



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.

Director's update

by Br. Frank Perkins

This year Refugee Week was commemorated throughout Australia during the period 16th-22nd June. The theme of the week was 'Restoring Hope' and it was a way of raising the consciousness of the wider community, to the desire of people coming to Australia to be given a chance to re-establish themselves. Refugee families hope to build a life that is safe and secure, to be able to freely practise their religious and spiritual beliefs and to find a sense of connection and peaceful harmony with the wider society.

It seems to me that these are the foundations which most people want to base their lives on. Despite cultural, political and economic differences, we all share a common humanity.

At ERCRS we strive to play a part in the process of restoring hope to those who have been disadvantaged, by engaging with young people through education, and by supporting their learning, and so to work towards empowering them to have control over their own lives.

May we all take the opportunities that come our way to help build a society that is free from injustice, prejudice and disadvantage.

My experience with Mentoring	2
A day in Wonderland	2
SecondBite	2
Easter camp	3
Volunteer Dinner	3
Thanks	4



Sandy and Achel at Wonderland Park

Website launch

It is with great pleasure that we announce the imminent arrival of our new website!

www.ercrs.com.au

Please take a moment to check it out. On the site you can apply to become a volunteer tutor, read about our history or the story of Edmund Rice, catch up on our most recent events, browse the gallery or, if you are a current student or tutor in the homework club, find some useful resources and activities for the sessions. There is plenty more, including sections on FAQs, Donate and Contact us as well as links to other organisations in the Edmund Rice network.

My experience with Mentoring

by Nyakeer Akoul

Over the last 5 months I have been a part of the [ERCRS] peer-mentoring program, which is a group of 6 students who have been attending the tutoring program and every 2 weeks or so we go to different places, like the Immigration Museum, 80s art exhibition, arts market, rock-climbing and an animation studio. After doing the activity, Natalia our coordinator and two other mentors, who help her out, would ask us girls questions about what we thought and what was important to us, and the new things that we learned. The reason I have participated in mentoring is because I thought it would be a good idea to get to know new people and find out what mentoring is all about, also getting to know new perspectives in life. I have found mentoring a great experience because it showed me more than I knew, I got to know more people and I feel more confident than I used to be.



Nyakeer and Fereshteh at Fed Square



Rejoice, in her bright red dodgem cart

A day in Wonderland

by Dane Stammers and Rejoice

On the 17th March, 10 buddies and 14 students set off for a day of fun at the Wonderland Fun Park in Melbourne's Docklands. The day was much anticipated and did not disappoint the excited primary students as they spent 4 hours using their unlimited ride passes on attractions such as the Crazy Wave, Walk on Water Balls, the Bungee Trampoline and, of course, the infamous Dodgem Cars. Here's what grade 4 student, Rejoice had to say about the Dodgem Cars;

"Dodgems are cars which you drive and they have electricity. If you go on it, it will make you want to go again and again that you will want to sleep on it. Dodgems are like real cars. They are different colours and you can choose what colour you want to drive. I drove it at a place called Wonderland in the city. I hope it makes you go on it."

ERCRS has become the beneficiary of two boxes (15kg) of fresh fruit free of charge every Monday courtesy of *SecondBite*, an organisation committed to making a positive difference to people by identifying sources of nutritious surplus fresh food and produce that would otherwise go to waste, and facilitating its safe and timely distribution to agencies and people in need. This fruit, once collected at the start of the week, fuels the students in all four of our weekly sessions.



**A big thanks
goes out to...**

SecondBite
food for people in need

Easter Kids Camp

by Millie Landsell

I was very lucky to spend my Easter Long Weekend on camp with some of the most energetic and enthusiastic kids I think I've ever met. Our 4-day camp was based at the Edmund Rice Centre at Amberley, but quite a few of the days involved going offsite. Camp began when we picked up the kids in from the tutoring centre, and from the get-go it was high energy and smiles all round.

Swimming, cooking, disco dancing, night walking, science experiments, games and overnight outdoor camping, only to name a few, were some of the activities that the kids participated in over the weekend. The camp had a strong focus on water safety, which lead us to swimming twice - the first time being straight after picking the kids up. Although it was a chilly start to camp with learning some surf lifesaving skills at a very cold Williamstown beach, there was fantastic engagement and spirit from all of the kids!

The days passed by very quickly as there was always something to do. We made hot cross buns (although they turned out more like biscuits!) and on Sunday morning, we had a big Easter egg hunt. The Easter Bunny also kindly paid us a visit and left little bags of chocolate outside the doors of every room.

Amongst all of the activities, the camp-out was definitely my favourite. Blue and Red group slept in tents on the last night which was a great end to the camp. We had a barbeque dinner and finished up with toasting some marshmallows! I can't think of a better way to have spent my Easter. I'm already looking forward to next year's camp!

The final day was a sad one for most, but luckily it wasn't the end! Our catch up day to the You-Yangs and the Serendip Sanctuary was great. Lots of walking and piggy-back rides. It was just like a mini camp!



The boys...and a science experiment gone horribly wrong



Asheng, Julia and Abuk at the You Yangs



Daniel, Jenny and Richard at the dinner

Volunteer Dinner by Jenny McBride

On Friday 21st June twenty-four of our volunteer tutors gathered at the Good Shepherd offices in St Albans for the biannual volunteer dinner. Those present enjoyed traditional African fare prepared by the Sorghum Sisters catering service.

A highlight of the evening was the trivia quiz. Dane's selection of questions proved somewhat difficult and the answers eluded many of the volunteers. We will have to improve our general knowledge before the next dinner in November!

Thank you...



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

As always 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 student and tutor-providing schools for their ongoing commitment, passion and support.

A special thanks goes out to *Minter Ellison Lawyers* and *Parks Victoria* for their generous contributions to our social and recreational programs.

We would also like to thank the staff at *Edmund Rice Camps Victoria*, *Good Shepherd Youth and Family Service*, the *Brimbank City Council*, *Jesuit Social Services* and *Catholic Regional College St Albans* for their ongoing support.

News in brief

- We are extremely grateful for *Minter Ellison's* generous donation towards our Young Women's Mentoring Program. This support will allow us to improve and expand on this wonderful program.
- Adam Kennedy, an officer of the SES visited the homework club to speak to the primary students about safety in the event of emergencies (namely flooding and storms).
- Edmund Rice Camps will be hosting our annual Family Camp from Saturday 28th September - Wednesday 2nd October at Amberley in Lower Plenty.
- Family excursion to the St Bernard's / St Columba's College musical, 'Once Upon a Mattress', will take place on the 8th August.
- St Patrick's College is planning to organise and run an excursion for students of the homework club in Term 3 of this year.



VOLUNTEER?

If you are interested in becoming a tutor with ERCRS, contact Dane via refugees.vic@edmundrice.org or 9366 6436

Office

354 Main Rd West
St Albans VIC

P: (03) 9366 6436

E: refugees.vic@edmundrice.org

