



In the spirit of Edmund Rice, ERCRS seeks 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 the year.

Force Behind Edmund Rice Community and Refugee Services

Biong Biong — ERCRS Program Coordinator

Please join me in acknowledging these great gentlemen, Br. Trevor Gibbons, Br. Terry Giles and Br. John McKean who would stop at nothing in giving their service to the needy. In our case at ERCRS St Albans we are grateful and privileged to have them supporting our service. Quoting Director of programme Br. Jim D'Arcy, "These three gentlemen run a military schedule in supporting ERCRS."

- ♦ **Br Terry Giles** has been engaged with ERCRS activities for many years after working in cross cultural missions. He looks after registration and learning support materials. He attends five tutoring sessions each week and checks attendance as well as tutoring.
- ♦ **Br Trevor Gibbons** came from many years of teaching senior science in different countries. He joined ERCRS in early 2014. He has brought so much experience to our work. As well as being a tutor, Trevor looks after laptops and internet. He also attends five tutoring sessions each week.
- ♦ **Br John McKean** has been with ERCRS for many years and looks after hospitality. He attends the primary homework help sessions every Monday and Wednesday.



*Time to go home after a successful homework session!
Trevor (left), Terry (middle) and John (right)*

If the world was filled by people like them, kindness, benevolence and compassion would have been the only news trending. Being a program coordinator, I understand that it would be impossible to run ERCRS activities without them. And for that, I thank them abundantly for their selfless giving and support.

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Reflection from Graduate of ERCRS Brighter Tomorrow Boys' Group

16 years old Zalalem is originally from Ethiopia. He migrated to Australia with his parents six years ago. Last years he became one of the first students to join Brighter Tomorrow Boys Mentoring program. Zalalem did very well within the group. He demonstrated leadership quality and self-drive. After he graduated from the program, Zalalem is start volunteering with Brighter Tomorrow as assistance Coach. Below is his reflection:



“Through my volunteering at Edmund Rice Refugee Services ‘Brighter Tomorrow Boys’, which has a partnership with Melbourne Victory Football Club, a coordinator named Kaitlyn Krahe helped me arrange a week’s work experience at Melbourne Victory at AAMI Park. During the week of work experience at Melbourne Victory, I got the opportunity to meet not only professional football players and coaches, but also professionals in a wide range of roles. These ranged from executives and financial and administrative individuals, through to secretarial employees and various managers of different club positions. While at work there, I learnt about the roles and qualities that each person brought to the club. I also came to appreciate how many different types of professions are essential to running a high level football club like Melbourne Victory. As an example of a task I was given, I helped to find a rental house for a newly contracted international player named Alan Baro. To do this I started by doing a search online following the guidelines I was given. In my short time there, I had many positive experiences, but the stand-out favourite was learning from the financial manager about how the club’s money is organised. The most important lesson regarding money flow was the point made that to run a profitable company, the key is to ensure that overall income is higher than gross expenditure. It was an enormously educational experience, and I was privileged to have been given this opportunity to be involved with so many talented and friendly individuals.

For my second work experience, I worked at Myer Melbourne in the CBD. I was positioned in Men’s and Youth’s formal wear, and undertook tasks such as direct customer service and interaction, movement of stock, as well as intricate training on how to take suit and shirt measurements. Over the course of the week, my inbuilt skills were brought to my attention, these included fast and efficient working and taking detailed instructions. I was recommended to apply for a Christmas casual position by my team leader due to my excellent performance, and I have recently submitted my application. Overall this was an amazing experience that I look forward to building on.”

ERCRS wish him the very best in the years to come.

Celebrating 80 Years!

Jim Darcy — ERCRS Director



Not often does it happen, but when it does it is a cause for great celebration. Last Wednesday at a special lunch, the ERCRS St Alban’s staff marked the occasion of the 80th birthday of one of our staff: Br Trevor Gibbons. The lunch was the vehicle to not only thank Trevor for his ever-faithful commitment to our programs, but also to acknowledge his many years of generous work with Aboriginal students in Broome, his work in the Cook Islands, Yambio and in PNG. A missionary for most of his teaching life, Trevor has a great love for life revealing itself in his passion for camping, cycling, gym work-outs and his “scientist mind” that keeps him open to new ideas and discoveries. But it is his genuine interest in people- the staff, students and volunteers that we at St Albans/Sunshine have come to know and appreciate Trevor the best.

Well done and thanks, Trevor!

ERCRS Volunteer and Student Made Runner Up at MY Education Award

Biong Biong — ERCRS Program Coordinator

Please join me in congratulating **Zalalem Yigletu** (ERCRS Tutoring and Mentoring Students) and **Aisha Alawad** (ERCRS volunteer primary Tutor) for distinction and outstanding contribution made in their respective field. They both were shortlisted and became runner-up for an outstanding secondary student of the year and an outstanding Volunteer Tutor respectively at My Education Award last Thursday.

CMY's MY Education of Multicultural Youth Education Awards recognise excellence and showcase outstanding contributions made by organisations, students, schools and out-of-school hours learning support programs (OSHLP) throughout Victoria.

Zalalem was recognised for demonstrating a willingness to work hard to achieve his goals and comes to biweekly sessions without exception. He is always willing to assist his peer if he can and is a great role model to other students in homework club. He is constantly striving to improve and engages in a variety of academic and extracurricular programs in his community. His commitment, frequent demonstration of initiative and academic curiosity ensures he always gets the most out of the sessions he attends. Thanks to Kaitlyn (ERCRS Mentoring Coordinator) for nominating him.

Similarly, Aisha a peer tutor was recognised for her regular attendance at Sunshine Harvester Homework Club each week of school term since the beginning of 2015. She has provided academic and homework support to a small group of students with whom she has developed a very good rapport. Aisha supports and enables them to confidently engage in their learning, improving outcomes. In addition, as a peer support leader at Braybrook, Aisha assists with the students' transition to high school. Thank to Erin (ERCRS Sunshine Harvester Coordinator) for nominating her.

The awards were presented by Hon. James Merlino, Deputy Premier of Victoria and Minister for Education (in the photos below).

This will not be the first time ERCRS nominees had won such awards. Last year two primary school students from ERCRS Homework Club at Sunshine Harvester won first place for being outstanding primary school students. However, each nominee has their own unique merits, therefore these two undoubtedly deserve this award and ERCRS congratulates them both for job well done.

Zalalem (left) and Aisha (right) with Hon. James Merlino



Excursion to Wyndham Leisure and Aquatic Centre

Nikki Gholizadeh — ERCRS Homework Club Volunteer

On Tuesday the 19th of September, a number of enthusiastic volunteers (myself included) assisted staff and Primary Homework club students with an exciting excursion to the Wyndham Leisure and Aquatic Centre. With an array of different pools, big waterslides, and a pool playground, students were presented with countless opportunities to engage in fun activities. Whether they were making friends with regular patrons or pushing their boundaries in attempting the scary waterslides, all the students made the most of this enjoyable opportunity and were an absolute pleasure to not only look after but to also be around. The fun and games were topped off with a well-earned feed provided by the lovely staff (ensuring there was enough for seconds and thirds for the hungry students!) and was a great way of kicking off the school holidays!



Spring Family Camp

Karen Vuong — ERCRS Media Coordinator

From the 25th-30th of September, 25 students, 4 families and 29 volunteers attended the annual Spring Family Camp hosted by Edmund Rice Camps (ERC) in association with ERCRS.

All those involved had a brilliant time challenging themselves in a variety of physical activities, including bike riding, swimming lessons at Watermarc and Latitude. In particular, the “Pat and Chat” session gave an opportunity for families to safely engage with trained dogs. It aimed to build confidence around dogs in the community and showed students the soft and playful side of our furry friends! When they were not outside soaking up the lovely Spring sunshine, the families enjoyed shopping and preparing healthy cultural meals.

During their stay, the participants were warmly received by the camp staff who demonstrated exemplary leadership and organisation in the running of the fun and enjoyable camp. Many thanks to the volunteers at ERC who made the experience memorable for the students and their families.



Sunshine Harvester Students at Animal Land Children's Farm

Erin Byrne-Gurung — ERCRS Sunshine Harvester Coordinator

During the Term 3 school holidays, staff of ERCRS took 10 students from Sunshine Harvester Primary School to Animal Land Children's Farm at Diggers Rest. We were fortunate to have lovely weather for the day, and the children were able to enjoy a range of outdoor and farming activities. We began with pony rides around a paddock before heading to the barn to milk a cow! We then wandered past the ducks to the animal nursery, where students held two-day-old chicks, and baby rabbits, guinea pigs and ducks. We also toured the farm in a trailer attached to a tractor to hand-feed goats and sheep, before enjoying a gourmet lunch provided by Sunshine Harvester Program Assistant, Anna.



It was a wonderful opportunity for children to experience the farm, and to spend time socialising with each other. Some children also overcame nervousness and hesitation to pat and feed the animals, and enjoyed playing with people who they might not normally at school.



Drumming Up Business at ERCRS

Trevor Gibbons — ERCRS Staff Member

On Monday 14th November, the Homework Programs at St Albans and Sunshine Harvester School finished the year in great style with workshops by the African Dance and Drumming Company "African Star".

At St Albans on Monday, Mohamed Camara from Guinea produced some forty African drums (tzembe) and guided the students through forty minutes of lively and noisy rhythms. Tempo changed as students watched his hands for guidance through a range of beats. Mohamed performed a second workshop for the Wednesday program and students from St Columba's joined the session – a change from one to one tutoring. It was hypnotic. This was followed by farewell and treats.



Over at Sunshine Harvester Primary on both Wednesday and Thursday, the after school gathering began with a short party. Then Shaba from Ghana led us in a similar experience. He had a different style but it was just as lively (and noisy).

ERCRS Tutoring Student Graduated Year 12 with Excellence

Biong Biong — ERCRS Program Coordinator

One of the main aims of ERCRS is to unlock the potentials of young people through education so they can excel in their future lives. Below is a testimony from Year 12 student, Binita Jalloh, who was farewelled at her school (Sunshine Secondary College) with an award of academic excellence.

“My name is Binita Jalloh and I am 17 years of age and I attend Sunshine Secondary College. I graduated on the 19th of October 2016. Though I currently have my exams coming up this week, I may feel scared, anxious and nervous... I believe that I have studied hard enough in order to receive my desired ATAR score.

I am extremely proud of myself and my achievement for the past two years. I have finally made it and I thank god, my parents, teachers/staff and Edmund Rice tutoring program that I have been attending for the past two years. They have greatly equipped me with the necessary resources that I needed, along with providing great, caring and good quality service. I attend Edmund Rice tutoring sessions every Tuesdays and Saturdays and they have provided great service for me by helping me with all of my subjects along with providing small snacks and tips on how to further my education. In addition to this, I did lots of studying at home as well had discussion groups with the other students because a great way to learn and understand a topic is by discussing it with others and teaching those who may not understand the topic.

I am reasonable happy with my grades so far, as I have studied hard in every single subject. However, my favourite subjects are Business Management, Economics, History and English. Maths is not my forte.

During my graduation this week, I had the privileged of doing a speech describing my journey from the North campus to the senior campus. I was also honoured and congratulated with an Academic Excellence Award for ‘Business and Social Science Award’. When my named was announced, I had a shocked expression on my face. However, hard work and determination most definitely pays off. I am very excited and happy to finally graduate because I cannot wait to start University. My goal is to get accepted into a university that either offers Bachelor of Business and Arts or Bachelor of Marketing (management) applied because I wish to pursue a career in business and possibly start my own business one day.”

ERCRS congratulate Binita and wish her all the best in her journey of success ahead.



ERCRS Tutoring Students in Debating Success

Biong Biong — ERCRS Program Coordinator

Recently two of our regulars in the St Alban's tutoring program represented their school in a Year 11 inter-school debate. Chosen to represent St Albans Secondary School, Karman Bhinder (Indian) and Kanzbara Rajput (Pakistan) from non-English speaking backgrounds were part of a three person debate which won the contest taking the affirmative for “Uber should not be legalised.”

Such news and regular reports of high marks in student tests are a tribute to our team of voluntary tutors here at St. Albans.

Brighter Tomorrow Boys' Group on Community Radio

Kaitlyn Krahe — ERCRS Boys' Mentoring Program Coordinator

On Saturday the 18th of June, members of the ERCRS Brighter Tomorrow Boys Mentoring Group travelled to RMIT University and SYN Radio Studios to participate in the Youth And Loud Radio Programme. SYN empowers young people to be creators of media and the Youth And Loud segment is a fantastic initiative which aims to give youth from different communities a platform on which they can express their own voices to the about issues which matter most to them.

We had the opportunity to discuss a wide variety of topics ranging from dreams and passions for the future, the positive impact of soccer and sport and challenges facing young people today. It was an awesome experience to have some fun and contribute to the important dialogue around the diverse experiences of young people.

Youth And Loud airs every Monday night from 8-9pm on SYN 90.7fm. ERCRS would like to thank Peter Salvador and SYN Radio for facilitating this great opportunity.



Brighter Tomorrow Boys' Group Term 4 Activities

Kaitlyn Krahe — ERCRS Boys' Mentoring Program Coordinator

- ♦ **Mixed Martial Arts and Self Defence:** It has been a new learning experience where the mentees have had the opportunity to acquire new practical skills and further their personal development in areas such as self-discipline, confidence and respect.
- ♦ **Melbourne Victory Training Sessions** (with Thomy Newbery): The skill-focused sessions continue to be a highlight of the program and it is evident that the rapport and trust between Thomy and the mentees is mutually beneficial. Thomy took the initiative to order a set of Melbourne Victory soccer uniforms for the boys to wear when they play as a team together which was a very kind gesture and has helped consolidate the group to feel professional. He also volunteered to coach the group on the 6th of November at the Annual Futsal Tournament in Ballarat. Two teams were entered, and we progressed to the finals before eventually being knocked out. The entire group showed respect for each other, the coaches other players and referees throughout the day at Ballarat Futsal Centre.
- ♦ **Weekend camp at the Amberley Edmund Rice Centre:** During the weekend after the first week of Term 4, the group participated in a diverse range of outdoor, practical activities which were designed to put their decision making, team building and leadership skills to the test, as well as continue to build a sense of trust and support throughout the group. Challenging activities such as canoeing was interspersed with relaxing, fun activities such as campfire building and marshmallow roasting.



Thank You...

To the Christian Brothers' Oceania Province and the ERCRS Board for their leadership and unwavering support in all areas of our work.

To the Edmund Rice Foundation Australia (ERFA), St. Patrick's College Ballarat, Caroline Chisholm Catholic College, Minter Ellison Lawyers, Brimbank City Council, Department of Premier & Cabinet Affairs (Victorian Multicultural Commission), Australian Communities Foundation (ACF), the Stan Willis Trust and John Wallis Foundation, for their committed financial support of programs in our ministry.

To the volunteers, students and families that make up the ERCRS community, who are making connections, engaging in learning and building friendships on the ground.

To our students and tutor-providing schools for their ongoing commitment, passion and support.

We would also like to thank the staff at Edmund Rice Camps Victoria, Melbourne Victory Soccer Club, Good Shepherd Youth and Family Service, the Brimbank City Council, Centre for Multicultural Youth (CMY), Brotherhood of St Laurence (BSL) and Catholic Regional College St Albans for their ongoing support.

Volunteer Tutors Wanted

- We are currently looking for enthusiastic, patient and committed individuals to provide one-on-one homework support & tutoring to primary and secondary students of a disadvantaged or refugee background. Our volunteer tutors come from all walks of life to assist young people in improving their literacy, numeracy and general study skills.
- **Primary Homework Clubs:**
Mondays and Wednesdays at the Errington Community Centre, Princess St, St Albans, from 3:15-5:15pm. Wednesdays & Thursdays from 3:30-5:00pm at Sunshine Harvester Primary School, Sunshine.
- **Secondary Tutoring:**
Tuesdays at the Errington Community Centre, Hall 2, St. Albans from 3:30-5:15pm, and Saturday mornings in the library at the Catholic Regional College, St Albans, Cnr Theodore and Winifred Sts, from 10:30am-12:15pm.

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On behalf of the
Stan Willis Trust