
RMS Refugee Resettlement News

April - 2008

Akam Bul ta, Bite-Kinyarwanda, Gaw Ler a Gay, Hello, Kia ora, Nabad, Nihau, Mhoroi, Min ga la ba, Salaam, Salibonani, Shalom, Talofa lava, Vanakkam, Zdravo!

RMS Refugee Resettlement News is an occasional electronic newsletter updating you about RMS Refugee Resettlement activities and refugee issues in NZ. If you've any comments about this newsletter, or suggestions about what you'd like to see included, please email us. Feel free to forward this email to anyone else who might be interested in the contents.

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1. Regional Refugee Resettlement Forums

RMS Refugee Resettlement in partnership with local refugee community groups and organisations recently held a number of Refugee Resettlement Forums in Auckland, Hamilton, Wellington and Christchurch.

The outcomes of these forums will now directly feed into the National Refugee Resettlement Forum which will be held at the Westpac Trust Stadium, Wellington on May 29/30.

The forums were well attended and a number of issues and topics were covered. Each region reports that it was a very effective grass roots approach with organisations and communities working towards local solutions for local issues.

Key priorities were targeted in each region and some of the issues covered were Youth, Justice, Health (emphasis on Mental Health), Education, Employment, the Legal System and Immigration.

For Non Government Organisations represented at the forums, streamlining services and inter agency communication were discussed.

A theme running through all forums was an agreement for action orientated outcomes and best options for change.

2. Regional News

Mangere

One of the first groups of Bhutanese refugees to leave Nepal is the forty members of the Lhotshampa community of Bhutan. They were forced to flee Bhutan after the Royal Bhutan Government security forces threatened the Lhotshampa due to their Nepali origin.

Gross violations of human rights of the community as well as the violent threats from security forces caused virtually all members of the community to leave Bhutan arriving in Nepal between 1990 and 1992.

Our staff at the Mangere Refugee Reception Centre have made contact with the local Nepalese community who are assisting us in a cross cultural role.

Members from the Saytha Sai community in Auckland have also been very active in their practical support and friendship role providing food, clothing and arranging outings.

It was the Nepali New Year on April 13th and everyone from the Bhutanese group were hosted for a day of picnicking and fun at Shakespeare Park on the Whangaparoa Peninsula by members of the New Zealand Nepalese Friendship Society.

Half the group will be re-located to Palmerston North and the other half to Christchurch at the end of the month. Many of the group have basic English skills and are looking forward to upskilling, further study and working in their new communities.

Others also at the Centre are from Eritrea, Ethiopia, Iraq, Myanmar, Rwanda, Democratic Republic of Congo and Somalia.

Auckland

Every three months we have a social event for the two previous intakes of refugee families and their volunteers. This is a great event as it gives the refugee families an opportunity to meet up again with people they met at the Mangere Centre.

It's always rewarding to see the bonds that have grown between the families and the volunteers.

It's a shared dinner concept where there's a mix tapestry of food that is appreciated by all and lots of entertainment. Great to see people from different cultures trying different dances!

The next volunteer training programme starts on Wednesday 11 June. For further volunteering information, as well as opportunities in a short term role (3 months) as a volunteer or as a mobile volunteer (on call) we would love to hear from you. Please contact Liesa Walter on 621 0013 or liesa.walter@rms.org.nz

A sustainable gardening workshop was held for a Burmese group at the Botanic Gardens and was supported by the Auckland Regional Council. The workshop brought new understanding of the food growing options in New Zealand to the Burmese who are already keen gardeners.

Some of the vegetables they had never seen before and herbs such as thyme and rosemary just looked like pretty plants.

Concepts such as worm farms and composting were also something new as in Burma, the soil was fertilized with animal manure and by burning the field after harvesting - not really an option for Auckland backyards!

Auckland Volunteer's view:

Two brothers originally from Mauritania (25 & 21) have only been here five months and are already in the local football team.

"A volunteer in our team encouraged them to come along to his football training and next thing the coach is asking them to join, helped them get their gear and now they're top goal scorers! This has been great for their confidence, community spirit, health, fitness and feeling of acceptance. We also set them up at MIT on an employment English course and now the older brother is starting a 10 week mechanics work experience course. He is so excited about the prospect of working full time.

"It's been such a pleasure to see him grow, he really has settled here so well, it's amazing. I delivered a bike on Saturday and he was absolutely over the moon. He was riding up and down the hill and when I called yesterday, he told me that I had given him a 'car'. That he was now able to pop up to the shops and get supplies for his Mum, whereas before they would have had to have walked twenty minutes there. He is absolutely rapt."

Hamilton

January saw a pilot orientation programme run for the new Colombian families who arrived in Hamilton in December. It's quite a lengthy wait until the new year's classes start and with normal routines out the door, January can be a very difficult time for those who have just arrived.

In conjunction with ESOL Home Tutors and WINTEC, we ran a full time summer programme with English classes in the morning catering for all ages from pre school to adults, then orientation in the afternoon.

Local school teachers gave up their well deserved summer holiday to voluntarily teach the children which enabled them to receive the best foundation for the start of the school term.

Orientation included sessions with the police who talked about bullying and home safety; there were also budgeting sessions, immigration updates, local orientation and information sessions with Housing New Zealand and Work and Income.

There were also visits to the museum, swimming pool and of course the local fish and chip shops!

The inaugural Waikato Refugee Resettlement Forum was held at the beginning of April with former refugee communities, local NGO's and government representatives looking specifically at the unique picture of Waikato resettlement.

Support for local ethnic youth in building identity and positive pathways was a hot topic and by the end of the forum there were several new possibilities for creating new options and resources.

Palmerston North

The annual Palmerston North Festival of Cultures took place in the square on the last Saturday in March. A fantastic opportunity to introduce our new communities to the people of Palmerston North. We met up with some old friends, volunteers and other agencies as well as enjoying the food and entertainment.

We were delighted at the turnout for our Volunteer Training Programme. These wonderful people will be supporting the Bhutanese families who will be arriving later this month. We also welcome our new staff member Bikram, who will be the Bhutanese Cross Cultural Worker. Bikram is Nepali - welcome "Namaste"

The next training course starts in May. Please phone Lorna Johnson (06) 355 1415 or email lorna.johnson@rms.org.nz

Two Congolese women have graduated with Certificates in Computing from UCOL. A fabulous achievement as they only arrived in New Zealand two years ago with virtually no English. One woman is now enrolled in the foundation course for Nursing at UCOL and the other has found a job as a caregiver.

We have also had great success with a group of Burmese and Congolese women who have graduated from a Straight 2 Work Sewing Skills Programme run by the Apparel and Textile Industry Training Organisation. The group also completed a course on workplace communications skills and are now employed in the apparel industry.

Christchurch

We have had a very busy few weeks leading up to the Refugee Resettlement Forum. It was a very informative experience with enthusiastic participation from those who could attend.

The Christchurch community is very much looking forward to the arrival of the Bhutanese refugees who will arrive later this month. We are also welcoming an Eritrean family.

We have had a fantastic response to our Volunteer Training Programme which ends on the 20th April with experienced volunteers to be placed within each of the teams to ensure good support for the new arrivals and the new volunteers.

The Christchurch "Tampa" community has been very proud of young Abbas Nazari who has just been judged third best in the National Spelling competition. Abbas was 6 years old when he arrived in Christchurch in 2001 and he has done extremely well with his education, as have the

majority of the children in his community. There are increasing numbers of Afghan and Kurdish youth attending university and this has been because of the value of education instilled in the children by their parents.

Interested in volunteering? Please contact Judi Bastin on (03) 366 0497 or judi.bastin@rms.org.nz

3. Changemakers Refugee Forum - Wellington

The Standards for Engagement Guidelines for Central and Local Government and NGO's working with Refugee Background Communities is a new publication that was launched by Changemakers Refugee Forum recently.

Changemakers Executive Chair Adam Awad says the Standards for Engagement reflect a change in the way refugee background communities wish to work with government and other organisations.

"Communities don't want to be treated as the passive subjects and receivers of policies and services. We want to be actively and meaningfully involved in new initiatives that affect us."

Adam says the guidelines provide the ingredients for successful engagement with communities and evolved out of many months of consultation with communities, government agencies and NGO's.

Please contact Changemakers Refugee Forum, (04)801-5812 or email changemakers@crf.org.nz to request a copy and the full press release.

4. Former Refugee wins Scholarship

Samara Al Badri, 18, arrived with her family as refugees from Iraq six and a half years ago. Speaking very little English, Samara launched into school life with dedication and hard work. At the end of 2007, Samara graduated from St Catherine's College, Wellington and at the prize giving and graduation ceremony she was awarded the Wellington Archdiocesan Catholic Foundation's Halina Fladrzynska-Morrow Scholarship, in recognition of her fortitude in overcoming the difficulties that she had faced in her young life.

In addition to learning English, Samara has studied French and in 2005 was the recipient of a New Zealand Language Teachers' Association Certificate of Excellence in French.

Samara has begun her tertiary studies at Victoria University in chemistry, biology and statistics, toward a degree in biomedical science.

5. ESOL Home Tutors' Conference 2008

ESOL Home Tutors' conference will be held at the Rutherford Hotel, Nelson from 16-18 May.

The conference theme, Our Changing Identity, highlights how changing social, cultural and political environment impacts our work and identity.

For more information, contact natoffice@esolht.org.nz www.esolhtlorg.nz

6. Recipe from Becky Malesic

Titufahije (Stuffed Apples)

(Even though this dish has been established as Bosnian, I think that it originates from Turkey or some Arabic country as the word Tufaha (Too-fa-har)- in Arabic means apple and does not have a meaning in Bosnian at all)

Ingredients:

6-12 apples (peeled and cored)

About 100-150 ground hazelnuts

Whipped cream (for top of apples)

2 Cups of Sugar and one cup of water (for the syrup you have to use white sugar - I tried brown and it did not work at all.)

One peeled lemon (slice into 7-10 pieces at least)

Depending on which season you prepare the dessert - decorations could be cherries, strawberries, hazelnuts etc)

In a deep dish place at least 6 peeled apples with core taken out. Pour in one cup of water and add the two cups of sugar.

Between the apples place the slices of lemon.

Golden apples do not need to be cooked for very long. Usually 5-10 minutes on both sides.

When they are cooked, put them in a large dish (which should have some depth for syrup) Take the apples out. Wait to cool off.

Stuff them with ground nuts in which you put some of the whipped cream. You can use a little vanilla essence as well.

The syrup from the dish should be poured through a sieve to put into the serving dish.

The rest of the cream is used for the decoration on top of the apples with strawberries, or cherries or even hazelnut. This is quite sweet but delicious.

VOLUNTEERING:

If you would like to make a world of difference in your community, please visit our website www.rms.org.nz to find your local office.

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He aha te mea nui? He aha te mea nui o te ao?
Maku e ki atu. He tangata he tangata, he tangata.

What is the most important thing? What is the most important thing in
the world?

I will say to you. It is people, it is people, it is people.

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