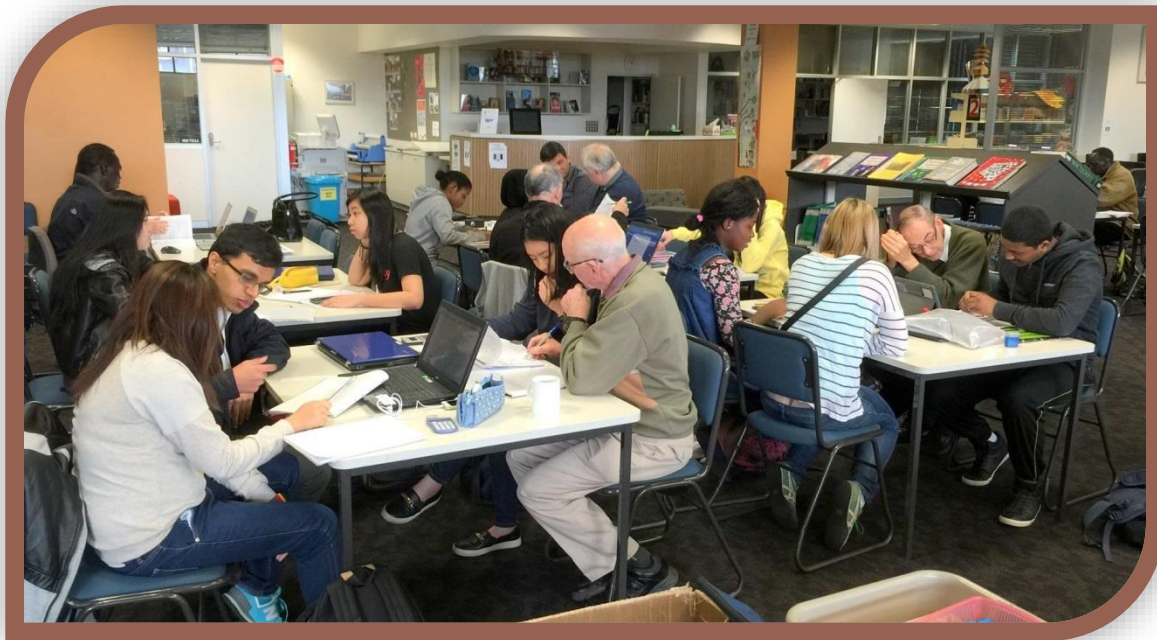


Edmund Rice Community & Refugee Services



Board Annual Report 2015



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Background and Values

Edmund Rice Community & Refugee Services (ERCRS) was established in 2002 and operates in the Brimbank City area, in the western suburbs of Melbourne. ERCRS is a not-for-profit community charitable organisation, incorporated into Edmund Rice Services Ltd. Its mission is to provide free educational learning support and opportunities for social and recreational participation to students from a refugee or disadvantaged background. Students from such backgrounds have often had a dislocated or interrupted educational experience in their early years, and so require extra tuition or study support to enable them to develop their academic potential, and to have access to further education and employment opportunities.

“Conscious of our own brokenness, we walk with people in need, especially those made vulnerable by society”, Christian Brothers Oceania Province: Strategic Directions 2014

Edmund Rice Community & Refugee Services (ERCRS) draws its inspiration from the life and vision of Edmund Rice (1762 – 1844), an Irish businessman who responded to the needs of the disadvantaged young people he encountered on the edges of his society. Edmund believed that every young person deserved an opportunity to receive a quality education, and thereby to have choices in life that would allow them to achieve independence, freedom and increased self-esteem. His was a life characterised by the values of presence, compassion and liberation.

Edmund Rice Community & Refugee Services believes in upholding the following values which are affirmed in various religious traditions around the world:

- ‘Human Dignity’ : all people deserve respect and acceptance because we are human and loved by a creator God, irrespective of race, culture or religion
- ‘Option for the Poor’ : it is a commitment to the common good that we have particular care for the people who are most disadvantaged
- ‘Solidarity and the Common Good’: we have a responsibility to build a society together, which will benefit all people.
- ‘Who is my neighbour?’ : all humanity, especially those seeking safety and protection, are now revealed to be our brothers and sisters.

Among the principal goals of our organisation is a focus on improving the self-confidence, dignity and resilience of these young people as they negotiate their way through primary and secondary schooling. The services offered are mostly focused on educational / learning support, helping to build the capacity of the young people who come our way, and enabling them to grow as self-assured young citizens of Australia. The afterschool learning Support and Tutoring sessions are held during

the regular school term times and an emphasis is placed on obtaining 1:1 support of each student with a volunteer tutor. The volunteer tutors come from a range of experience and backgrounds, and include:

- i) Secondary School students (Years 10 – 12) from a cohort of secondary colleges which have linked in with ERCRS as partners in this project. These secondary students tutor the primary school children who attend the learning support sessions each week.
- ii) University students and other young adults who have knowledge to share, and who are available to tutor either primary school or secondary school students.
- iii) Older adults from the wider community, including present and retired teachers. The specialised knowledge and experience of these tutors is greatly appreciated by the young people seeking educational support.

ERCRS is deeply grateful for the generosity and commitment demonstrated by the wonderful band of volunteers who have supported the mission of ERCRS during 2015. These volunteers bring with them, many skills, experiences and energy which help inform and guide the young people with whom they work. These valued skills not only include the more easily recognised talents such as ability in specialised school subjects, ability in sports etc. but also aspects such as ability to engage and communicate well, show patience, have a sense of humour, be able to give positive affirmation etc. As a result of their engagement with a variety of young people, many of the volunteers find that they also experience a life-enriching growth in aspects such as understanding of others, empathy and a wider world vision.



St Albans Homework club

Board Chair Annual Report 2015



Dr. Denise Goodwin

Edmund Rice Community and Refugee Services continued to operate with strength and vitality during 2015, performing in line with the Board's expectations. In mission, it sought to be present, provide quality services and advocate for the vulnerable and marginalised in the community.

Operationally it continued in its service to deliver excellent learning programmes, also making forays into new areas of service provision, casting an even wider net of support in the local community. All financial deliverables were met.

The ERCRS Board met on eight occasions during 2015. The Board's governance processes have remained consistent and professional, providing vision and planning on matters that have impacted on the organisation. Sub-committees including policy, grants and finance have met between Board meetings to assist in planning and actioning of initiatives. Matters of significance to the Board in 2015 included: -

- The Ministry accreditation process
- Temporary relocation of Homework Club venue
- Funding and grant application procedures
- The Young Men's Mentoring Program
- Piloting of Kid's Club and Playgroup programs

Board members were supported in their preparation for Ministry accreditation. From the Oceania Province of the Christian Brothers, guidance was given through Mission Directorate documents outlining Province mission, mission accreditation and collaboration. ERCRS is thankful to the Oceania Province, the Province Mission Directorate and Br Shane Wood for their support of the Board in their preparation of ministry review.

In 2015 Brimbank City Council commenced the redevelopment of the Errington Centre. The Homework Club delivering sessions at the Errington Centre on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, had to be vacated and relocated into portables by early June 2015. A review of risk management was undertaken and a rollout of renewed procedures executed for the temporary accommodation of tutors and students in ERCRS programs.

With ERCRS now having DGR status, the grants committee consisting of Dona Cayetana, Biong Biong and myself worked on developing sources of funding. Several important grants were secured. Of note, a successful application was gained, and a grant of over \$20,000 was received from the Victorian Multicultural Commission. This success was a source of assurance for the Board as we were new to the area of raising funds. We worked on the development of procedures for applying for funds, which should greatly assist ERCRS sustainability. In highlighting our initial success in fundraising, the Board is ever mindful of the generous financial support given to ERCRS by the Edmund Rice Foundation.

We strategically increased our services, focussing on disengaged youth in the community and seeking to involve preschool children in two age groupings in various activities. We rolled out the Young Men's mentoring program and piloted the Kid's Club and Playgroup programs. Our resolve was to enable youth to become connected to others in the wider community through sporting activity and networking with possible mentors. We also sought to assist mothers with young children to socialise and play at a convenient venue, while older children attended the Homework Club. Collaborations with, and support was gained through Edmund Rice Camps Victoria, VicSEG and Edmund Rice Community Partnerships. In its deliberations, the Board considered the needs of the community, and the capabilities of ERCRS to successfully provide service and involvement in these areas. Compliance with Oceania Child Protection policy and adherence to risk assessment protocols were met.

I am thankful to the Board for their commitment and active participation in the governance of ERCRS, and for their expertise in delivering sound professional advice and support to this ministry. In 2015 we sadly farewelled retiring member Moses Lado. He has served the Board well in various capacities offering a wealth of skill and knowledge. We welcomed Deacon George Piech Meat whose pastoral presence and influence in the Sudanese community is well known. His offer of service on Board is gratefully appreciated.

Finally, engagement in ERCRS programs offers volunteer tutors and students the opportunity to experience transformational learning for both the volunteers and students. This is highlighted in their continued support and willingness to participate, and evidenced in comments written in their tutor journals. Reflecting on tutor engagement, individuals have remarked that their experiences have been personally rewarding, and note how they have gained a new level of cultural awareness in their formation of unique bonds with students.

Through their commitment and building of relationships, tutors have also commented that their experiences in the homework club were intimately challenging, a great experience, enjoyable, positive and fun. Reflections such as these are heartening for the soul of ERCRS, as they attest some surety that the Province values of Presence, Compassion and Liberation are becoming a visible expression within our ministry.

Dr Denise Goodwin



St Albans Homework Club

Director's Report 2015

Edmund Rice Community & Refugee Services was formed in the Brimbank City area of Melbourne some fourteen years ago as a response to the observation made by various agencies; that young people of a refugee background required extra



Br. Frank Perkins

support and guidance in their academic school studies in order to remain engaged in education. ERCRS has evolved to a point where it now provides a range of activities to enhance the development of young people from a variety of backgrounds, not only in their academic studies, but in what might be described as wider life skills.

It is to the benefit of all in our community that recently arrived migrants to Australia, particularly those who have come from unsafe situations, are given support and guidance as they endeavour to establish pathways to a more secure future. For young people engaged in the education journey, it is important to provide them with the best possible opportunities to maximise their life endeavours. A major factor that supports the improved learning of the students accessing our programs is the establishing of a safe, trusting, positive relationship between the student and the tutor.

Throughout 2015 ERCRS continued to provide well-established induction programs for the volunteer tutors and this included mandatory Child Protection training. There was also the opportunity to participate in a tutor training workshop organised by CMY, as well as a one day 1st Aid training course provided by Australian Red Cross. An assessed three-hour training course on Child Protection protocols is compulsory for all new staff and adult volunteers working with ERCRS. During 2015 some forty people successfully completed this training. Our continued appreciation goes to Dr. Pauline Meemeduma for the design, production and presentation of this program, and for the support of the Oceania Province of the Christian Brothers for the financial backing of this training. We continue to be very appreciative of the generous support of our volunteer tutors who commit themselves to supporting the students in their learning. By their commitment and patience, their cheerfulness and their willingness to build positive relationships, these volunteers are wonderful role models for the young people of a CALD/refugee background who are striving to improve their abilities in literacy and numeracy.

ERCRS also partnered with a variety of organisations in order to provide quality programs that allowed the young people, both primary and secondary students, as well as their families, to benefit from the specialised skills and resources that these organisations are willing and able to provide. We are especially grateful to the following:

- Edmund Rice Foundation of Australia (ERFA)
- Edmund Rice Camps Victoria (ERC Vic)
- Centre for Multicultural Youth (CMY)
- Brimbank Youth Services (BYS)
- Good Shepherd Youth & Family Services (GSYFS)
- Victorian Cooperative on Children's Services for Ethnic Groups (VICSEG)
- Brotherhood of St. Laurence
- Edmund Rice Centre, Amberley
- Life Saving Victoria (LSV)
- Second Bite

Throughout 2015, ERCRS continued to strengthen and refine the programs it offered to the young people who accessed our services. The free Learning Support and Tutoring programs continued to be the main ways in which continued engagement in education for these young people was promoted. However, in July, after a period of research and consultation, a separate mentoring program for boys was also established. This program aimed particularly at supporting boys around the Years 8 & 9 level (ages 13-15), who were experiencing difficulties with the general school experience. A more detailed description of this mentoring program is to be found later in this Annual Report.

Also, following feedback from several parents of students enrolled in the primary students learning support sessions at the Errington Centre, St. Albans, two new programs, a Children's Playgroup and a Kids' Club, were operated as pilot projects during school term four in 2015. Once again a more specific description of these projects will be given later in the report.

The major thrust of our ERCRS endeavours continues to be that of providing learning support for young people from a refugee or disadvantaged background, whose educational journeys have been disrupted through no fault of their own. By a patient, encouraging and committed approach, the tutor often finds that the student receiving support begins to blossom in confidence towards his or her learning, thereby lessening barriers to further educational development. Further growth and self-assurance comes with building a well-rounded educational environment, and exposure to other learning experiences outside of the classroom. Again ERCRS is indebted to its partner organisations, and to a cohort of generous volunteers in ensuring that these extra opportunities are available to the young

people in our programs. Experiences such as Edmund Rice residential camps, water confidence and swimming lessons with Life Saving Victoria, or excursions to the museum or to the zoo, not only broaden horizons and create opportunities for building self-esteem, but are also capable of delivering important life skills.

Throughout 2015, ERCRS continued to receive wonderful support and encouragement from the Oceania Province of the Christian Brothers, and from the Province Mission Directorate. Oceania Province, in conjunction with the Edmund Rice Foundation, continues to be the major funding agency for ERCRS, as well as allowing us access to highly qualified staff who provide essential logistical support in governance, financial and policy matters.

My special thanks again goes to the professional, committed and generous members of the ERCRS staff and board. Your ability to give wholeheartedly and skilfully to build a service that can dedicate itself to those in need, is truly valued.

Frank Perkins cfc



Sunshine Harvester Group on Family Camp at Amberley

Tributes

Tribute to Elizabeth Diacos

Elizabeth Diacos joined the ERCRS staff in July 2014 as the Program Coordinator of the Sunshine Harvester School project, and continued in this role until December 2015. This project was for Edmund Rice Community & Refugee Services to establish



and operate an after-school Homework Club / Learning Support Program for a group of children at Sunshine Harvester Primary School (SHPS), who had recently arrived into Australia.

This project, a collaborative partnership between SHPS and ERCRS, actually began in mid-2013, but due to pressure on the availability of ERCRS staff, could operate only one afternoon per week. More students at SHPS were seeking help, so with the generous backing of Centre for Multicultural Youth (CMY) and

Australian Communities Foundation (ACF), Edmund Rice Services was able to engage Elizabeth as a Program Coordinator for this project. Elizabeth had been working at Mill Park Heights Primary School as a teacher specializing in Art, English and Drama.

Elizabeth brought to ERCRS her experience as a creative teacher, with a flair for engaging young students in learning that was interesting and enjoyable. Under Elizabeth's guidance, 60 students from SHPS were registered into the Homework Club and were able to attend the one and a half hour program that operated each week. Two sessions per week were held, with 30 students at each session. As Coordinator, Elizabeth linked in with the volunteer tutors who are so much an essential part of the ERCRS program. These volunteers were a mixture of adults and secondary school students from five colleges that encouraged their students to become involved in a social service outreach. Elizabeth was instrumental in introducing this volunteering opportunity to Braybrook College, a secondary school within walking distance of SHPS. The support from the volunteers at Braybrook College, and from the four other Colleges supporting us, was greatly appreciated and allowed Elizabeth to provide 1:1 support of tutors to children.

Elizabeth's creative organizational skills were evident in a number of different ways during her time with ERCRS:

- production of workbooks for the children, that helped the tutors give focus to their support
- an enjoyable excursion to Overnewton Anglican Community College, for the children in the term 3 school holidays
- a well-produced end of year celebration day for the children, which included games, face painting, a magic show and tempting things to eat

- she was involved in organising a very successful dinner to thank all the ERCRS adult volunteers

In her 18 months working with ERCRS, Elizabeth contributed significantly to the educational focus of the learning support program at SHPS.

We wish her every success in her further ventures.

Programs 2015

Learning Support Programs

In the traditions of ERCRS and the spirit of Edmund Rice, ERCRS had continued to improve the lives of, and opportunities for, children and young people of a disadvantaged background by supporting them in their education and providing them with access to free learning support along with a range of social activities throughout 2015.

Education support remained our key aim in delivering quality and lasting support. With that in mind, ERCRS continued to partner with schools and individuals who volunteers as tutors to provide a vital one-on-one learning support to young people who need it.

In summary, ERCRS operated the following programs throughout 2015:

- A Homework Club for primary students which took place each Monday & Wednesday of school term from 3:30-5:00pm at the Errington Community Centre St Albans.
- A Tutoring Program for secondary and tertiary students which took place each Tuesday from 3:30-5:30pm at the Errington Centre, St Albans and every Saturday morning from 10:30am-12:30pm at the Catholic Regional College Library, St Albans during school term.
- A Homework Club for Sunshine Harvester Primary School students which took place each Wednesday and Thursday afternoon from 3:00-5:00pm at Sunshine Harvester Primary School, Sunshine during school term.
- A Young Men's Mentoring program (Brighter Tomorrow Boys' Group) for year 8 students, took place every Thursday 3:30–5:30pm at Errington Community centre, St Albans from June 2015.
- Kids Club and Playgroup, for children who are too young for our homework program, took place in term 4 2015 as a pilot from and ran every Monday from 3:30-5:00pm.
- A recreational program for all students involved in the above programs. This includes excursions, camps and events throughout the year.

Homework Club for Primary Students

Throughout 2015 ERCRS continued to operate four Homework Club (learning support) sessions each week:

- two sessions per week (Mondays and Wednesdays) at the Errington Centre in St. Albans
- two sessions per week (Wednesdays and Thursdays) at the Sunshine Harvester Primary School in Sunshine

The sessions at the Errington Centre are for primary school students enrolled in Grades 3-6 at various schools around the St. Albans area, who need extra learning support, particularly in literacy. As a result of the popularity of these sessions, families were asked to choose just one session per week for their children to attend. The average attendance at each session during the year was 30 students.

The sessions at Sunshine Harvester School were specifically aimed at helping to improve the literacy skills of students who attended the school, and who were recent arrivals, most often from a non-English speaking refugee background. The numbers of students attending each session was capped at 30. The extra learning support offered to the students in the Homework Club has a goal of assisting the students to develop the literacy skills, and so be active and engaged participants in their regular mainstream classes.



Sunshine Harvester Program



St Albans Homework Club

Tutoring Sessions for Secondary Students

Two free tutoring sessions were held each week during the regular school terms for secondary students who wished to receive support in their school subjects. The sessions offered were:

- Tuesdays after school for two hours at the Errington Community Centre in St. Albans
- Saturday mornings for two hours in the school library at Catholic Regional College, St. Albans

Most of the students who register for these sessions attend the local secondary schools in the St. Albans area, but others travel from further afield to make use of the opportunity to study 1:1 with a tutor. We are truly blessed to have a strong cohort of talented adult volunteer tutors who attend the sessions regularly, and whose passion and love of learning communicates itself to the students.

Our heartfelt thanks goes to Ms. Christine Utri, Principal of CRC St. Albans, and her staff, for generously allowing ERCRS to use their College library each Saturday morning for the tutoring sessions.



Magic show at the end of the term

Sunshine Harvester School Learning Support Program

Background of Sunshine Harvester

An outside of school hours learning support program was established in Term 3 2013 as a partnership between the school and Edmund Rice Community and Refugee Service, this catered specifically for the learning needs of newly arrived students from a refugee background who are in the most need of education support. The program was designed and implemented by the school's EAL co-ordinator. During each session students complete a numeracy activity, a literacy activity and play a board or card game to practice their oral language skills.

In Term 2 2014 the program was supported with funding through the Refugee Education Support Program (Department of Education via CMY), which enabled it to run over two afternoons per week.

The program has continually achieved set outcomes and has consistently high attendance – approximately 30 students attend each session each week. It is well supported by the school and at least one volunteer teacher from school is rostered to attend session each week.

The partnership with Edmund Rice Services enables a large number of tutors to attend each session so students can receive either individual or small group support. It has also opened up opportunities for students to participate in additional activities such as swimming lessons and camps during the school holidays, which are either funded by or organised through ERCRS partner agencies.

Elizabeth Diacos continued through 2015 as the ERCRS coordinator of the Sunshine Harvester School learning support program. Elizabeth liaised with Chris Durbridge, the EAL coordinator at the school, to plan the sessions that occurred after school each Wednesday and Thursday. While the overall success of the program can be difficult to judge in the short term, several factors point towards real progress being achieved. These include:

- consistently strong numbers of students attending the sessions
- the continuing committed support from the volunteer tutors, which included several secondary colleges which bring their students as volunteers
- Feedback from Sunshine Harvester School that the program is having a positive effect on literacy levels and the self-confidence of the children.

ERCRS is grateful for the continued support of the Centre for Multicultural Youth (CMY) in the operation of this program.

Play Group and Kids Club

Following feedback from several parents of students enrolled in the primary students learning support sessions at the Errington Centre, St. Albans, two new programs, a Children's Playgroup and a Kids' Club, were operated as pilot projects during school term four in 2015.

Playgroup

This pilot program was run in partnership with Edmund Rice Community Partnerships and VICSEG, and was facilitated by a professional worker from VICSEG. Although the main aim of the program was to engage parents of Homework Club children with their preschool siblings in a learning and fun environment, the program was also aimed to reduce the issue of parents having to wait in their cars with preschool children until their older siblings had finished at Homework club. The program ran each Wednesday from 3:30 – 5:00pm at Errington Community Centre in St. Albans. This program struggled to meet its objectives and for that plus lack of funding it was not going to run in 2016

Kids Clubs

Kids Club was a pilot program in partnership with Edmund Rice Camps Victoria. The program was aimed at engaging school children who are too young to be in homework club, through fun learning activities. It was staffed by one Edmund Rice Camp staff member and several volunteers. The program ran each Wednesday from 3:30 – 5:00pm at Errington Community Centre in St. Albans. Average of about 14 children attended the program each week.

Boys' Mentoring Program

Mid 2015, following consultation with local schools and other local agencies, ERCRS launched a young men's mentoring program called Brighter Tomorrow Boys' Group. For the rest of 2015 the Brighter Tomorrow Boys' Group continued to operate as a partnership between Edmund Rice Community & Refugee Services, the Edmund Rice Community Partnerships, Catholic Regional College St. Albans and other local schools.

The Program aimed to provide young people a group platform in which they are able to experience success and build self-esteem. This is believed to help increase their ability to positively engage with the education system as well as the wider social community.

The Group targets young men in Year 8 who come from English as a Second Language background, are disadvantaged or are at-risk of becoming disengaged from the education system.

The Group initially ran a 4-week pilot based around soccer clinics in order to attract participants, meeting every Thursday night at Errington Community Centre from 3:30 to 5:30pm. Each session consisted of a soccer-based activity and an additional activity based around team, confidence and aptitude building. The young men involved are encouraged to suggest additional activities they are interested in.

The participants are recommended in consultation with teachers from a number of local partnered high schools. Some students were selected from existing attendees of the Edmund Rice Tutoring Centre. Approximately 20 participants are selected for duration of 6 months.

The program engaged some inspirational speakers including Mick Malthouse to address the boys. Excursions and other team-building events such as mountain biking and involvement in the Victorian State Futsal competition in Ballarat, were also part of this program.



Brighter tomorrow boys at State Futsal Competition

Social and Recreational Programs

The social and recreational programs offered by ERCRS aim to support a holistic approach to learning and relationship building that can help build self-confidence and resilience in the young people who access these opportunities.

Camps:

In Partnership with Edmund Rice Camps Victoria, ERCRS was able to offer two camp opportunities during 2015 for students and families who are connected with ERCRS.

Easter Kids Camps:

During the Easter School holiday break between 18th and 21st April, ERCRS sent 21 children on a camp run by Edmund Rice Camps Victoria. All the children who attended the camp were from the St. Albans sessions with many being from Year Six, since it was their last year at Homework Club.

These camps are very important for children from our services who have few opportunities to engage in fun activities during school holiday times.

After each camp, the results are visible to many of us who work with the children at Homework Centre. Children give their own account of their experience on the camp like the following:

"I had a great time with my Camp leader. She was very kind, funny, loved singing and never yelled, because she is a loving and is always looking out for everyone. I enjoyed the whole camp because I learnt new songs and chants. I enjoyed playing the cup song in the talent show with all my friends".

Many children improved in their self-esteem and self-confidence. Our thanks goes to the Edmund Rice Camps team for providing great activities and to the capable young leaders who mentored the children through each activity. ERCRS is very grateful to the Edmund Rice Foundation for providing funds needed to sponsor our children on this camp.

Family Camp:

During the second week of the September school holidays, the Spring Family Camp run by Edmund Rice Camps (ERC) in association with Edmund Rice Community & Refugee Services (ERCRS), was held at Amberley, Lower Plenty.

The 2015 Family Camp was especially aimed at supporting the families from the Burmese community in Sunshine, who have arrived in Australia during the last three or four years, and whose children are members of the Homework Club operated by ERCRS at the Sunshine Harvester Primary School.

Some thirty participants (with an age range of 18 months to mid-40s) gathered at the Sunshine Harvester Primary School on Monday 28th September, to be met by the ER Camp volunteers, who proceeded to introduce the families to a week of activity, fun, relaxation and enjoyment. The camp was a wonderful opportunity for these families to spend a week experiencing a different environment to normal, and this included sampling new foods, participating in sporting and physical activities that they had not tried before, and entertaining one another in song.

Our thanks as usual go to the energetic volunteers from Edmund Rice Camps who made the experience so memorable for the families, and to the John Wallis Foundation (a branch of the Missionary Sisters of Service), that provided a grant to help fund the camp.

Holiday House:

September 2015, generous couple (Margaret and Warwick Yarnton) contacted us to offer their place to any of ERCRS family from refugee background who would want to spent holiday in a small country town. Margaret and Warwick live on one acre at the edge of Mirboo North and have three spare bedrooms which could easily accommodate a family. They offered to look after them and provided meals, transport and activities including a day trip to local tourist attracts. Through many emails and phone calls ERCRS managed to reach an agreement with the couple, by accepting to nominate a family whenever the couple are happy to host a family.

During January school holiday 2015, Margaret and Warwick invited an African family of refugee background to stay at their place for a few days. January 7th 2016, Br Terry Giles generously drove the family to Mirboo North.

Br Terry observed that the host family was most welcoming, gracious and hospitable. Mrs Mary Dar, her two daughters and a grandson responded gratefully, and a close bond was soon established.

Margaret and Warwick drove the Mary Dar family back to their home in Jacana after three wonderful days. ERCRS is thankful and grateful to Margaret and Warwick for their generosity.

Excursions:

During 2015 Edmund Rice Community & Refugee Services ran a number of excursions for children who are involved in various programs, this provided recreational and educational experiences beyond normal programs. Some of these programs include:

Swimming lessons in association with Life Saving Victoria

During the term one school holidays ERCRS in partnership with Life Saving Victoria (LSV), once again ran swimming lessons for the children and families from the St. Albans program.

As in previous opportunities the children were provided with one week of free lessons that trained them in swimming skills, and how to be safe around water. This is becoming a regular partnership between Life Saving Victoria and ERCRS, and many children have received training in these important life skills. Many of them can now swim more confidently and are aware of water safety.

Mountain Bike Excursion

On Saturday 21st November, 14 young men ventured into the bush land of Plenty Gorge (Greensborough) for a day of Mountain Bike riding. The young men were from the ERCRS Brighter Tomorrow Boys' Mentoring Group. The boys showed tremendous amounts of vigour in their riding, perseverance with the difficult steep hills and care for each other by yelling out to their group "man down" if someone fell.

Mountain Bike riding was a new activity for all the young men. They loved the adventure, they soaked up the skills they were being taught and they embraced the opportunity to be surrounded by nothing but bush land. A small few were lucky enough to ride within 20 meters of a pack of kangaroos – they got a real sense of connection to our local wilderness.

There is no doubt that this brilliant day showcased many symbols of strength and skills that these young men have. Quite fairly the young men finished the activity full of confidence, appreciative of experiencing something different and having further developed the mateship within the group.

Thanks to all volunteers that supported the activity and to Mark Monahan and Andrew Lansdell for helping instruct the activity.

Visit to Overnewton Anglican Community College

Thursday November 19th a group of children from the Sunshine Harvester program visited Overnewton Anglican College in Keilor, to participate in sporting activities as a response to an invitation extended to ERCRS by Overnewton College students and staff.

Elizabeth Diacos plus a number of volunteers accompanied over 20 students to Overnewton in a bus provided by the College. The children participated in a soccer match with some of the middle school students, and followed by a catchup with their tutors at afternoon tea. It was a successful and enjoyable day.

AFL Game Excursion At Etihad Stadium

Sunday 9th August, 2015, members of Brighter Tomorrow Boys Group were invited by AFL officials to be part of the Multicultural round of the AFL. The boys were given free tickets to enjoy a footy game at Etihad Stadium as part of this round. Although many of the boys are still gaining knowledge of AFL football they ended up enjoying the game.

Victoria Futsal Title at Ballarat

Sunday 25th October, the ERCRS Brighter Tomorrow Boys' Group spent a long day in Ballarat competing in the Victoria State Futsal (indoor soccer) titles. 15 boys and 4 adult mentors grouped into two Futsal teams and each team played at least eight games that day. And by the end of the day, as a result of their very positive performances, they were invited to participate in the National competition which was to take place in Sydney during January 2016. Unfortunately they didn't participate at the National due to short notice and lack of funding. However, their main objective of exposing the group to such competition was to build on their team work, confidence and relationship among the boys; this objectives were notably achieved.



Home Club St Albans



Kids Play Club



Mick Malthouse visit Brighter Tomorrow Boys Group



Excursion to Skating Centre in Sunshine



Sunshine Harvester Program

Events

ERCRS Volunteers Annual Dinner 2015

Thursday 10th September was that time of the year when we say ‘thank you’ to all our volunteers for their generous contribution of time, skill and knowledge offered to ERCRS in its ministry of providing learning support to the young people who attend our tutoring sessions.

On the night 33 adult volunteers representing partner schools and general volunteers gathered to celebrate another year of great contribution and achievement. We enjoyed the opportunity to share a meal and wine together. We also acknowledged the achievements and progress of the ERCRS mission over the past twelve months.

Certificates were awarded to three long term volunteers who have been with us for more than five years. The award;

- To Cate Livingston for being with us each Saturday morning session for the past 5 years to tutor secondary and tertiary students of a refugee background.
- To Kate Murray for being part of the ERCRS team for the past 7 years, tutoring high school students.
- To Terry Giles for being with ERCRS as a staff member and tutor since 2004.

The evening was filled with a sense of achievement. Thanks to all those who made the event possible.



Volunteer Annual Dinner

Presentation to Edmund Rice Community & Refugee Services

At the ERCRS Volunteers' Dinner, held on 10th September, ERCRS was able to publically thank all those committed people who had freely given of their time and skill to help tutor young people of a refugee or disadvantaged background. These young people often require tutoring support on a one-to-one basis in order to reinforce and explain what has been taught in class.

Currently ERCRS has some 125 primary students registered over the four sessions that operate each week, and another 62 secondary students receiving learning support in two other sessions offered weekly. Two of the primary learning support sessions are located in Sunshine Harvester Primary School (SHPS), and ERCRS operates these sessions in partnership with the school.

At the Volunteers' Dinner a representative from Sunshine Harvester Primary School presented a painting to ERCRS as a way of acknowledging the contribution that ERCRS had made over three years. As she presented the painting Chris Durbridge, the EAL coordinator at SHPS, explained its significance. The artist, Danny Lewis, is a social worker who works closely with the staff in the school to support disadvantaged children. In the painting he has listed the name of every student of SHPS who has been enrolled in the Homework Club over the three years of operation. We were pleasantly surprised and very grateful to receive such a gift, which will be displayed in our office in St. Albans.



Presentation at Volunteer Dinner

Summary of Learning Support and Tutoring

The following information illustrates the ethnic background and gender breakdown of the participants of the Education Support Programs at the various locations used by ERCRS.

Location: St. Albans: Primary Students

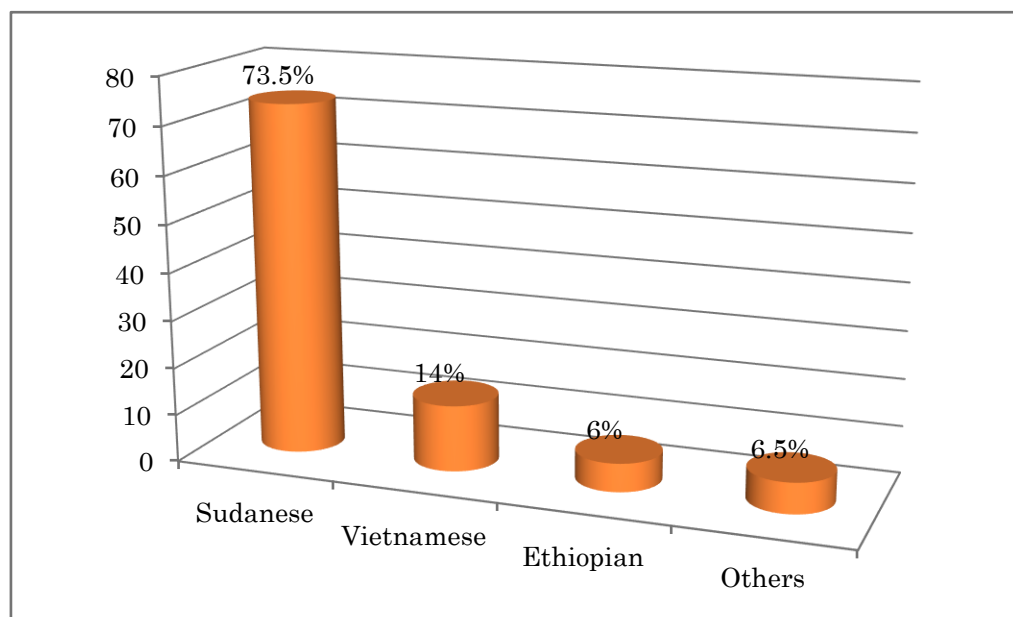


Figure1: Ethnic background of Primary school students attending St Albans

Monday and Wednesday sessions:

- Students come from 9 different primary schools in the Brimbank area
- Primary students of a refugee or disadvantaged background
- Number registered (enrolled) = 76 (40 Girls, 36 Boys)
- Average attendance per week = 33
- Demographic: 73.5% Sudanese, 14% Vietnamese, 6% Ethiopian, 6.5% other

Location: St. Albans: Secondary students, Tuesday Session

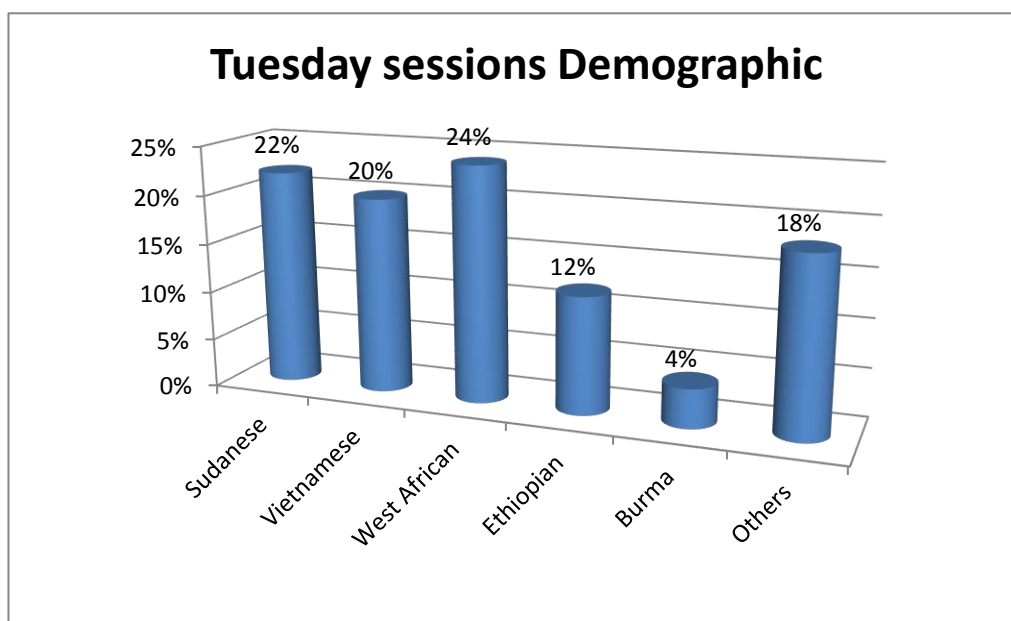


Figure 2: Ethnic background of Secondary students attending St Albans on Tuesdays

Tuesday sessions:

- Secondary students of a refugee or disadvantaged background
- Number registered (enrolled) = 53 (41 Girls, 12 Boys)
- Average attendance per week = 19
- Demographic: 22% Sudanese, 20% Vietnamese, 24% West African (Ivory Coast, Liberia and Sierra Leone), 8% Ethiopian, 4% Burmese, 18% other (India, Pakistan, Macedonia, Sri Lanka, Cambodia)
- Students come from 4 different secondary schools in the Brimbank area.



Br. Frank at Expo,



Brighter Tomorrow Boys at AFL Game

Location: St. Albans: Secondary students, Saturday Session

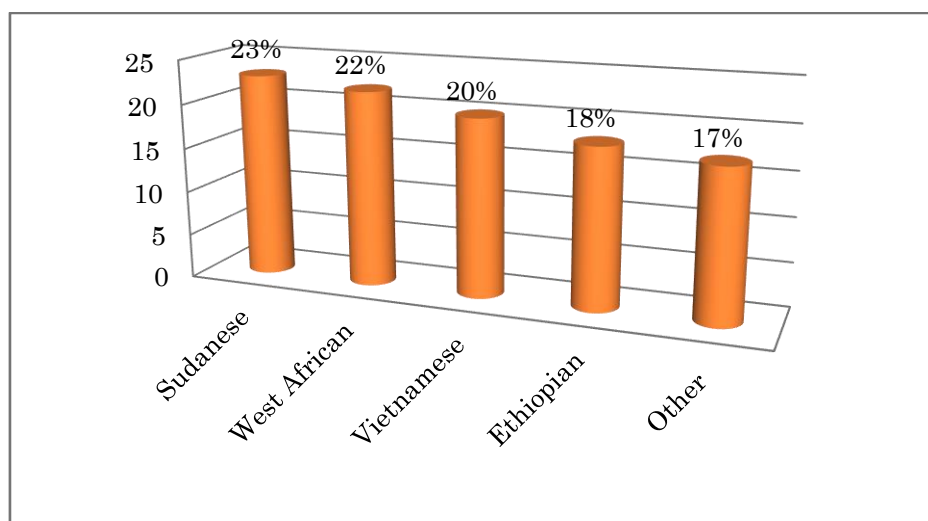


Figure 3: Ethnic background of Secondary and Tertiary students attending St Albans on Saturdays

Saturday sessions:

- Secondary and Tertiary students of a refugee or disadvantaged background
- Number registered (enrolled) = 42
- Average attendance per week = 21

Demographic: 23% Sudanese, 20% Vietnamese, 22% West African (Ivory Coast, Liberia, Sierra Leone), 18% Ethiopian, 17% Other (India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, China)

Location: Sunshine Harvester Primary School: Primary Students

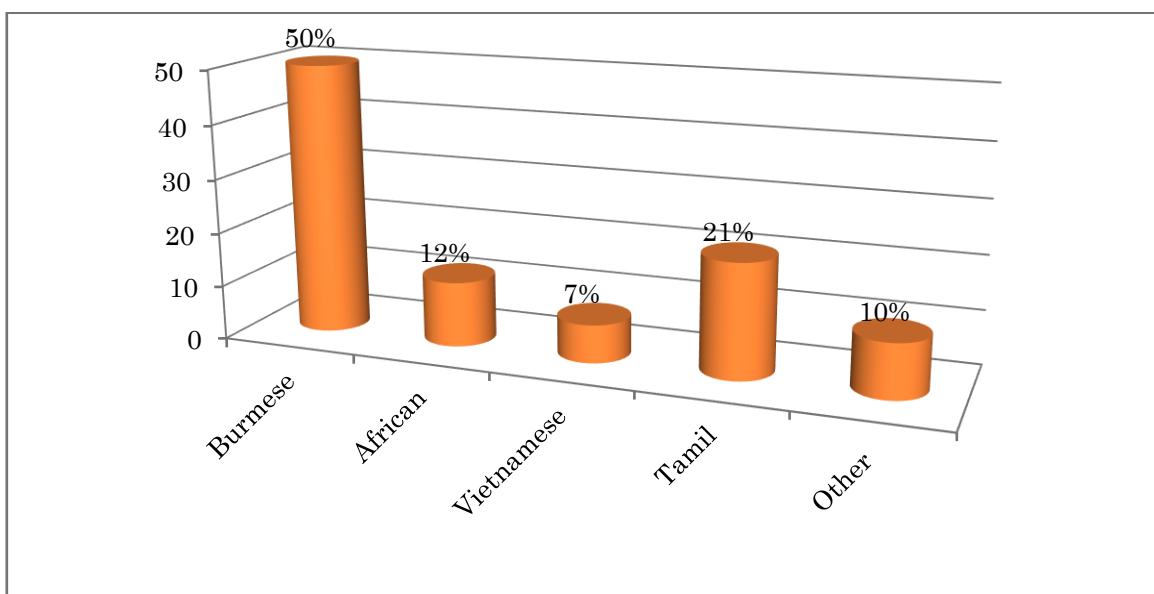


Figure 4: Ethnic background of Primary students attending Sunshine Harvester Primary School Homework Club

Wednesday and Thursday sessions

- Primary students of a refugee or disadvantaged background who attend Sunshine Harvester Primary School
- Number registered (enrolled) = 47 (25 Girls, 22 Boys)
- Average attendance per session = 26
- Demographic: 50% Burmese, 21% Tamil, 12% African, 7% Vietnamese, 10% Other

Learning Support Program Statistics 2015

TERM 1	Avg. Students		Avg. Tutors (peer and Adult)	
Year	2015	2014	2015	2014
Mondays	31	41	22	20
Wednesdays	32	35	36	27
Tuesdays	18	17	4	5
Saturdays	19	17	8	13
Wednesday Harvester	27	NA	17	NA
Thursdays	23	24	23	17
TERM 2				
Mondays	36	28	32	20
Wednesdays	34	22	36	15
Tuesdays	18	17	8	5
Saturdays	23	14	12	12
Wednesday Harvester	32	NA	32	NA
Thursdays	24	31	31	18
TERM 3				
Mondays	27	35	30	23
Wednesdays	29	28	34	22
Tuesdays	20	19	9	7
Saturdays	22	17	14	12
Wednesdays	28	19	31	17
Thursdays	26	30	33	17
TERM 4				
Mondays	27	36	24	17
Wednesdays	27	32	27	17
Tuesdays	16	18	10	8
Saturdays	18	17	15	10
Wednesdays	30	24	25	11
Thursdays	29	30	24	15

Table 1: Av Student & Tutor Attendance in ERCRS Learning support Programs across Brimbank in 2015

Total number of days opened in 2015: 174 (contrast to days open in 2014 of 182)

	Mondays		Tuesdays		Wed St. Albans		Wed Sunshine		Thursdays		Saturdays	
Term	2015	2014	2015	2014	2015	2014	2015	2014	2015	2014	2015	2014
1	5	6	7	8	7	8	6	-	6	7	6	7
2	5	9	7	9	6	9	8	-	8	8	7	8
3	9	9	10	10	10	10	10	5	10	10	8	9
4	6	6	7	7	6	8	7	11	7	11	6	7
Total	25	30	31	34	29	35	31	16	31	36	27	31

Table 2: Number of Days of Operation of ERCRS Learning Support Programs in Brimbank 2015

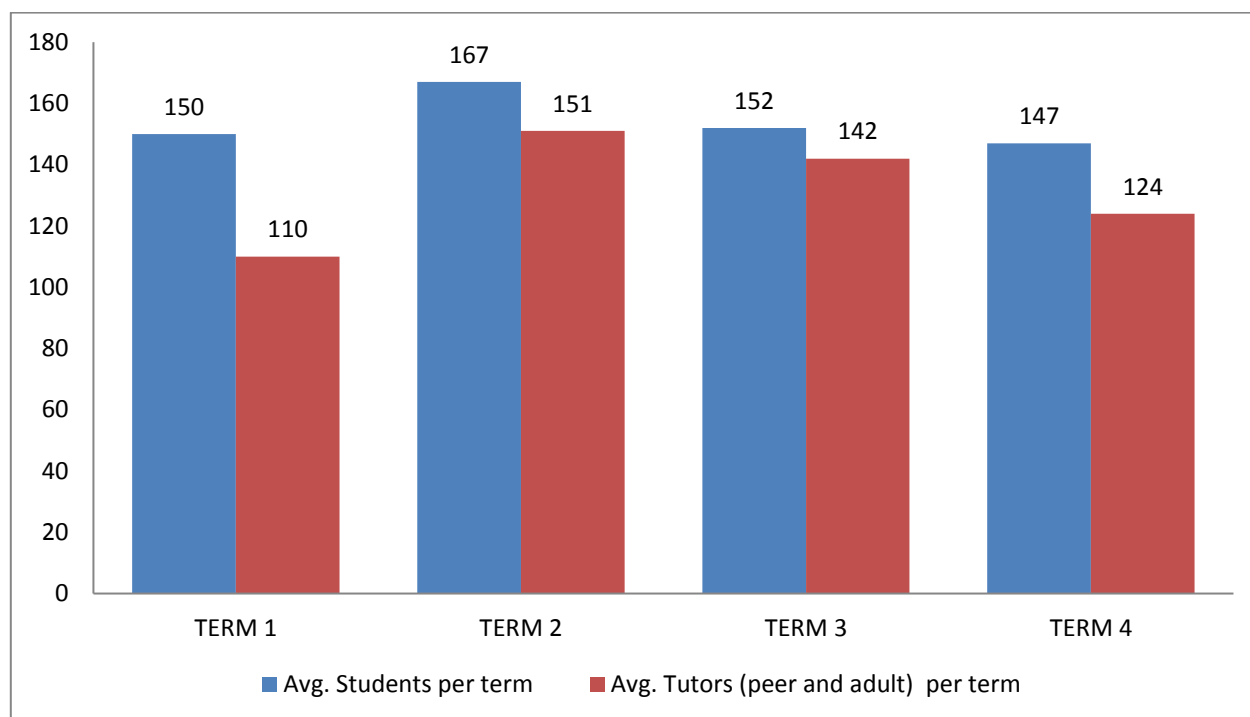


Table 3: Student to Tutor Ratio in ERCRS Learning support Programs across Brimbank in 2015 by Term

Volunteer Tutors

Adult Tutors

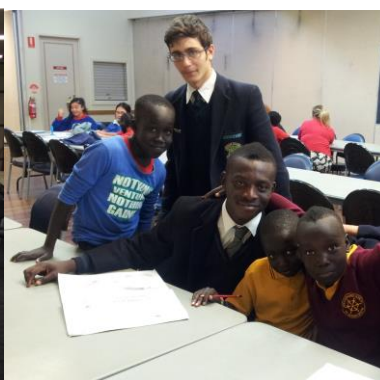
For a Learning Support / Tutoring program to be effective, consistent and safe, it not only must have proper protocols, sure guidelines and tight organisation, but must also be able to attract a skilled network of willing tutors. Edmund Rice Services is fortunate in being well served over the years by a strong network of volunteer tutors who have proven to be reliable, consistent and committed to the students who seek their guidance.

An essential core of these volunteers are themselves past or present teachers, well versed in the rigours of academic studies. A significant number are university students who are very much up to date with current learning and research methodology in a variety of subject areas. Yet others are adults with a wide range of backgrounds and experience who are keen to assist young people who often require someone patient and trustworthy to guide them one to one with their studies, at a pace that suits.

Many of our volunteers have been with Edmund Rice Services for several years now. They have built up a solid core of institutional knowledge about our service, and have also fine-tuned their skills in tutoring students of a CALD background. The students whom they tutor actively look forward to their presence at the learning sessions, realising that these adults bring with them not only sound knowledge in various subject areas and a fund of experience, but also a sense of humour and a gentle, encouraging approach to learning. Edmund Rice Services is particularly blessed to have such dedicated people involved in its programs.



St Columba's Girls at St Albans Homework Club



St Albans Homework Club



St Albans Homework Club

Peer Tutors

ERCRC is very grateful for the dedicated secondary schools that assist us in our ministry by providing senior students to act as tutors with the primary school students who need help in general literacy and numeracy. Some of these schools travel significant distances to transport their student volunteers, and it is often inspirational to witness the growth that occurs on both sides, students and tutors, through shared effort and positive encouraging relationships. The secondary schools that provided senior students as volunteer tutors to the Learning Support sessions in 2015 were:

Ave Maria College, Aberfeldie

Braybrook Secondary College, Braybrook

Caroline Chisholm Catholic College, Braybrook

Catholic Regional College, Sydenham

Loyola College, Watsonia

Mt. St. Joseph's Girls' College, Altona

Overnewton Anglican College, Keilor

Parade College, Bundoora

Penleigh & Essendon Grammar School, Moonee Ponds

St. Bernard's College, Essendon

St. Columba's College, Essendon

St. Patrick's College, Ballarat

St. Kevin's College, Toorak

For the students from these colleges who agree to act as tutors we ask them to commit to attending five Learning Support sessions so that the children whom they tutor may have the chance of building an effective learning relationship with them. The large majority of these college tutors are very loyal to this commitment. Several of the tutors have in fact shown commitment well beyond what may be expected.

Tutor Journals

In order to understand student and peer tutor learning, we ask the peer tutors to record their impressions of their experience at the end of each session. The Tutor Journal allows us to track some of the learning of the students and peers tutors over the course of the term.

Here are some examples of what peer tutors have written in their Journals.

"The 5 week program worked really well as I developed strong, relationships with the kids. Overall it was a very memorable experience."

"To be honest I didn't think I would be able to help that much but, I think I gained a lot out of this, I was able to teach it was great."

"I really liked the 5 week commitment as it gave a really great experience. I built up a relationship with the children."

"The overall experience has been extremely personally rewarding, I'm not just saying but I have gained a new level of culture awareness, and great respect and empathy for the students."

"It was very organized it was a great way for the kids to learn, and interact with others outside of school. It also teaches us more about different cultures from the student."

"I loved the whole experience and the tutor side of me doesn't want to leave. I don't want to leave!"

"I really enjoyed being a tutor as it was a great chance to form a bond with students. It was challenging at times but overall a great experience."

"The overall experience as a homework club tutor was very positive. Especially as a teenager it was an experience that was particular new for me, and I valued it deeply

working with individuals, and creating a unique bond with them was rewarding."

"I think that everybody involved in this is amazing, and couldn't possibly have enough praise. On behalf of the world, thank you."

"I think it's an excellent program and really helps the students. The fruit, snacks and juice, are a really good idea to keep the students focussed."

"At my time with the homework club, I had a fun and interesting time. Watching a child grow every week is truly satisfying sight. But not only that, I also had so much fun."

"The experience was amazing, I got to see how I worked with children, the program was pretty well organised I wouldn't change anything."

"The homework club experience was intimately challenging, demanding and occasionally stressful, but it's important to keep the larger goal focused and think of the long term. So while tutoring sometimes can be these things, it's over ridiculously rewarding and valuable to yourself and those around you. "

"This was a great experience. I really enjoyed meeting the kids and helping them with their school work. I enjoyed talking to the kids about things other than work such as interest. I also enjoyed and was surprised when kids I wasn't tutoring came up to me and started talking to me."

Financial Report

Statement of Income and Expenditure For 12 Months Ended 31st December 2015

	Total \$
<i>Income \$</i>	
Donations	16,081
Grants	22,000
Program Income -	1,374
Province Support – Trustees of the Christian Brothers	29,616
ERFA Support	48,000
	<u>117,071</u>
<i>Direct Activities Costs</i>	
Program costs -	14,804
	<u>14,804</u>
<i>Direct Operating Surplus / (Deficit)</i>	<u>102,267</u>
<i>General Operating Costs</i>	
Computer Hardware & Software	90
Computer – Costs	1,660
Postage & Courier Costs	270
General	77
Depreciation	1910
Hospitality	1,402
Meeting Expenditure	100
Printing, Stat & Office Supplies	1,023
Professional Development	216
Rental of Premises	5,400
Repairs & Maintenance	90
Resources	23
Subscriptions & Memberships	219
Telephone	2,334
	<u>14,613</u>
<i>Staffing Costs</i>	
Salaries - Staff	84,339
Salaries - Superannuation	7,658
Salaries – Leave Entitlements	(6113)
Workers Compensation Insurance	1,769
	<u>87,654</u>
<i>Total General & Staffing Costs</i>	<u>102,267</u>
<i>OPERATING SURPLUS/ (DEFICIT)</i>	<u>0.00</u>

Grants and Donations

Grants

ERCRS was privileged to receive the following grants and donations during 2015:

Grants Giver	Amount	What for
Australia Communities Foundation (ACF) (CMY as broker)	\$20,000 (excl. GST)	Financial Support of Sunshine Harvester Project -Program Coord. (0.4) -Learning Resources -Food for children
Victoria Multicultural Commission (VMC)	\$20,900 (Incl. GST)	Boys Mentoring Program -Mentoring Coord. (0.3) -Catering/refreshments -Travel Costs -Activities
Brimbank City Council Community Grants	\$5,000	Boys Mentoring Program -Activities Camp cost
Minter Ellison Lawyers	\$5,000	Boys Mentoring -Activities -Coaching -Equipment's
John Wallis Foundation	\$2,000	-ER Family Camp for Sunshine Harvester Burmese Community
ERFA	\$48,000	Support of programs
Trustees of Christian Brothers	\$29,616	Support of programs

Donations

ERCRS is very grateful for the generous financial and in-kind donations received from the following supporters:

St. Patrick's College, Ballarat
Caroline Chisholm Catholic College, Braybrook
St. Columba's College, Essendon
Catholic Regional College, St. Albans
St. Bernard's College, Essendon
Overnewton Anglican College, Keilor
Parade College, Bundoora
Second Bite Food Providers

Governance

ERCRS Board Members

The Board Members in 2015 were:

1. Dr. Denise Goodwin (Chair)
DipT (SCV-ICE), BEd (Phillip),
GradCertRE (ACU), GradDipRE
(ACU), MA (Theol) (ACU), PhD
(ACU)
2. Br. Frank Perkins (Director)
Diploma of Teaching
BSc. (University of Canterbury)
3. Mr. John McKenna
BA(Monash), BEd(Melb), Grad.
Dip.Ed. Admin, TPTC
4. Ms. Liz Kofoed
BA, BSc, J.D, A.MUS.A
5. Mr. Moses Lado BA (VU),
BCom (Kumba Uni)
6. Ms. Dona Cayetana
PHD Candidate, Melbourne
University
7. Br. Trevor Gibbons
BSc (Melb) Dip Ed
8. Deacon George Piech Meat
BTheo, Melbourne University of
Divinity
9. Mr. Biong Biong (Program
Coordinator; non-voting
member) BCom Econ. (Griffith),
MA-FinBan(Swinburne)

Role of the Board

The Board is the governance arm of Edmund Rice Community & Refugee Services, and is responsible for ensuring the well-ordered operation of the services offered by ERCRS, particularly the tutoring and learning support programs.

Particular functions of the Board include:

- Planning and approving the programs offered
- Writing and approving policies
- Drawing up, approving an annual budget
- Monitoring income and expenditure throughout the year, in line with the budget
- Applying for and acquitting Grants
- Receiving and answering correspondence
- Performance appraisals of staff
- Advertising for, interviewing and appointing new staff

Composition

- This Board is composed of up to 8 voting members and 1 non-voting member.
- Board representation is aimed at ensuring gender balance as well as striving to represent the different groups that are part of the ERCRS fabric.
- Four sub-committees of the Board operated throughout the year. These sub-committees were : Executive, Policy, Finance, and Grants

Staffing at ERCRS

The following were staff members of Edmund Rice Community & Refugee Services during 2015:

- Br. Frank Perkins - Director
- Mr. Biong Deng Biong - Program Coordinator
- Ms. Elizabeth Diacos - Assistant Program Coordinator
- Ms. Asunta Deng - Community Support Worker
- Br. Terry Giles - Office Administration and Registrar
- Br. Trevor Gibbons - Information Technology Coordinator

Acknowledgements

We gratefully acknowledge the support of the following organisations:

1. Oceania Province of the Christian Brothers
2. Centre for Multicultural Youth
3. Catholic Regional College, St. Albans
4. Melbourne Victory Football Club
5. Good Shepherd Youth & Family Service
6. Edmund Rice Camps Victoria
7. Edmund Rice Centre, Amberley
8. Second Bite food providers
9. Life Saving Victoria
10. Lander & Rogers Lawyers
11. Brimbank Youth Services
12. St. Albans/Keilor Schools Network

We gratefully acknowledge the support of the following schools:

- St. Patrick's College
- Penleigh and Essendon Grammar School
- St. Columba's College
- Catholic Regional College, St. Albans
- St. Bernard's College
- Braybrook Secondary College
- Caroline Chisholm Catholic College
- Ave Maria College
- Mount St. Joseph Girls' College
- Parade College
- Overnewton Anglican College
- St. Kevin's College
- Loyola College, Watsonia

Thank you for being part of our journey



Edmund Rice
Community
& Refugee
Services

Edmund Rice Community & Refugee Services

Address: 354 Main Rd West, St Albans, Vic 3021

Phone: 03 9366 6436

Website: <http://www.ercrs.com.au>

<http://www.Facebook.com/edmundrice>