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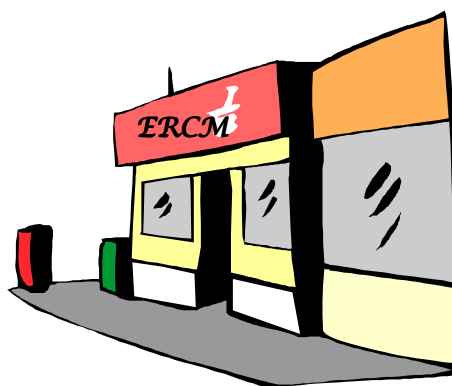
Welcome to the Second Edition of the Edmund Rice Centre Mirrabooka Newsletter

*News and Views
from
the Director - Steve Bowman*

This year, the Edmund Rice Centre Mirrabooka celebrates its tenth year of service to Refugee Migrant and Indigenous people in Perth. Looking back at records of the first day the Centre opened in March 1998, there were twenty-four adult students and three volunteers. Today the Centre has a staff of approximately twenty, with forty-two active volunteers and in excess of four hundred and fifty adults and young people who access at least one of our services each week.

"From little things, big things grow!"

We continue to welcome new staff, volunteers, and people from all parts of our world. Each person comes to share their talents, skills and personal stories with each other, making the Edmund Rice Centre Mirrabooka a very special and privileged place to be!



Do all the good you can,
By all the means you can,
In all the places you can
At all the times you can,
To all the people you can,
As long as ever you can.

John Wesley

Special Points of Interest

- Profile of a Volunteer
- How we are helping our next generation
- The benefits of Lifeskills and Women Together Programs
- The problems of settling in to a new country and how we can help
- Special Blessings for Easter
- Dates for end of Term 1 and commencement of Term 2



Profile of a Volunteer

Betty was one of the original volunteers when Steve Bowman first founded the Edmund Rice Centre at Mirrabooka in March 1998 to meet the needs of refugees arriving from Iraq, and the former Yugoslavian countries. Soon after that the Centre started catering for the often traumatised people coming out of Australian detention camps with Temporary Protection Visas (TPV's) and who were not eligible for any government assistance.

While Steve was building up the English-as-a-Second Language classes, Betty sought and received donations of furniture, household goods, bedding, crockery, cutlery, and cooking utensils, which were then cleaned, packed, and dispersed, through Br Geoff Seaman, to the most recently arrived refugees.

Since those early days, Betty, mother of seven, grandmother of 18, and great-grandmother of 3.8,



has become a personal assistant to Steve taking on the responsibilities of filing, listing and updating the inventory, building up the archives, coordinating the student placements at the Centre, as well as attending to the supplies of stationery, toiletries, and tea/coffee/milk/sugar for staff, volunteers, clients, and visitors. She also regularly assists Nihal, our Community Settlement Grants Program Generalist, with the reading and filling in of hard copy documents.

When the Centre holds its Staff Meetings each term, and for special occasions, Betty is there preparing,

and serving the food, and never leaves until she has cheerfully cleared away and cleaned up afterwards.

At the same time, Betty stays beautifully groomed, and always looks "a million dollars"!

Betty originally came from Coorow farming stock, and was educated at Dominican Ladies' College, a small country boarding school, in Dongara.

In her life outside the Edmund Rice Centre, Betty is the sacristan in her local church, a Special Minister, a senior altar server, the President of the Altar Society, a member of the Parish Liturgy Committee, and, over the past 16 years, has taken Communion to the sick of her Parish.

**Well done,
and a big
thank you,
'O good
and
faithful
servant'!**



News Briefs from our Program Coordinators

DSR Sports Program Refugee Youth

The Surf Lifesaving sessions, which followed on from the City of Stirling Holiday Sports Program, have overall been very successful and have served to strengthen our links with the Mullaloo Surf Lifesaving Club. In one of their sessions, the lifesavers brought out their large board and asked our young people to hold on while they were taken out into the deep water. This helped some of them to overcome their fears about swimming in the deep. Some members of the group have shown interest in becoming junior lifesavers.

Although a small number of our young people have begun participation in local sporting clubs, moving some has been difficult, even with the sponsorship program from the City of Stirling.

Indigenous Youth

In February, the program tried its hand at indoor beach volleyball, surf lifesaving, and cycling. The volleyball went very well with some inspiring play and incredible

comebacks. The group really enjoyed the surf lifesaving session with a couple of star athletes shining through. However, the cycling session was held on a very hot day, which made things very difficult.

Overall, behaviour has improved dramatically. With a number of the older participants having dropped out, it seems difficult to retain these young people past 14 years of age.

Youth Leadership Group

With regular meetings and a busy schedule, the reputation of the group has continued to grow. They are helping at more and more community events, while their improved confidence is evident.

Coordinator: Joe Moniodis

Youth Leisure Program

During February, there was only one activity. We took 22 youths to Mullaloo Beach for a swim and barbecue, tying in with the surf lifesaving activities held by the Sports Program at the same venue. After the barbecue which was expertly cooked by the coordinator (!), the group played a short game of Kanga cricket.

Thanks Jess, Kamil, Br Phil and Joe.

Br Jim van der Zalm, Coordinator

Computer Studies Program

Term One got off to a good start with encouraging numbers enrolling in our First and Second Click Programs. With approximately 50 enrolments, we are running a total of six classes scheduled over three days, - two First and Second Click classes for Seniors, and four classes of each for English-as-a-Second Language participants.

This term so far, student volunteers from Servite College and Chisholm College have been assisting Adele and myself. We have noticed lately that the participants themselves within the classes tend also to help each other out. This spirit of cooperation is to be encouraged.

Coordinator: Eoin Quigley



Lifeskills Program

Each week the Lifeskills Modules continue to be offered in three different locations where the mode of delivery varies according to the differing clientele, different refugee groups, and the settlement needs of each group.

At the ERCM location, the main participants continue to be Sudanese women, while at the Centrecare location Burmese families predominate. Some of the Burmese men seem to be very interested in the food preparation and nutrition aspects of the program, and are very keen to be involved.

The size of the group at ERCM has become very challenging. Any excess of 14 or 15 participants, especially if there are a couple of babies in prams, requires some "creative use of space" to keep everyone safe while maximising learning.

Staff flexibility and concern for these new refugees contributes to the overall success of the program.

Ros Trestrail, Coordinator

Indigenous Children's Program

This year's activities got off to a good start with 18 children enrolled and participating well. One of the highlights was the BBQ at Faulkner Park, Belmont, where two of the children asked if they could cook the meat. This they did expertly, and not once was there any need to speak to any of the children about their behaviour. We were very proud of them.

The biggest change this year involves changes in staff. Unfortunately we no longer have the services of Ray Pilkington, and Jessica Bouquet has had to limit her time, while Pashtana Pashtana has taken on a fuller, more responsible role. We are in need of a young, male youth volunteer. Br Pat, John Harris, and Joanne Henderson, thankfully, are back on board. The stability of the staff has been a great asset. Many thanks.

Phil O'Lughlen, Coordinator



English as a Second Language

This year there has been an overwhelming number of applicants, especially at the beginners' level. Even though the Basic Beginners and Advanced Beginners classes are available on four days each week, we have a 'wait-list' of potential participants. As all the basic classes follow a similar program, we have attempted to break up the larger beginners classes with two teachers taking separate classes on Mondays and two teachers doubling up on Tuesdays.

Some of the more advanced classes have also grown in numbers. In all, we are currently teaching 166 participants.

For the last few weeks a student from TAFE has been helping and observing, while school students have been helping also on various days.

Angela Broderick, Coordinator

Settlement Grants Program

During February, a total of 65 one-to-one services were provided to 42 clients. Issues covered included housing, applying for JET childcare through Centrelink, immigration referrals, financial and material assistance, and employment.

At the Housing Crisis Committee for CALD meeting in January, it was decided that HCCCaLD would organize a consultation with service providers to discuss the impact of the housing crisis on refugees and humanitarian entrants. This took place on 4 February and about 40 service providers participated with presentations from the Dept of Housing & Works, the Office of Multicultural Interests, the Dept of Immigration & Citizenship, and the Equal Opportunity Commission. We are now waiting for the report to be completed.

Nihal Iscel, Generalist Worker

Ogaden Communiity Settlement Program

During the month of February, seven cases were assisted with their settlement issues regarding accommodation, financial and document assistance, educational programs and employment.

Swimming classes, organised by ASETTS, were provided for nine Somali women with two other ladies taking care of their children.

Four information sessions were held,

and I attended five inter-agency network meetings.

Maryan Ibrahim, Community Settlement Grant Worker



Koondoola Integrated Services Centre

February has been a very busy month in the ISC. After the children returned to school, the number of clients increased noticeably. There have been four requests for assistance with finding housing after leases have been terminated or the client have been unable to pay the increases in rent. In spite of accompanying some to home viewing, assisting with application forms, and helping with internet searches, we have not managed to secure any properties thus far.

I have had three referrals from teachers with concerns about children bringing inadequate food to school, and one concerning personal hygiene issues. All have been addressed and resolved with the mothers of the children. I regularly visit three families assisting them with general lifeskills and enrolment in appropriate courses. I am currently arranging an information day for parents.

Christina Ward, Multicultural Community Liaison Worker

"Women Together Program"

Women participating in this program came from Iraq, Iran, Ecuador, Indonesia, Vietnam, Korea, India, Papua New Guinea, Sudan, Liberia, and various other African countries.

Seeing women of different nationalities chatting together about cooking or what is done in their own country is very heart-warming.

The different cultures are becoming more tolerant and more accepting of their differences, for example, buying only halal food, respecting times of fasting and celebrating each other's special days.

Sally Herzfeld, Coordinator



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Easter Greetings
Blessed Easter wishes to you,
your family, and friends
from all of us at the
Edmund Rice Centre
Mirrabooka

We are on the Web!

www.edmundricecentremirrabooka.com

Forthcoming Events of Interest

⇒ Classes will close at the end of Term 1 on Friday 11 April and will re-open on Tuesday 29 April 2008.

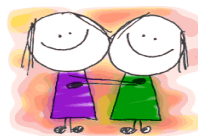
Volunteers Needed

The Edmund Rice Centre Mirrabooka is an incorporated, not-for-profit, charitable organisation managed by a Committee of Management with the support of the Christian Brothers.

The day-to-day operation is managed by a full-time Director, nine part-time Program Coordinators, a full-time Community Settlement Worker, several part-time receptionists and a team of volunteers. Many of these volunteers are qualified teachers.

The Centre continually develops new programs in response to expressed needs and in accord with the various skills offered by the team of volunteers.

As classes increase, there is an ever-growing need for more volunteers to help us to serve the needs of our refugee families so that they may settle happily in their new country.



If you would like to support the Edmund Rice Centre Mirrabooka Inc, your donation will be most gratefully accepted. Your donation will enable people from Refugee and Indigenous backgrounds, including youth, to continue to gain benefits from our educational programs.

I enclose a donation to assist the work of the Edmund Rice Centre Mirrabooka Inc:

\$20

\$50

\$100

\$500

Other

All donations over \$2 are tax deductible. Donations can be made by cheque or by direct deposit.

Please make cheques payable to "Edmund Rice Centre Mirrabooka Inc" or deposit directly into "Edmund Rice Centre Mirrabooka Inc", Account BSB 066 183, Account No: 1009 1408.

Reference: *Your Surname & Don e.g. Smith Don*

Title _____ Given Name _____ Family Name _____

Address _____ Post Code _____

Phone () _____ Fax () _____ Email _____