

Edmund Rice Centre Mirrabooka Inc

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Inside this issue:

- Computer Studies Program
- English as a Second Language Program
- Indigenous Children's Program
- Lifeskills for Living Program
- Multicultural Sport & Recreation
- Ogaden Community Settlement Grants
- Refugee Youth Leisure Program
- Settlement Grants Program
- "Women Together" Program
- Koondoola Integrated Services Centre

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

*News and Views
from
the Director—Steve Bowman*

Many of you would know by now that Nihal Iscel, our long-serving Settlement Grants Generalist worker, has left the Edmund Rice Centre Mirrabooka, and has moved to the Multicultural Services Centre. Thank you, Nihal, for your outstanding service over 4½ yr. Two employees have been engaged to replace Nihal as SGP Generalist workers in a job-share arrangement. Dolly Holzinger has had many years of experience working with the Burmese community, and Marika Krstevska's experience has been in assisting newly arrived entrants in the Integrated Housing Settlement Scheme program. Their common email address is:

ercgen@westnet.com.au

Phone 9440 0625 / 9440 1920

Farewell, Nihal, and welcome, Dolly and Marika. We trust you will all be happy in your new endeavours.

The greater good you can do for others is not just to share your riches, but to reveal to them their own.

Benjamin Disraeli

Harmony Weekend Report

On 16-18 May and 17-19 October 2008, the Edmund Rice Centre Mirrabooka will provide two Harmony Weekend Camps for families and individuals from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds together with those born in Australia. These camps have been made possible through a grant from the WA Government Office of Multicultural Interests. In preparation for these camps. A steering committee made up a representatives from a variety of communities and organisations has met over the past six weeks to plan these events. Both camps will be held at Camp Kelly near Dwellingup, and will include opportunities for participants to learn about our Indigenous heritage, personal and faith stories, and to celebrate the rich diversity of our community.

Steve Bowman, Coordinator



Special Points of Interest

- ⇒ The Harmony May Weekend
- ⇒ Two new SGP staff
- ⇒ Mothers' Day Prayer
- ⇒ Profile of a Volunteer—Br Geoff
- ⇒ Official launch of the HCC for CALD people, 30 April 08

Profile of a Volunteer

Br Geoff is a Christian Brother who has all the desirable qualities of a volunteer to the optimum. He is kind, caring, efficient, dedicated, committed and super-generous with his time.

His current main focus is to support refugees, mostly those from war-torn backgrounds who have suffered hardship and trauma in their home country, and have been displaced and dislocated from the life that they knew.

As the official Coordinator of Refugee Services for the St Vincent de Paul Society of WA, one of Br Geoff's tasks is dispense loans for these refugees who have arrived in Australia with very little other than the clothes they wear. He does this through an ecumenical conglomerate called Leviticus Loans formed by people associated with the Catholic Church (Religious Orders, St Vincent de Paul Society, and private individuals) whereby interest-free loans are dispensed to refugees for them to purchase such items as household goods, second-hand cars, driving lessons, computers, etc. that will help them to

settle in to their new country.

Br Geoff also operates the Christian Brothers' Loan Scheme whereby interest-free loans are given to some of those refugees required to pay their own travel costs to Australia - a fact that few people are aware of.

Promptly at 11.00 o'clock on Wednesdays, Br Geoff arrives at the Edmund Rice Centre Mirrabooka with his list of people who have previously made appointments with him. These he attends to first, meticulously, then he interviews the people who have called to "see Br Geoff", because of immediate needs and are prepared to sit and wait till he is free. Br Geoff has the patience of Job, and is always just as attentive to the last client as he is to his first appointment.

Br Geoff lives in a community in Girrawheen with three other Christian Brothers. As part of his contribution to the Girrawheen Parish, he operates the RCIA program, buses Catholic refugees to Mass on Sundays, and on request, attends to their spiritual needs by assisting them to access

the Parish Sacramental Program. He also currently teaches Religious Education each week at the local Government Primary School in Waddington.

Br Geoff grew up in the Murchison at Mt Magnet and Wurarga, a station often referred to as 'a suburb of Yalgoo' (fifteen miles south)! He went to school as a boarder to CBC Geraldton, subsequently entered the Christian Brothers' Novitiate in Strathfield NSW, and has taught in Queensland, South Australia and at Trinity (Terrace CBC), Highgate and Fremantle.

Despite long separations due to his religious life commitment, Br Geoff is very close to his family. He has now one brother and four sisters. Margaret, a Dominican Sister, is "an expert footie tipster"! Br Geoff's mother died in 2005 at the magnificent age of 100. At the rate Geoff is going, he may even outlive her record!

Congratulations, Geoff, and thank you for your dedicated service.

News Briefs from our Program Coordinators

Lifeskills for Living in Australia Program

During the school holidays, special workshops were conducted combining our ERCM group with families from the Integrated Services Centre at Koondoola. These School Holiday Workshops clearly demonstrated to us the importance of learning in a relaxed, enjoyable atmosphere. Another plus was that the Centre's new kitchen facility has proved to be a great asset for these holiday activities.

On Wednesday, 2 April, the ERCM Lifeskills group went "out and about" to experience and enjoy the foreshore of South Perth as well socialising with each

other. The participants also learned about the history of the Swan River, and what travel options are available for their families to access the area. Watching the participants jump around with excitement as the seagulls swooped in was a wonderful sight to see.

Ros Trestrail, Coordinator

Computer Program

Our new Microsoft funded UPS courses are underway this term, and our enrolments are on target. We are trialling an after-lunch class and if it takes off we will continue it in Term 3. Thanks to Adele and our volunteers.

Eoin Quigley, Coordinator

Youth Leisure Program

On 12 to 14 April, Br Jim was involved in the Leadership Camp at Secret Harbour in the capacity of bus driver and general presence. Also during the school holidays, the group tested their putting skills at Botanical Golf. One Afghan boy, Hussein, hit two hole-in-ones, a feat the coordinator was unable to emulate!

Br Jim van der Zalm, Coord.

"Women Together" Program

Unfortunately the numbers of participants in this program are diminishing due to the extra English classes on Mondays. The Living Skills program on Wednesdays is full to overflowing.

Sally Hertzfeld, Coordinator

Settlement Grants Program

During April, 35 one-to-one services were provided to 30 clients. Issues treated included housing, Jet Childcare through Centrelink, immigration referrals, financial and material assistance, employment. The official launch of the Housing Crisis Committee for CALD people (HCCCALD initiated by Nihal) took place on 30 April at the Edmund Rice Centre Mirrabooka. The launch was well attended with representatives from across the community including Hon Margaret Quirk, MLA.

**Nihal Iscel /Dolly Holzinger/
Marika Krstevska, SGP workers**

DSR Sports Program Refugee Youth Program

During April, rather than establishing links to a sporting club, we focused on involving the Youth Leadership Group in the sports program as mentors and organisers rather than as participants.

The majority of April's sports program was focused on basketball to help the Youth Leaders prepare for their upcoming tournament.

The other part of April was dedicated to activities for Refugee Week. In partnership with the Department of Communities, the participants were given cameras and encouraged to take photos centring on the theme 'A Place to Call Home'. ***Some even took photos of the Centre, - something that they saw as a part of their home!*** These pictures will be included in an Art Exhibition for Refugee Week in June.

Indigenous Youth Program

At the Supa Golf outing, the silent, but lethal, Br Jim took all before him on the golf course, and the pizza and planning session went well while presenting a few learning challenges in the process!

Youth Leadership Group

The Youth Leadership Group had a very busy month, when they:

- Met with the Head of Community Policing;
- Helped to score the Beatball event at the Hainsworth Centre;

- Won a grant to host a 3-on-3 basketball tournament as part of National Youth Week, and elected to take on organisational duties;

- Ran two tournaments within the multicultural Sport Program;

- Attended a leadership camp, which ran in partnership with the Mullaloo Sea Scouts.

Joe Moniodis, Coordinator

Indigenous Children's Program

The last activity of Term 1 was a wind-up at the Centre. A large contributing factor to the success of this activity was the presence of 12 helpers, four Yr 11 students from Mercy College, two from Trinity, a university student from Notre Dame, and our usual five volunteers. Great!

During the holidays, the group enjoyed a "Nearer to Nature" outing at Mullaloo Beach. On arrival, the children collected specimens washed up on the shore, then after a morning tea, they attended an hour's activity conducted by the Nearer to Nature guides. Before returning home, they had a BBQ and played on the grassed area. The best result of the outing was the contact made with an indigenous lady, Denise, who had great rapport with the children and expressed her willingness for future involvement.

David Wirrpanda is booked up to meet with us at Subiaco Oval next school holidays!

Br Phil O'Loghlen, coordinator

Ogaden Settlements Grant Program

During April, 12 clients were assisted on a one-to-one basis with such settlement related issues as housing, document and financial assistance, educational programs and citizenship.

On 12 April, we organised a community 'get-together' and about 250 people came to the event. All the Somalian leaders and elders were invited, one of whom shared information about back home,

and encouraged the young people to make use of the educational opportunities they have here in Australia. The President of the Ogaden Community, Mr Nuur, has urged all Somali communities to work together and be united.

Swimming classes were provided to nine Somali women, while arrangements were made for two other Somali ladies to take care of their children during the lessons.

The Coordinator attended a workshop on mental health learning about how to identify sufferers and how to refer them to relevant agencies.

Maryan Ibrahim, SGP worker

English as a Second Language Program

At the commencement of Term 2 there are 169 students participating each week in eleven different classes working at the four levels, Basic Beginners, Advanced Basic, Elementary, and Intermediate, with 'multitudinous' levels within each of those classes. The Basic classes are "packed to the rafters", and they still keep coming! Three conversation classes also take place each week.

There have been a few temporary staff changes with some teachers going on holidays, and the retirement of Br John. Farewell, John, and thank you for your faithful service. Br John Rae has erected some 'fantastic' boards for the multipurpose classroom. Thank you too, we are very grateful.

Angela Broderick, Coordinator

Koondoola Integrated Services Centre

During the school holidays, the electricity grid at Koondoola Primary School was being replaced, so a week away from the KISC was planned. This included a trip and picnic to Whiteman Park, a trip to the Zoo (Br Jim, bus), cooking classes at the ERCM (Ros & Lindy), and an 'Action Based Therapy' program.

Christina Ward, MCL worker

**Edmund Rice Centre
Mirrabooka Inc**

Sponsored by the
Christian Brothers



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We are on the Web!

www.edmundricecentremirrabooka.com

Volunteers Needed

The Edmund Rice Centre Mirrabooka is an incorporated, not-for-profit, charitable organisation managed by a Committee of Management under the auspices 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.

Forthcoming Events of Interest

- ⇒ Staff Tea to farewell Nihal Iscel, SGP worker, at the Centre, 5.30 pm, Thursday 8 May 08
- ⇒ Harmony Weekend— Celebrating Our Diversity Camp Kelly Dwellingup May 16-18, 2008
- ⇒ DVD Launch, 6pm, 14 May 08

HAPPY MOTHERS' DAY!
*Creator God,
today we honour your special gift of mothers.
We give thanks for the example
of your unconditional love through them.
Thank you for the mothers
who played with us, taught us, nurtured us, fed us,
listened to us and tried to understand us.
Thank you for their examples of inspiration,
commitment and faithfulness.*



*We pray that
and guide
everywhere
and grant them Your Wisdom
in loving and teaching their children.*

*you will protect
all mothers*

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.

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