



# Refugee Services

AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND

## Welcome to our most recent arrivals from Bhutan

August saw the arrival of three more families from Bhutan.

We welcome the Sharma family, the Ghimire family and the Neupane family to Palmerston North and we hope your new town will soon feel like home. All of these families already have extended family here which is great.

Our three groups of volunteers worked hard to get the houses ready in time and did a fantastic job. Thank you all. We hope you enjoy getting to know your families and assisting them with their resettlement.



## Plans for 2010

Anticipated arrivals from Bhutan in early next year mean it is likely we will run the next volunteer training in early February 2010. We would love to hear from any volunteers who would like to help with another family.

Refugee Services, PO Box 42, Palmerston North 4414

Tel/063551415 email/lorna.johnson@refugeeservices.org.nz

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The office team at Refugee Services Palmerston North



From left: Mario (social work student), Bikram (Cross cultural worker), Kevin, (local co-ordinator), Jenny (social worker) Lorna (volunteer programme co-ordinator)

## World Refugee Day Event 2009

This year to mark World Refugee Day on 20th June, the communities of former refugees in Palmerston North collaborated on a cultural event.

It was fantastic to see our new refugee communities involved, as well as the more established Cambodian, Rwandan and Algerian communities.

Each community performed either a dance or song and these acts were interspersed with brave and often moving accounts of the personal stories and journeys of individual refugees from each community.



*The Congolese community perform a traditional dance*



Community leaders present flowers to Heather Tanguay



Tinmama and the children from the Burmese community

## Palmerston North to host Communities Cup



On the weekend of 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> November, Palmerston North will host the second NZ Communities Football Cup at Arena Manawatu. This event was established by New Zealand Police to interact positively with ethnic groups.

The teams making up this event are all winners of ethnic football events held around the country over the past 12 months.

For further information check out the event's website at [www.nzcfc.org.nz](http://www.nzcfc.org.nz)

## Volunteer stories and photos: having fun together



Ran and Saraswati celebrate their first wedding anniversary

Andrea Calder sent us these great photos of herself, her team mate Angela, and their Bhutanese family, the Rauts. The family arrived in February, and Andrea and Angela have been their volunteer support workers for the past 6 months.

Andrea and Angela were honoured to be invited to celebrate Ran and Saraswati's first wedding anniversary in traditional fashion with the tika blessings.

On another occasion, the volunteers organized a trip out to Manfield to watch motorcycle racing, which was great fun, especially for the younger family members.

Nishan, Rans's nephew, at Manfield



Ganga, (Ran's mother) Angela and Andrea



### **WOMENS ONLY SWIMMING NIGHTS AT FREYBERG COMMUNITY POOL**

**Where ?      Freyberg Community Pool, Thames Street, Palmerston North**

**When?        Last Saturday of each month, 6.00-8.00pm (Please be there by 6.15pm).**

**Cost?         \$3.50 per swimmer includes a water aqua aerobics fitness class  
This is the standard price for entry. Children \$2.00**

**Come along, have fun and experience a different form of fitness and exercise  
This is a great night to meet new friends and have  
Fun in the process!**

**For more information, contact Heather Tanguay, Internal Affairs Advisor, on (06)  
3558083**

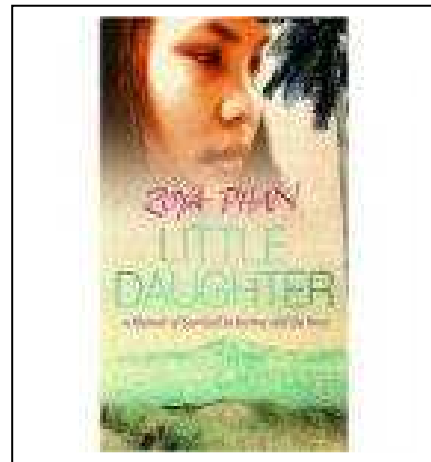
**Women Life Guards will be on duty**

## Want to know more about the refugee experience?

Book reviews by Jill Spicer

Biographies can help the reader gain an insight a different life and into another culture's view of the world. Often this also provokes thought about one's own accepted norms. Two recently published biographies also contribute to an understanding about the horror of the process of becoming a refugee, ordinary people like you and me, caught up in world events. Both are available in the Biography Section of the City Library.

The first, *Little Daughter – a Memoir of Survival in Burma and the West* by Zoya Pahn. (Call # 957.1053) describes, in the early chapters a happy childhood growing up in a village in rural Burma. One feels one can better understand the background of many of the families here, the things one can't talk about because of the enormous barrier of language. Then of course, darkness falls, the fighting moves in, the happiness and sunshine disappear and the years of terror and confusion are outlined in chilling detail. Zoya Pahn's father was a leader in the Karen resistance which means she is also able to outline the political background to the present situation, something we hear little about in the West.



Zoya Phan is International Coordinator at Burma Campaign UK and is one of the leading Burmese democracy activists in Europe.

The second book, *Infidel*, (Call # 949.2073) is written by Aayan Hirsi Ali, a young Somali woman who was accepted into Holland as refugee and went on to become a member of the Dutch parliament and one of the world's 100 most influential people – as listed by Times Magazine. The first section tells of her life growing up as a Moslem woman in Somalia and neighbouring countries. (Her father was also politically active with difficult consequences for his family.) One quickly becomes aware of a very different outlook on family, honour, society, loyalty. It is fascinating.

The second part documents her arrival in the West – an independent but devout Moslem woman. She tells of the refugee experience but also describes the enormous, wrenching questioning of her fundamental beliefs caused by the flood of new experiences in her new country coupled with her introduction to Western philosophers at university. She, through rational argument and evidence finally, reluctantly, abandons her basic beliefs, but, using those same tools, she goes on to challenge left wing liberals of the West to examine their basic beliefs about immigration and a multi-cultural society. This is a fascinating book and, you have been warned, perhaps a challenge to think about your own political beliefs



**Where's Brigitte?**

Lots of you have asked us how Brigitte (our social worker), Marty and baby Tian are doing, and as you can see from this adorable photo, the answer is very well indeed!

Brigitte has gone for a trip back home to Germany so that she and Tian can be spoilt by Grandma, while Marty is holding the fort here in Palmerston North.

Brigitte is still on maternity leave but we hope to persuade her to return next year!

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If you, or a member of the family you are supporting, are interested in studying at IPC, you may like to know that scholarships are available for New Zealand permanent residents (so all our families would be eligible). IPC provides a very multicultural environment for study, with small class sizes and individual support. The campus is in a beautiful setting as those who visited for the Sakura festival will remember!

We have had many volunteers from both staff and students at IPC over the last couple of years, for which we are very grateful. For more information contact Zeb at [Zeb@ipc.ac.nz](mailto:Zeb@ipc.ac.nz)