



Volume 2 Issue 8
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Inside this issue:

CBERS Redress WA

Computer Studies
Program

Driver Education
Program

English as a Second
Language Program

Indigenous Children's
Program

Lifeskills for Living
Program

Multicultural Sport &
Recreation Program

Refugee Youth Leisure
Program

Settlement Grants
Program

"Women Together"
Program

Youth Leadership
Program

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

News and Views from the Director – Steve Bowman

On Friday 13 February 2009, I attended the first anniversary celebration of the apology to the stolen generation held at Mirrabooka Square. Listening to the various speakers at the event I remembered how this milestone in Australia's recent history had "moved" me on that day twelve months ago when the Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd, delivered the apology in Federal parliament. We can all make our own assessments as to what has changed since to "close the gap" between Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Australians at a government departmental level, but I know too that we can all strive to reduce this "gap" at a personal and local level. Harmony Week (16 March - 21 March, 2009) is one opportunity for us to understand and appreciate our diversity and to help build community at a local and national level. To find out more visit: www.multicultural.wa.gov.au

First Anniversary of the Apology

To commemorate the First Anniversary of the Apology to the Stolen Generation presented by the Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd, on 13 February 2008, The Edmund Rice Centre Mirrabooka, along with the City of Stirling, Mirrabooka Square Shopping Centre, Reel Connections Project, and Janine Freeman MLA organised and supported a Community BBQ Breakfast at the Mirrabooka Shopping Square. Stephen Bowman attended as an invited guest.

The whole event was a resounding success. To begin the ceremony after the Welcome, the main points of the "Sorry Statement" were read by one of the local Nyoongar elders, Doolan-Leisha Eatts. Janine Freeman's response was followed by a flag-raising ceremony. The Aboriginal flag was raised by Walter Eatts, the Australian flag by Janine Freeman, and the Torres Strait Islander flag was raised by Damien Yarran. Following the formalities, all guests and passersby enjoyed a breakfast of bacon, eggs and sausages, cooked by the Lions Club members, and damper and kangaroo stew provided by Shemia Ugle. Entertainment was provided by a local indigenous band. This very successful morning event was enjoyed by at least 80 people from a wide variety of ethnic groups.

Christina Ward, ERCM—Assistant to the Director



Special Points of Interest

- ⇒ First Anniversary of "The Apology"
- ⇒ Has anyone seen our new front garden?

News Briefs from our Program Coordinators

SGP Generalist Program

In February 2009 a total of 79 case-work services were provided to 48 clients, 12 of those being first-time client contacts. The main issues presented included Centrelink payments, citizenship, Homeswest Review applications and priority Listing, Keystart Shared Equity Housing Loan Applications, Immigration referrals, applying for JET assistance (childcare) through Centrelink, housing, financial and material assistance, employment—including preparation of resumes, fines enforcement registry, Proposers Application and IOM Loans, as well as assisting a homeless client with emergency accommodation.

The majority of clients were from Sudan, Somalia, Burma and other African and Middle East countries such as: Sierra Leone, Liberia and Afghanistan and as well as from South-East Europe. The information session on housing - "Tenants Rights and Responsibilities" organised on the 26th of February was attended by 23 clients. At this session, the SGP grant manager from DIAC was present.

Dolly Holzinger & Marika Krstevska, Community Settlement Workers

Youth Leisure Program

There were four activities during the December/January holiday break. The December activities included roller-blading/skating at the Morley Rollerdrome and beach activities and BBQ at Mullaloo. The January activities were also held at Mullaloo with the chief chef (!) doing a great job at cooking the BBQ sausages. An average of 10 youth participated in the activities. Many thanks to Joe Moniodis, his cousin, Jess, and the youth leaders, Joyce and Kamil, for their help during this holiday time.

Br Jim van der Zalm, Coordinator

Indigenous Children's Program

The new year began with a staff meeting. All staff members were positive about where the program was heading. They were pleased with the behaviour of the children and their participation in all the activities. Both Joanne Henderson and John Harris are presently away on holidays. Br Jim has agreed to fill in with the bus driving while John is away. The first activity conducted was fully attended with 18 participants. Five

new enrolments came through Alistair Pickett from the Department of Child Protection, and at present, there are two children on the waiting list. After satisfying their 'eating needs', the children were taken through the rules of the program and then they engaged in various indoor games. One notable achievement was that three of the boys put together a 100-piece jigsaw puzzle in record time! The only other activity this month was the visit to the Balga Leisure Park where the children were taken through some water games by an instructor. The swimming was followed by a BBQ at Celebration Park. As always, the children enjoyed this outing. All in all, it has been a smooth and pleasing start to the new year. Pashtana and Jessica continue to have a close, friendly rapport with the children, and the program is fortunate in that these two young people are able to continue to be an important part of the program whilst they continue with their study commitments.

Br Phil O'Loughlin, Coordinator

Driver Education Program

The Drive-Safe classes and practical driving lessons are continuing this year. Angela has started from Module One again of her Drive-Safe Program with six new clients enrolled. About half of the clients who attended the first classes are very happy to attend the second time around. Two Burmese ladies have passed their Practical Driving Test and another two participants have their test booked in the next few weeks.

There are 45 names on the waiting list and enquiries are being made daily. I am now advising people to come back after May when we know if the program will continue for another year. I am also passing on the details of the Driving Instructors who are now working with us and are charging people who are referred from ERCM \$40 per hour for lessons. The three ladies who qualified as instructors with ERCM are now fully licensed and employed by Defensive Driving School. They are all now part of the Wednesday program and have 11 clients between them who are enrolled in the program. We also have a qualified instructor from Burundi and one from Burma who are instructing our clients. Both these men are running their own business.

Chris Ward, Coordinator

DSR Sports Program **Refugee Program**

December 2008 ended with a softball session and an end of year party celebrating a fantastic year in the program. The Refugee Program had a busy January, with Surf-Lifesaving being the sport of the month. These sessions were conducted in partnership with Sorrento Surf Club. It was really encouraging to see these young people's love for the beach grow over the four weeks. Some of them were scared on first arrival but after the four weeks many wanted to go out into the deep. In fact, every participant in the last week went with either myself or a surf lifesaver on a board into the deep water, a great and thrilling achievement for these young people. In February, we ran a swimming program at Balga Park Leisure Centre, where participants had swimming lessons with an instructor for a short time and were then given free time at the pools. The purpose of this was to promote Balga Park as a leisure facility to CaLD youth. The youth gradually became more confident in the water and the improvement of their skills over the four weeks was noticeable.

Achievements include: Strengthened links with Surf Lifesaving WA, Sorrento Surf Club and Balga Leisure Park; 2 youths joined Balga Scout Group through Community in Clubs.

Indigenous Program

In 2009, this program began with indoor beach volleyball, with the skills of the young people being of very high standard. Two male youth leaders and a volunteer have been helping on the program and they have proved popular, particularly in providing positive interactions for the male program participants, who really look up to them. In the second week a netball program began, with the youth enthusiastically joining in the training and game. In the third week the netball was run entirely by Joyce, with help from Ezra and Francis. Attendance in this program has improved this year with two new participants joining from Koondoola Intensive English Centre and two who have been referred by the Department of Child Protection.

Joe Moniodis, Coordinator

News Briefs from our Program Coordinators

Lifeskills For Living in Australia Program

The Lifeskills Program for 2009 commenced on Wednesday 4 Feb at ERCM and on Thursday 5 Feb at Communicare. This year, we are very fortunate to be continuing with the same staff and volunteers within the program, as their enthusiasm, knowledge, commitment and flexibility assist so much in making the sessions not only informative, but also very enjoyable for all those involved.

The new Centrecare building at Gosnells is now completed and the multi-purpose kitchen facility is very spacious and soon will be well equipped. The first session with Centrecare's new-arrival families for 2009 was held on 24 Feb. This involved some recently-arrived Burmese families, so we were assisted by their Burmese interpreter. The session went well. The Burmese adults seemed very keen to learn and enjoyed particularly being involved in the food preparation side of the activity, especially since Anne, the Burmese interpreter, was so involved too!

Ros Trestrail, Coordinator

Computer Studies Program

The First Click Program got off to a good start with 24 new students registering for our Seniors classes and 25 for the ESL classes. This put us ahead of target for our First Click quota. Our "Unlimited Potential" Program for the more advanced students has an enrolment of approximately 10 students.

Teachers: Adele Dickson, Tia Hattar, Nelia Elber; Volunteers: Herbert Green, Lee Beck, Maureen Marrows; Helpers: Students from Chisholm, Mater Dei, and Trinity Colleges.

Eoin Quigley, Coordinator

English as a Second Language Program

The year began with all classes filled to capacity with a long waiting list. A total of 218 students pass through our English classroom doors each week, attending 17 different classes and taught by 12 different teachers. It gives me great pleasure to announce that Pat Chinnery, the Centre's stalwart volunteer teacher, has agreed to run a Basic English class on Thursday mornings to ease some of the pressure. This class is

already filled to capacity! — Matt Lobo

is our standby and is currently filling in for Freda who is away. Even so, within our

Our class numbers are limited by the size of each room, and there is a dire need for more volunteer teachers.

nator

Koondoola Integrated Services Centre

The month of February has been a reasonably quiet month with only 35 sessions with clients, some being attended to more than once. I helped a few women to attend the Monday ERCM Women Together sessions which were enjoyed immensely by all. I organised a "Healthy Lunch Box" talk with the assistance of Glenda from ASeTTS. The 11 clients were able to purchase a lunch box for 50% off the retail price and make up a healthy lunch to go with it. The interpreters enjoyed the talk and the lunch boxes as much as the clients! This month, the issues dealt with included, as always, housing, medical and dental needs, immigration, racial discrimination, and general support and advocacy. Several families are floundering severely with not being able to maintain their property in an appropriate manner, suffering depression, and having multiple other problems, such as hygiene issues, concerns for families in Africa, and schooling issues. There were a couple of outside referrals, - one to CASE who help with migration issues, an another to Mirrabooka Legal Services who help with tenancy issues. Other clients were taken to the doctor, the dentist, Centrelink and Homeswest.

I have also been taking Apuk, who is being sponsored by the ERCM, to her Youth Choir rehearsals.

Mandy Whitton, Multicultural Community Liaison Officer

CBERS Redress Service

In January 2009, Redress WA became aware that many fewer applications for the Scheme had been received than might have been expected. It commenced an active public relations plan and this saw both Philippa and Gail being interviewed by newspapers, radio and

television as well as several CBERS Redress clients.

As a result of this by early February our service was getting dozens of phone calls a week from new clients. More contractors needed to be employed and the service instituted some processes to streamline information provided to applicants. They will be coming up to speed in the two months remaining before applications need to be in. Whilst we are aware that this has placed additional burdens on the ERCM accounting staff, Philippa is working hard with Wendy Low, ERCM Bookkeeper, to minimise this burden. We are also very aware that the closing date for applications is looming but have been given assurances from Redress WA that once the basic information has been received on behalf of clients, we, and the contractors, can take up to six months longer to supply reports. We appreciate the support of the ERCM staff.

Gail Green & Philippa White, Program Coordinators

Youth Leadership Development Program

Achievements include: Four Leaders helped at basketball tournament organised by the City of Wanneroo at Banksia Grove; three new members welcomed; six Leaders helped to deliver school holiday program for CaLD Youth Sports Recreation & Leisure Project at the Herb Graham Centre; one Leader was the focus of a story in two community newspapers; Leaders are now helping regularly on both the Refugee and Indigenous Sports Programs; one Leader has begun work experience at the ERCM Centre; 12 Leaders began Level 1 coaching; Six Leaders helped at Beatball in January; 10 leaders met with Department of Child Protection representative to discuss possible youth mentoring program; two Leaders attended *Every Human Has Rights* Committee meeting; three Leaders ran a session for the Aboriginal Sports Program.

Joe Moniodis, Coordinator

Women Together Program

This program continues to carry on by its own energy and the class is full with over 30 participants. Thank you to Elda D'Annunzio and Farangeez Ahmadi for carrying the load. Sally Herzfeld, Coordinator

**Edmund Rice Centre
Mirrabooka Inc**



**Sponsored by the
Christian Brothers**

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We are on the Web!

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Thank You to Our Ongoing Sponsors



The Aboriginal Prayer

Father of all, you gave us the Dreaming.
You have spoken to us through our beliefs.
You then made your love clear to us in the person
of Jesus.

We thank you for your care. You own us.
You are our hope.

Make us strong as we face the problems of change.
We ask you to help the people of Australia
to listen to us and respect our culture.
Make the knowledge of you grow strong in all
people,

So that you can be at home in us,
And we can make a home for everyone in our Land.

Bev Port Louis

and Thank You to our Donors

We would like to thank our very generous donors, who have regularly given us donations over the years. Often these small, constant donations keep us going. May God bless your kind and thoughtful generosity. Any extra money that we receive is generally put towards the purchase of teaching materials for the English as a Second Language Program which attracts no grant while all the teachers are volunteers.

Forthcoming Events of Interest

- ⇒ Harmony Week 16-21 March 2009—City of Stirling
- ⇒ Special celebration to be held at the Mirrabooka Town Square on Thurs 19 Mar at 1pm-6pm.
- ⇒ Street Parade at 12.45pm outside Herb Graham Centre

If you would like to support the Edmund Rice Centre Mirrabooka Inc, or a particular program, your donation will be most gratefully accepted. Your donation will enable people from Refugee and Indigenous backgrounds, including young people, 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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