
RMS News

Issue #26-- August 2006

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 News is a monthly 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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In this issue:

- 1. Mangere update
- 2. RMS staffing changes
- 3. RMS vacancies
- 4. Refugee Rights Conference, Toronto
- 5. Islam Awareness Week
- 6. NZ Migrant and Ethnic Youth research
- 7. NZ Diversity Forum
- 8. NZ Interfaith Group

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- 1. Mangere update

We started out expecting around 135 refugees in the July intake, with numbers reduced early due to a couple of advanced pregnancies. Of the 127 we were then expecting, a family of seven arrived on 4 July, one single man on 6 July and 79 on 7 July. It was hoped the others would arrive within ten days or so but they were deferred - hopefully to the September intake. That left us with just 87 people, which was quite timely given that Mangere was short of a Social Worker.

The group is predominantly Burmese (mostly Chin plus a Karen family of three, a Burman couple plus a single Mon woman and a single Kachin woman). Our other Nationalities are Iraqi (2), Iranian (1) and an Afghan woman and children reunited with husband/father who has been in NZ not quite two years. A very responsive group who have been keen to attend meetings and are very happy to be here. 44% of the group will resettle in Auckland including Burmese, (Karen, Burman, Mon, Kachin & some Chin), Iranian & Iraqi with the Afghan family to resettle in Christchurch and the remainder of the Burmese (Chin) to be split between Nelson, Hutt Valley, Porirua and Wellington for resettlement.

- 2. RMS staffing changes

RMS Accountant Peter Pritchard has retired from his role at the National Office in Wellington. A special luncheon was held in his honour, to acknowledge 16 years of outstanding contribution to the organisation. Peter has seen many changes over the years and will continue his support as a close friend of RMS. Penny Fisher, regional coordinator for Hutt Valley is due to retire from her position on August 11th. Another long term committed member of

RMS Refugee Resettlement, Penny is a well known identity amongst former refugee families and has been an integral part of the national team.

3. RMS Vacancies

RMS is looking for two qualified, experienced and motivated Social Workers. One position will be at the Mangere Refugee Centre and the other at the Hamilton office. Both positions are for 20 hours per week with flexible times to be negotiated. For a more detailed job description, please go to our website www.rms.org.nz/rmsvacancies.html, or email jenni.broom@rms.org.nz (for the Auckland position) or barbara.redfern@rms.org.nz (for the Hamilton position).

Other vacancies coming up - Social Workerers (3) for Auckland central; Senior Cross Cultural Worker, Adminsitrator (both Wellington based) and a Wellington Coordinator...please check www.rms.org.nz/rmsvacancies.html for more details.

4. Refugee Rights Conference - Toronto

In June our Regional Manager for Auckland Jill Conway attended the Refugee Rights Conference in Toronto which was hosted by the Canadian Council for Refugees. The themes of the conference were NGO networking across borders and refugee rights as human rights. Jill contributed to two workshops, one on the Professionalisation of Settlement Workers and one on Integration - Use of Mainstream or Specialist services.

The conference was attended by over 500 participants and provided a wonderful opportunity to hear about what is happening in refugee resettlement around the world. It was also very focused on establishing action plans for ongoing collaboration and networking.

5. Islam Awareness Week 7-13 August
***** Islam Awareness Week is a week of information and activities organised by local Muslims to increase New Zealanders' awareness of their beliefs, values and practices, and to tackle misinformation about their religion in a positive way. Activities during the week such as Mosque open days, talks, video screenings and information displays will allow people to have an insight into the Islamic way of life and the Muslims who follow it. For more information: www.islamawareness.co.nz or email info@islamawareness.co.nz

6. Research with New Zealand Migrant and Ethnic Youth

Professor Colleen Ward of the School of Psychology and the Centre for Applied Cross-cultural Research at Victoria University in Wellington is currently conducting research with New Zealand youth (13-18). The research forms part of a larger project on Identity, Acculturation and Intergroup Relations. The research is focused on the experiences of mirgrant and ethnic youth in New Zealand and particular issues of interest are cultural identity and national identity, peer group relations, values and attitudes, well-being and school adjustment.

More information on the survey (participants will remain anonymous) can be found on-line at www.vuw.ac.nz/cacr.

7. New Zealand Diversity Forum 20-22 August

National identity, cultural diversity and harmonious race relations will be the subject of a wide range of meetings and forums as part of the third annual New Zealand Diversity Forum. This year the forum will consist of four elements: a National Youth Forum; Sector and Professional Meetings, Information Forums; Special TOPic Forums and a Plenary Session. For more information about the programme go to www.hrc.co.nz/diversityforum

8. New Zealand Interfaith Group

The NZ Interfaith Group has evolved from a variety of interfaith groups that have been active in Wellington over the past 15 years, such as the World Conference on Religion and Peace, and Faith and Community Week. It is in the process of becoming an umbrella group for interfaith groups in other centres around Aotearoa New Zealand.

Members of the Bahá'í, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Latter Day Saints, Muslim, and Sikh faiths are represented in the group currently. For more information about the NZ Interfaith Group, please contact Paddy Payne: info@interfaith.org.nz; www.interfaith.org.nz

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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