacks, and escape grabs or holds.

He and Aikido master Mal McRae will also teach participants how to recognise a potentially dangerous situation or person.

"Avoid at all times, and defend if necessary - that's known as the RAD technique," Mr Gill said.

"It's actually a lot easier than people think. I've taught people from age six to 80.

"It's non-contact, and it's for total beginners. It's safe to practice and you don't have to be fit.

"I've been hurt more in tennis than I have been in martial arts."

Many domestic violence victims have contacted Mr Gill for help over the years.

"But prevention is better than cure. It's better to learn it first," he said.

He said the self esteem, confidence and resilience women gained through self defence, could help them to avoid such situations - and it taught them to recognise potential perpetrators.

"If they show any type of violence towards anything, you can pick that up fairly early on and ween off the relationship," he said.

Mr Gill said self-defence skills would always be there when needed, because they worked with a person's instincts.

"Naturally we tend to squirm and move anyway," he said.

"It should automatically come to you. It's technique combined with natural instincts."

Visit www.johngill.com.au or call 0432 767 900 to sign up for a workshop or for more information.



John Gill shows Sean Kiddy some self-defence moves. 73688

Right: John Gill is out to teach every woman and child how to defend themselves.

Pictures: Donna Oates



IT'S ALL IN THE WRIST

DAVID Seeds, Dean Pobjoy and Will Ong from Bowens in Mount Evelyn and Mount Evelyn Christian Reformed Church's Rev Richard Schoenmaker play their part in stopping violence against women as they don their White Ribbon Day wristbands. For more information, visit www.whiteribbon.org.au. 74176

Picture: Russell Bennett



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Stamford Hotel Bus Stop on Wellington Rd 9am
Includes: • Morning Tea • Guided tour
• 2 Course Lunch • Luxury Coach Travel
• Ferry Crossing Queenscliff to Sorrento
Highlights: Geelong - Eastern Beach - Barwon Heads - Point Lonsdale - Historic Queenscliff - The new development Queenscliff Marina and viewing tower
Return Approx: 6.15pm
Cost: \$56.00 pp



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