



# Help for kids no tall order



**ALISON BRANLEY**

**EDUCATION**

THE head of Life Education in the Hunter says the children's education service is struggling to stay afloat because of the global financial crisis.

Executive officer David Baker said donations from its annual Dress Down Drug-Free day were down more than one-third this year and takings from its cash house sessions at Hunter clubs have also taken a hit.

"Because times have been hard we have found it even more difficult to compete with different charities," he said.

The service launched a fundraising program yesterday, which it hopes will inspire Hunter businesses to support its activities.

Businesses of all sizes have been invited to adopt one its

classes for \$450 a year.

The money will help the service pay the education costs of students who could not otherwise afford to take Life Education classes.

Life Education teaches more than 32,500 Hunter children and teens each year about their body, healthy eating, safety, exercise, bullying, drugs and alcohol.

Mr Baker said the program would mean the service did not have to use its reserves and could be more sustainable in the future.

They are aiming to get 50 businesses to sign up this year and 350 after three years.

"Our vision is to get every child in the Hunter to Life Education," Mr Baker said.

"Adopting a class will give the supporting business a connection with a local school and they will see the progress of the Life Education program."



LOOKING UP: Life Education mascot Harold the Giraffe with Newcastle Grammar students Bronte Capone, left, and Sean Bamard yesterday. — Picture by Jonathan Carroll