



# Refugee Services

AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND

## Palmerston North Newsletter February 09

### Refugee Services

PO Box 42  
245 Main St  
Palmerston Nth  
4440

**Phone:**  
06 355 1415

**Fax:**  
06 355 1425

**E-Mail:**  
[PalmerstonNorth@refugeeservices.org.  
nz](mailto:PalmerstonNorth@refugeeservices.org.nz)

Key events so far in 2009:

- 7 former refugee families from Bhutan received, 2 family reunions of Burmese and Congolese
- 17 new volunteers trained and 7 experienced volunteers placed, making 24 in total.
- 5 more families expected end of April

### Joyful day as families reunite in Palmerston North



### Individual Highlights:

Profile: Darren Paki	2
Renovations	2
Festival of Cultures	3
Staff news	3
Volunteers	4
PN Girls High	4
Book review	4

On Friday 27<sup>th</sup> February, there were some very happy faces outside the Refugee Services office as seven families arrived from Mangeru to be greeted by their families already settled in Palmerston North, as well as by 24 enthusiastic volunteers.

Despite the long bus journey from Auckland, there were smiles all around as families from Burma, Congo and Bhutan were reunited.





## Profile: Darren Paki, Ethnic Liaison Officer



*Darren Paki, Ethnic liaison officer*



“When there are strong partnerships with people, community leaders and other agencies we can all move forward together.”

Some of you may know Darren already, but for those that don't, we caught up with him during a typical busy week to ask him a bit about his role as Ethnic Liaison Officer for Palmerston North police.

Darren sees his role as providing a bridge between the community and police. From a police point of view, it helps build confidence in the uniform so that reporting of crime and passing on of information is easier. It is a broad role and gives him freedom to initiate projects that have a social impact such as the driver's licence scheme (where refugees are helped to become legal drivers, funded by MSD) and the ethnic soccer tournament.

He was appointed in January 2008, and says he was motivated by his interest in community work. His wife is Indian, his step father from Fiji, his Grandmother Irish and his sister in law German, so as he jokingly explains, “It is a big melting pot in my family”.

What he has enjoyed most in his job is meeting people and thinks it is cool to be able to do some project work that prevents problems, rather than having to deal with the issues that have already happened. The driver's licence project is a good example of that. He loves the chance to sit down and talk through issues with people and find out what it is they want.

In particular he sees his role with the refugee communities as helping them settle into New Zealand life and educating them about the police here.

His message to volunteers? “Don't be shy to ask for my help, that's what I'm here for”.

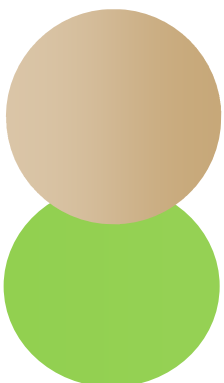
Darren can be contacted at Rossmont CPC, Vogel Street, tel: 359 3165, or email [Darren-Leigh.Paki@police.govt.nz](mailto:Darren-Leigh.Paki@police.govt.nz)

## Renovations for the Refugee Services office

We have had some renovation work done on the Palmerston North office over the last couple of months, as those who have been in recently will notice.

The work has involved constructing an extra office, expanding the meeting room to provide a more user-friendly space, moving the kitchen facilities to the meeting room and as a result enlarging the storage area for furniture. The work has been funded by a grant.

The next stage will involve painting and new carpet, as well as the provision of an extra phone line. With the sound proofing of the new office, there is an opportunity to use this space for one-one counselling sessions in the future.



## The Festival of Cultures and Ethkick 09



At the end of March New Zealand celebrates Race Relations week. As part of this week, Palmerston North holds an annual Festival of Cultures in March.

This vibrant and colourful event takes place in the Square from 10-4 on Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> March. There are singing and dance performances from cultural groups, food stalls with delicious offerings from all over the world, and many stalls celebrating the diversity of cultures that we share in Palmerston North.

It is a day not to be missed!

Then on 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> March, Skogland Park (near Freyberg pool) will be the venue for Palmerston North's first Ethnic football tournament. 40 teams

ranging from the Thirsty Camels (Saudi Arabia) to the Diables Rouges (Congo) will be competing for the prestige of being the winners of the inaugural event. Come and support our communities (Bhutanese and Congolese)

There will be food stalls and entertainments, plus on the Sunday an exhibition match will be played between the Police and the Fire Services. There are prizes for the best supporters too!

**Ethkick 09: promoting a positive image of friendship through football**

*The last week in March is Race Relations week, and to celebrate there are two fantastic events planned for Palmerston North*



**Heartfelt thanks to all our volunteers, past and present. You do a fantastic job and we think you are awesome!**

## Staff news

We would like to welcome Jenny Pepworth to the Refugee Services team. Jenny will be taking over the role of Social Worker while Brigitte is away on parental leave. Some of you may well know Jenny already, as she trained in February 2006 as a VSW and worked with a Congolese family. Since then she has done a second placement with a Burmese family and so comes with a superb knowledge of the agency and the role of the VSW already! Jenny writes:

“I feel honoured and excited about taking over Brigitte’s role as social worker with Refugee Services whilst she is away. I am originally from Durban, South Africa and moved to Palmerston North with my husband and two daughters about 14 years ago. I became involved, as a volunteer, with Refugee Services in 2006 when the Palmerston North office first opened. I am really looking forward to meeting everybody over the coming weeks. If you are in the area, please drop in and introduce yourself.”

We also welcome Antoinette Umugwaneza who will be working part time as a Cross Cultural Worker with a Congolese family reunion case. Again we are really saying ‘welcome back’, as Antoinette also trained as a VSW in the same group as Jenny and worked with a Congolese family.

*3 former  
volunteers now  
working for  
Refugee Services  
at Palmerston  
North*





## Volunteers needed for April



*Volunteers organizing house set up in 2008*

In April 2009, we expect to receive about 20 Bhutanese refugees in Palmerston North. To prepare volunteers, the next training course will be held at the Red Cross starting 23<sup>rd</sup> of March and finishing 4<sup>th</sup> April 2009.

Please tell your friends and colleagues about this opportunity and ask anyone who might be interested to call Lorna at the Palmerston North office, 3551415, or email [lorna.johnson@refugeeservices.org.nz](mailto:lorna.johnson@refugeeservices.org.nz)

We especially welcome our experienced volunteers to come back for another placement.

Feedback from newly trained volunteers is often that they would have appreciated someone who was experienced in their team.

## Volunteers from PN Girls High School



Cuiying (left) and Deinika (right)

We are delighted to have two young women from Palmerston North Girls High School working with us this year as part of their science and technology project. Deinika Elston and Cuiying Yao have also signed up to take part in the training course for volunteer support workers in March.

They are pictured here preparing small gift bags for each child that arrived in February. This is a project the girls have initiated themselves and got sponsorship for.

## Book review: *The Life you can save*: Peter Singer



*Be the  
change that  
you want to  
see in the  
world*

*Mahatma  
Ghandi*

“Most of us are absolutely certain that we wouldn’t hesitate to save a drowning child, and that we would do so at considerable cost to ourselves. Yet while thousands of children die each day, we spend money on things we take for granted, and would hardly miss if they were not there. Is that wrong? If so, how far does our obligation to the poor go?”

Peter Singer is a philosopher who in 2005 was named by Time magazine as one of the world’s 100 most influential people. He has written this book with the aim of challenging us about our obligations to those who live in extreme poverty and to convince us to choose to give more of our income to the poor. In it he explores the reasons why we give and the arguments

we use to convince ourselves that we do not need to give. He discusses the facts about aid and how it can be improved and puts forward a new standard for giving.

The book is very readable and Singer is remarkably persuasive. He presents clear and logical arguments, and supports his views with a lot of evidence. He presents the reader with examples of ethical dilemmas and discusses common responses.

I encourage you to read this book and reflect on what each of us can do now to save a life. Be prepared to be challenged!

Lorna Johnson