



ERCRS is a ministry of the Christian Brothers that provides free learning support, tuition and a range of recreational services to students of a disadvantaged or refugee background in the Brimbank area of Melbourne.

Learning Programs



Director's update

by Br. Frank Perkins

As 2015 comes to a close, ERCRS, like many organisations with a similar ethos, focuses time and energy in reviewing the way we operate, updating and fine-tuning our procedures and protocols.

It can sometimes be challenging to make these things a priority in the midst of the activity and busy-ness which surrounds the day-to-day learning support sessions. However, if the basic building blocks and foundations are well cared for, the structure will develop along safe and reliable lines.

Our goal at ERCRS is to provide quality learning support and mentoring for young people, who for one reason or another have had a disrupted educational journey and who require a little extra help to enable them to develop their talents and skills.

We are only able to move towards this goal because of the wonderful support we receive from our generous volunteers. These dedicated people (a mixture of adults and senior secondary students) are able to bring out the best in the young people they support by being a welcoming presence and by forming respectful, caring and encouraging relationships with the students they tutor. Many of the volunteers acknowledge that it is very much an experience of mutual learning and understanding.

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Family Camp

By Frank Perkins



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. This year's 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. As usual 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.

End of year activity days (St. Albans and Sunshine)

By Elizabeth Diacos

The last day of Homework Club at the Errington Centre was a hot afternoon with ice blocks, chunks of chilled, juicy watermelon, pizzas and lots of fun and games. We were joined by some friends from Edmund Rice Camps and peer tutors from St Bernard's and St Columba's, who helped run activities for the students including soccer, temporary tattoos and fingernail painting. We were treated to a magic performance and face painting.

At the end of the event, the graduating Grade 6 students were given an Education pack kindly donated by the Brotherhood of St Laurence. The packs contained stationery, a USB stick and other requisites that will help them to be well prepared for their Secondary schooling.



Sunshine Harvester Primary School's party was held in the school hall where two performers entertained us with contact juggling, balloon twisting and a twirling Toroflux, and 1.5 hours of non-stop face-painting by volunteers Katerina and Meg.

Food kept on appearing with party pies, sausage rolls and hundreds of cupcakes and fairy bread. Adult tutors, peer tutors from Mount St Joseph's Girls College, Loyola College and Braybrook College as well as some ER Camp volunteers, came along to join in the fun and we were joined by the school after-hours care students. We said goodbye to the Grade 6 students and everyone went home on a sugary high.

Child Protection and Reporting Training

To uphold our values of working with children and by complying with the requirements of the Edmund Rice Network, ERCRS has continued with sound procedures by making sure tutors are trained in this vital area of child needs and care.

On the 20th September a successful training session was completed by 20 tutors. ERCRS is proud and confident that students will be well looked after by these experienced tutors, who not only share their knowledge and skills with them but also make sure that they are okay.

ERCRS thanks all volunteers who made time to attend this very important training.



ERCRS thanks Mark Monahan for offering his time and skills to provide this vital training.

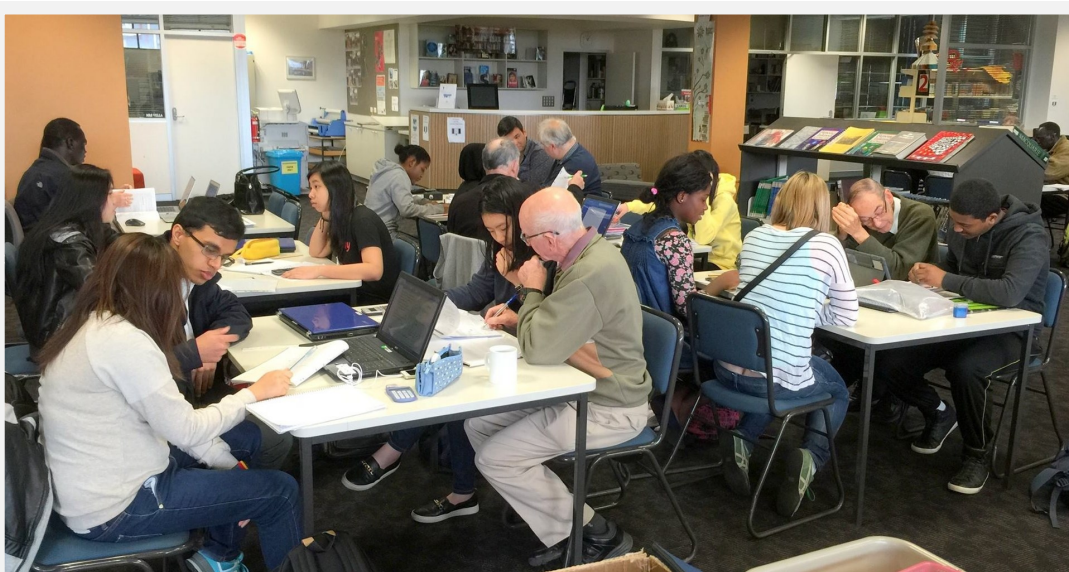
On my experience as a tutor with CRCRS

By Trevor Gibbons

I come from a background of over fifty years teaching senior science, with occasional classes in mathematics. Melbourne University prepared me well for this and I have always enjoyed it. When the time came to retire from the classroom, what better than to continue my love of teaching by offering as a tutor of secondary students at CRCRS. I recent years I taught in Sudan, PNG and in a Maori school in New Zealand – all a good preparation for the mix of cultures in the students who come after school or Saturday morning for two hours of help with homework in St Albans.

I join a team of volunteers with various skills – English, history, science, legal studies and more – a mix young University students and retired people keen “to make a difference”. Mixing with them keeps me young at heart. The students give up free time, so they are keen. Where possible it is one to one and we

build a relationship which develops trust. I get a real boost out of reports back of good marks in assignments and tests. With students struggling with English I sometimes think the marks gained should be shared with the tutors! I have a group of three or four who regularly seek me out – a real boost for someone not wanting to face “retirement”!



Brighter Tomorrow Boys' Group

Edmund Rice Community & Refugee Services is excited to announce that, we have launched a young men's mentoring program called Brighter Tomorrow Boys' Group. This program began on 16th July in St. Albans.

The Brighter Tomorrow Boys' Group operates as a partnership between Edmund Rice Community & Refugee Services, the Edmund Rice Community Partnerships and a number of local schools.

The Group aims to provide young people a group platform in which they are able to experience success and build self-esteem. This is expected to 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 an English as Second Language background, are disadvantaged or are at-risk of becoming disengaged from the education system.

The Group initially ran a 4-week pilot program based around soccer clinics in order to attract participants. The group meets every Thursday night at Errington Community Centre from 3:30pm to 5:30pm. Each session consists 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 group partnered with a number of local high schools who in consultation with teachers, recommend students. Some students are selected from existing attendees of the Edmund Rice Tutoring Centre. Approximately 20 participants are selected for duration of 6 months.

After 4 weeks of the pilot program, following extensive consultations and evaluation, this project was confirmed to be meeting the goals intended and therefore needed to continue.

Program have then been running in the same sitting as pilot program. Many activities which include attending AFL games, Futsal competition, Mount biking and many more where conducted. Guest Speakers too where also hosted. We consider this program be a success story.

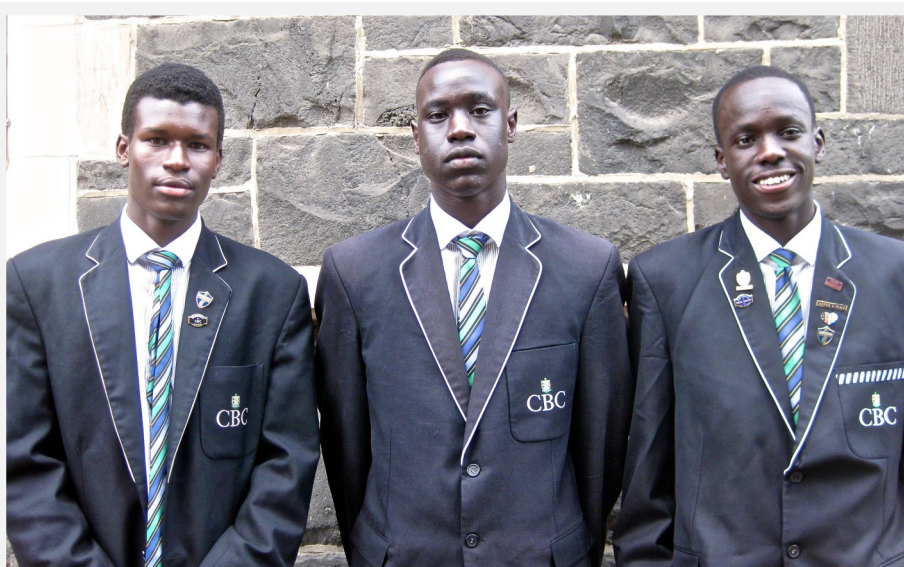


ERCRS past Students

By Terry Giles

Three young men along with their year 12 classmates celebrated the completion of secondary education at CBC St Kilda with a valedictory mass and dinner. Soon after their arrival in Australia as refugees from Sudan they were enrolled at the Edmund Rice Community & Refugee Service at St. Albans whilst in primary school, then to CBC where they continued to flourish.

Anei (on the right in picture) who was College Captain this year was honoured with five prizes. Anei is now with some classmates in India working in a deprived village sister school of CBC. We wish Anei Thou success in his tertiary studies. The photo from left shows Malut Adut, Anandat Thou and Anei Thou.



Annual Volunteers' Dinner 2015

ERCRS Annual Volunteers' 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 also awarded to three long term volunteers who have been with us for more than five years. And so, three volunteers were awarded certificates as follows:

- 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.

Presentation to Edmund Rice Community & Refugee Services

Frank Perkins, ERCRS Director

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.



Mick Malthouse Visits ERCRS Brighter Tomorrow Boys' Group

By Kaitlyn Krahe



On the sunny afternoon of Thursday the 12th of November, the Brighter Tomorrow Boys Group welcomed a very special guest to Errington Halls, St. Albans. Recognised as one of the most successful professional coaches in the history of the Australian Football League, the BTBG were very excited to host Mick Malthouse to speak about his vast experience of teamwork and leadership on and off the field.

Despite having a record breaking career spanning many decades in professional sport, Mick spoke about his humble beginnings. Having grown up in the Northern Ballarat suburb of Wendouree West, Mick shared with the boys that he was told at age 14 that he would never amount to anything by significant people in his life. He spoke about how these struggles can sometimes get the better of us as humans, but determination, resilience and being part of a strong team is the best way to persevere through criticism and life's challenges. Using examples of past and present AFL football players, Mick also emphasised the importance of having the right attitude. He demonstrated that success takes more than natural talent and sporting ability. Teamwork, leadership, a positive attitude and discipline are all attributes some of the best players in any sport on and off the field.

The Brighter Tomorrow Boys Group team and volunteers would like to warmly thank Mick for his honest and inspiring discussion last Thursday, and for volunteering his time to address the boys group and willingly answer all our questions about sport and leadership. We wish him all the very best. We also thank Don McInnes (ERCRS long term Volunteer Tutor) for introducing us to Mick Malthouse.

Mountain Bike Excursion

By Mark Monahan

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 are involved in Edmund Rice Community and Refugee Services' Brighter Tomorrow Boys Mentoring Group. The boys showed tremendous amounts of vigor 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 off.

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.

Mountain Bike riding is difficult, you need to concentrate because every 10 meters is not like the previous 10 meters. There is always different shaped rocks, logs, holes, turns, steep sections, trees above and the potential for snakes below!! But the young men embraced this challenge and as the day progressed their skills developed by 300%. For the last hour of riding, the young men were riding fast down hill, navigating tight corners, rolling over rocky sections and pushing up more hills.

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 mate-ship within the group.

Thanks to Biong and the five volunteers that organized and supported the activity and Andrew Lansdell for helping me instruct the activity. I don't think this will be the last time we explore ourselves through the adventure of Mountain Bike riding!!!



Brighter Tomorrow Boys surprised Officials at 2015 Victorian State Futsal Titles



Sunday 25th October, the ERCRS Brighter Tomorrow Boys' Group spent a long day in Ballarat competing in the Victoria State Futsal (indoor soccer) titles.

At 8:45am on the Sunday morning, 15 boys and 4 adult mentors walked through the doors of the Ballarat Futsal Centre. The Boys were all dressed up in their blue Melbourne Victory Jerseys, looking very professional and confident, ready to compete in their first ever game as a team. The officials and the crowd welcomed them with big smiles on their faces.

At 9:30am Brighter Tomorrow Boys' Group, in their two teams (Team A and B), kicked off their first games on two different courts simultaneously. Not only had the boys never played as a team before in such a competition, but they had never played Futsal before with the exception of one or two. The officials were surprised at the talents and skills displayed by the boys. Both teams did exceptionally well with team A reaching the quarter finals before being defeated.

By the end of the day, BTBG had played eight games against eight teams. It was a very long and busy days, full of fun and laughter.

However, the big surprise to us was that, after we exited the centre, the officials told us that the boys had done very well and so they have been invited to participate in a national competition in January 2016. Although budgeting for this may be a large hurdle, this news boosted the boys' confidence, which is actually one of our main goals for this group. In our opinion, it was good experience for the boys. It has built them up as a team and also helped build their confidence.

We thank Melbourne Victory for providing the uniforms and coaching. A big thank you also goes to the mentors, especially Anthony Cocomazzo for getting the boys into such a competition. Thank to Edmund Rice Camps for providing us with the bus.



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, Minter Ellison Lawyers, Victorian Multicultural Commission (VMC), Australian Communities Foundation, 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 the connections, engaging in the learning and building friendships on the ground, to make it all possible.

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, 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 with improving their literacy, numeracy and general study skills.
- **Primary Homework Club:**
- Mondays and Wednesdays at the Errington Community Centre, Princess St, St Albans- 3:15-5:15pm. Wednesdays & Thursdays 3:15pm -5:00pm at Sunshine Harvester Primary School, Sunshine.
- **Secondary Tutoring:**
- Tuesdays at the Errington Community Centre, Hall 2, St. Albans. 3:30pm-5:30pm or Saturday morning at the Catholic Regional College (St Albans) library, Cnr Theodore and Winifred St. 10:30am to 12:30pm

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On behalf of the
Stan Willis Trust

