

FAMILY VIOLENCE ART EXHIBITION

CONNECTIONS UNITINGCARE HELPING TO PUT THE PIECES TOGETHER

A selection of mosaic art created by women who have experienced family violence will be on display at St Kilda Library from Tuesday 23 March 2010 for a week.

Stemming from an overwhelming response of clients who expressed their need for ongoing contact with other women who have also experienced family violence, Connections UnitingCare Mosaic Art Group ran for 10 weeks in late 2009 from Connections' Windsor office.

With an increasing body of research suggesting that creative arts has a positive impact on mental health, Connections' Family Violence Counsellor Joanne Donne said this art group provided the women with the opportunity to regain their confidence to once again participate in community life.

'Throughout this whole process we encouraged the women to think of themselves as someone separate from the person that they knew who had been abused or traumatised and challenge the descriptions they once had of themselves,' Joanne said.

Facilitated by artist Ann Riggs, the participants were able to use the skills they learnt in the classes as a way to build their confidence and find another avenue of self-expression.

'Women who have been affected by family violence tend to experience a lot of disruption in their lives which understandably leaves them feeling as though they no longer have any control over the direction they are heading,' Joanne said.

'The process of thinking about, creating and making a piece of art provided these women with a focal point and allowed them to feel a sense of completion, a feeling that many had not felt for a long time.'

For the one in five women in Victoria affected by family violence each year, knowing who to turn to is often as confusing as understanding why someone they love is hurting them. Connections Family Violence Counselling Service offers women and children a safe, respectful and empowering environment where they can talk to someone outside of their situation and make informed decision about their options.

» Event: Launch of exhibition Wednesday 24 March 2010 (11:00am-12:00pm). St Kilda Library, Community Room 150 Carlisle Street, St Kilda.

Media: Connections Family Violence Counsellor Joanne Donne is available for interview. Contact Connections UnitingCare Communications Officer, Kirrilee Torney on 03 9271 0816 or kirrilee.torney@connections.org.au