

Our Stories exhibition tells the real story of disability

Franklin is hosting a multimedia exhibition that is touring the country to change New Zealanders' attitudes towards disability.

The Our Stories Exhibition challenges Kiwis to get to know people with disabilities – to see the person first, rather than the disability.

Based on photographs by Hanne Johnsen and Glenn Busch's book, *The Man With No Arms and Other Stories*, the exhibition uses photographs, words and film to tell the stories of people with disabilities.

The project, run in partnership between CCS Disability Action and IHC, is more than just an exhibition. It includes workshops for schools and an information evening for employers and service, sport and recreation groups.

It sends the message that people with disabilities have a right to participate in the community, to share in family life, have a job and ambitions.

An evening for employers will be held on Tuesday, May 13 and for service, sport and recreation groups, another will take place on Tuesday, May 20.

Throughout the exhibition, which runs until May 28, primary school pupils will take part in educational workshops at the New Zealand

Steel Gallery called "My Name Is ...", and in parallel workshops, intermediate school pupils using the latest technology interview people with disabilities and make a short documentary as part of the Film Fest workshop.

The workshops give primary and intermediate school students the chance to meet local people with disabilities and find out what it is like to live with a disability.

"The Our Stories project is a far bigger, more varied and more exciting project than was first planned. There is no better way to begin to understand the varied experiences disabled people have in their daily lives than to listen to and see their stories," says David Matthews, CCS Disability Action Regional Manager, Canterbury West Coast.

The exhibition, which is open to the public (free entry), runs from Saturday, May 10 to Wednesday, May 28 at the New Zealand Steel Gallery, Franklin: The Centre, 12 Massey Avenue, Pukekohe. The official launch is on Friday, May 9.

For further information: David Matthews 0274 984 262 or Trish Grant 027 284 0257. For further details, visit the website www.ourstories.co.nz