



press clip

## 'Angel' nurses will Take a Hike for good cause

**Charlotte Lam**

charlotte.lam@thechronicle.com.au

DOCTOR James Morton gets a tear in his eye when he looks back on the personal development of his son Andrew who has autism.

The founder of AEIOU, a foundation for children with autism, is preparing for the annual Take A Hike

fundraiser this Sunday at Queens Park.

Now in its seventh year, all funds raised go directly to support the foundation's early intervention program.

Dr Morton hoped his personal story with Andrew, now 17, would show the work of the foundation.

"He was diagnosed in 2002 and there was so little around so my wife and I

decided to start this up," he said.

"In the early years, it's just the hardest thing to deal with as a parent. I look at him now and it's amazing

where he has come."

"He's job training, and working with him over many years has meant that a lot of the problems with his autism have been addressed.

"You can't fix the

underlying intellectual impairment but in his case his autism has become a strength not a weakness."

This year St Andrew's Toowoomba Hospital Oncology nurse Julianne McEwen has assembled a team of "angels" to support the annual event.

She was inspired to sign-up by Dr Morton.

"I've worked with Dr

Morton for 12 years," she said.

"I remember when AEIOU was established and feel the community in Toowoomba has embraced it and the families it supports.

"I've visited the centre here and have met families who have enrolled their children in the program.

"I've seen what a difference it has made to

their lives and I also know from talking to Dr Morton how important early intervention is."

Registrations are still open to all walkers, hikers and racers.

There are 21km, 10.5km and 5km distance options to choose from.

It's not too late to register. Visit [takeahike.org.au](http://takeahike.org.au).



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**CHARITY EVENT:** Participating in Take a Hike this Sunday from St Andrew's Toowoomba Hospital are (from left) Nicole King, Karrie Staples, Latisha Taylor, Mary Kelsey, Dr James Morton, Julianne McEwen, Donna Thomas and Sigrid Burton.  
PHOTO: NEV MADSEN