



# Refugee Services

AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND



Members of the Bhutanese community performed traditional dances at Ethkick 09 and the May Day Concert.



## *Contents*

*Bhutanese dancers*

*Arrivals Update*

*New CEO for Refugee Services*

*Brigitte is a Mum!*

*Points of interest*

*Ethkick 09-*

*Read how our teams did*

*Bank Accounts*

*Book review*

*Role of the Cross Cultural Worker*

*Festival of Cultures*



## **Update on resettlement in Palmerston North**

Five Bhutanese families arrived at the end of April, making 14 new families so far in 2009.

This has been a huge ask for our staff and volunteers and we would like to thank you all as well as our sister agencies, and the Bhutanese community in Palmerston North, for your help and support. The settlement of these families has gone very well in general, although not without a few minor hiccups! We anticipate a further group of three families arriving in August this year.

**The next training course for volunteers starts on 17<sup>th</sup> June: please tell your friends! Experienced VSWs, we would love you to come back to support a new family and share your knowledge and experience with our new volunteers.**

We also need further donations of furniture and household items such as bedding and pots and pans to help set up homes.

Thank you one and all for the work that you do, the successful resettlement of the families could not happen without you.

## Staff updates

### Farewell to Peter Cotton

Our long serving CEO, Peter Cotton, left Refugee Services last month. We were all sad to see him go and wish to acknowledge the huge amount of work he has done in the area of refugee resettlement for the past 18 years.

### New CEO for Refugee Services

We now have a new Chief Executive for Refugee Services, Heather Hayden. Heather has held senior positions in the public and private sectors, with responsibility for significant staff numbers, substantial budgets, and many change management programmes. She spent seven years in India in the 1980s where she gained valuable practical experience in work with the United Nations High Commission for Refugees.

Much of her work has had a strong focus on communications and community development. She is a director of the Wellington Community Law Centre and of a private company specializing in strategic communications.



*Peter Cotton's farewell*

### Congratulations Brigitte!

We are delighted to announce that our social worker Brigitte and her partner Marty are the proud parents of a baby boy, named Tian, born 16<sup>th</sup> May at home. Mother and baby are both doing well. Glückwünsche!



### Points of interest:

- ❖ We are establishing a library of resources, both books and DVDs, which will be available for our volunteers to borrow. If you have any suggestions of material please let us know. We have a DVD of a BBC World documentary called 'The Forgotten Refugees' about the Bhutanese camps in Nepal.
- ❖ Recent changes to the law concerning immigration advisers mean that it is now an offence to give immigration advice if you are not registered as an adviser. This is a timely reminder to us all that immigration advice is not part of the volunteer role. Any queries can be addressed to the Community Law Centre.
- ❖ Volunteer Awareness Week is from June 14<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup>.
- ❖ World Refugee Day is on June 20<sup>th</sup>. We are planning a film evening for families and volunteers, more details to follow.
- ❖ The Refugee Services stall at the Festival of Cultures attracted a lot of visitors. Thanks to those volunteers that helped out or paid us a visit on the day

## Ethkick 09

### Promoting a positive image of friendship through football

This 7-side ethnic football tournament held to coincide with Race Relations Week, took place at Skoglund Park, Palmerston North on March 28-29, with teams based on country of origin or ethnic group. The tournament was run along World Cup lines with pool play, quarters, semi and finals. 39 teams took part.

It was fantastic to see all three of our communities enter, although our loyalties were divided when the Burmese played the Congolese in the quarter finals!

The event had a festival air, with an opening and a closing ceremony, entertainment between matches, food stalls and a police dog display. Police Officers also took on Firefighters in an exhibition football match.



The Bhutanese Team

Those organisations helping organize Ethkick09 were the NZ Police, Department of Internal Affairs, Sport Manawatu, Refugee Services, Settlement Support and ETC Learning Centre.



*“For us it just feels good to be part of a society that goes to such lengths to make us feel included. I think the people of Palmerston North should know we really appreciate it.”*

*Veteran Fiji and Burma NYC team manager*

The Burmese Team with their Fijian Manager



The Congolese team "Diables Rouges" (Red Devils) (with guest player, VSW Dave Boyak), reached the semi finals of the social competition, after beating the Burmese team in the quarter finals.

### Bank Accounts for young people

During the past few weeks a number of young people turning 18 have wanted to open their own bank accounts in order to have their benefit placed directly into their own account.

As their Certificate of Identity has an 'expiry date' ( it 'expires' a year after arrival) the banks are not willing to open new accounts unless the young person obtains a letter from New Zealand Immigration stating that their Certificate and Residence Visa is still valid. This of course takes some time to organise.

One way around this is for young people (particularly teenagers nearing 18) to open their own bank accounts within a year of arriving here, before their Residence Visa expires. Most banks will open accounts for school students which have no bank fees and which require only a small deposit to activate the account.



### Book review: Earthless Trees. Short stories by young refugees in New Zealand

Created during a series of writing workshops for young refugees, these vibrant stories provide an insight into the lives of new New Zealanders- individuals and families who came to New Zealand seeking security and freedom. From an escape through mountains on an overloaded truck, to living through an explosion in urban Kabul, these stories touch on universal themes: survival, family, home, friends. Available for purchase at \$25 for the office. Proceeds to Refugees as Survivors Trust



## Social Work and Cross Cultural Work - Pulling the Wheels together

By Bikram Pandey

### The Roles

As a cross cultural worker, interpretation, including linguistic and cultural interpretation, is the major and distinct role to play. The role bridges the cultural and linguistic gap between the families arriving here for resettlement and the support agencies and individuals facilitating their resettlement through different capacities. However, advocacy and social linkages are the other two vital roles the cross cultural worker plays in conjunction with the social worker.

### Pulling All Together

Given the two distinct but possibly overlapping roles between the cross cultural worker and the social worker, the challenge for me as a cross cultural worker has been to know my roles better. The reasons for this have been that after a couple of visits to the client families along side the social worker, I know the bits and pieces of information delivered to the families and as the families find it easier to talk freely with me in their own language there is always the propensity to overtake the role of the social worker at least to some extent. However, a number of working practices that developed over time with the social worker have been able to develop clarity of roles, keeping the boundaries and that have pulled the wheels together:-

- A brief interaction, at least, between cross cultural worker and the social worker prior to and after a visit to the client family. These interactions have included anything related to families such as health issues, family dynamics, knowledge of English in the family as well as anything related to family visits itself - what to talk about and how to start the conversation with the family etc.
- But the important thing has been to keep the communication channel open all the time. Not only between the social worker and the cross-cultural worker while at the office but even during the family visits such as encouraging the families to download their feelings or allowing them to lead or shape the discussion. These instances further highlighted the importance of pre and post visit interactions.
- Closely related is the flexibility in terms of the content (what to discuss and what not to discuss) during the visits and how should that proceed. The focus has been to let the families feel comfortable to share what they have to share rather than imposing on them our “official roles”.

In conclusion, the most important thing for the cross cultural and social worker is to work together in a way that helps the families to feel comfortable and that provides the best support possible for the families.

(Special thanks to Jenny Pepworth, Social Worker, Palmerston North for her review and comments on the article.)

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