



Climbing Kathmandu for nephew Jack

KNOXFIELD'S Margaret Romeo is proving she would go to the ends of the earth to find a cure for muscular dystrophy.

She's training for a gruelling trek through Nepal to raise funds to help fight the disease.

After her nephew, Jack, was diagnosed 13 years ago with Duchenne muscular dystrophy, a degenerative muscle-wasting disease that particularly afflicts young males, Ms Romeo became heavily involved in fund-raising.

Eventually Ms Romeo started working as a respite co-ordinator at North Melbourne's Muscular Dystrophy Australia (MDA).

"I saw the daily struggles that Jack and his family and so many families like them were going through," Ms Romeo said.

"I just wanted to be able to make a difference in their lives."

So dedicated is Ms Romeo to helping find a cure, she has participated in two intensive challenges cycling through Vietnam and southern

China to raise funds and is taking a fast-track course in mountain climbing to prepare herself for the Challenge MD Nepal 2009 trek.

In October, the group of hikers will tackle the majestic yet punishing slopes of Kathmandu.

"We ascend slowly up to about 3700 feet and most of the terrain will be pretty rough, but then it wouldn't be a challenge if it was going to be easy, would it?" she said.

» To donate: 9320 9555.



Margaret Romeo is trekking through Nepal to raise funds for those who suffer from muscular dystrophy, like her nephew, Jack, 18.

Picture: GLENN DANIELS N47MV3

DID YOU KNOW

■ **DMD affects one in 3500 males, making it the most prevalent of muscular dystrophies;**

■ **It is caused by an absence of dystrophin, a protein that helps keep muscle cells intact;**

■ **Onset for DMD is early childhood from about two to six years with some symptoms visible in infancy;**

■ **It eventually affects all voluntary muscles, and the heart and breathing muscles; and**

■ **Survival is rare beyond the early 30s.**

Source: mda.org.au