

Focus on disabled

By HEIDI BALE

A community education exhibition showcasing the black and white photographic work of Hanne Johnsen will be officially opened at Franklin: The Centre, on Massey Ave, Pukekohe, on May 9.

The exhibition to be held in the New Zealand Steel Gallery is entitled *Our Stories* and will encourage informed, positive attitudes towards disabled people in the workplace and wider community.

The two-week exhibition, which is free and open to the public Monday to Saturday, will also provide educational sessions to school children that complement the works of Hanne Johnsen and the tour's theme book; *The Man With No Arms and Other Stories*, by Glenn Busch.

The educational sessions will provide an opportunity for kids to ask guest speakers questions about how people cope with disabilities.

A joint CCS Disability Action-IHC initiative, *Our Stories* is touring nationally with the aim of providing an insight for the community into how disabled people uniquely add value to society – particularly through sports and employment.

The exhibition communicates the opportunities that are out



OUR STORIES: (from left) Supported Employment co-ordinator Gail Crafar, Warehouse Pukekohe employee David Irwin, Warehouse Pukekohe team leader Nadine Brown, and president of Counties IHC Bob Bettison are looking forward to the *Our Stories* exhibition.

there for the disabled, says the president of Counties IHC, Bob Bettison.

Our Stories will showcase the sometimes ingenious ways disabled people cope – recognising the unique skill sets disabled people gain in their struggle to live normally.

“Once you persevere and get to know them you realise they are just like you and me – they have the same wants and desires,” says Bob.

Schools in the Franklin District have been invited to visit the exhibition during the

two-week programme at Franklin: the Centre, and children will have the opportunity to produce a DVD that explains the life of a disabled person through their eyes.

There will be invitation evenings for employers and sports providers of Franklin to hear how the disabled can be integrated into jobs and recreation.

The public can see the exhibition Monday to Friday 9.30am to 4.30pm and Saturdays from 9.30am to 2.30pm.

The exhibition runs from May 10 to 28. Entry is free.