



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.

## INTRODUCING NEW STAFF AT ERCRS



The beginning of February once again heralded in a new school year, and as usual this coincided with the opening of the education support programs that Edmund Rice Community & Refugee Services (ERCRS) offers to young people of a disadvantaged/refugee background in the Brimbank region of the western suburbs of Melbourne.

Six separate learning support/tutoring sessions are offered each week of the school year, with four of these focused on primary school children, and two for secondary school students. A boys' mentoring program is also being offered to help support boys in years 7-9 who are at risk of disengaging from school.

2016 has seen a new Director and two new staff members being appointed to ERCRS. We welcome:

- ☐ **Br Jim Darcy** who has taken over the role of Director
- ☐ **Ms Erin Byrne-Gurung**, who has been appointed as Assistant Program Coordinator, with responsibility for supervising the Sunshine Harvester School learning project
- ☐ **Ms Kaitlyn Krahe**, who has been appointed as Coordinator of the Boys' Mentoring program.

Jim has joined us from Brisbane. He has taught in several schools throughout Queensland, and has significant experience in the fields of Networking & Human Rights/Advocacy, and Indigenous Education. Jim has Masters degrees in Education, Theology and Community Development.

Erin holds a BA from Deakin University and a Master of Art Therapy from La Trobe University. She has had several years experience working in schools and for community groups with a range of children and adults from CALD backgrounds, supporting their learning and wellbeing.

Kaitlyn is a third year university student studying Paramedicine at Victoria University. She volunteered with ERCRS as a tutor last year, and also became a mentor in the boys' pilot program of 2015. Kaitlyn has also had experience volunteering with Young Mercy Links and with the St. Vinnies soup van.

We welcome them to Edmund Rice Community & Refugee Services, and thank them for offering their skills and experience.

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## Programs for 2016

In the tradition of ERCRS and 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.

This year is no exception. We are positive and optimistic in continuing with our work of helping children and people to explore their potential through education.

### Programs for 2016 are as follows:

A Homework Club for primary students takes place each Monday & Wednesday from 3:30-5:00pm at the Errington Community Centre, St Albans.

A Tutoring Program for secondary and tertiary student takes 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.

A Homework Club for Sunshine Harvester Primary School students takes place each Wednesday and Thursday afternoon from 3:30-5:00pm at Sunshine Harvester Primary School, Sunshine.

A Young Men's Mentoring program (Brighter Tomorrow Boys' Group) for year 8 students, takes place every Thursday from 3:30-5:30pm at the Errington Community Centre, St Albans.

We are well into another busy and productive year. Please join us again in helping to make a difference.



## ERCRS Brighter Tomorrow Boys' Team Building Day

By Kaitlyn Krahe

On the sunny morning of Saturday the 20th of February, the ERCRS Brighter Tomorrow Boys' Mentoring Group travelled to Amberley Edmund Rice Centre to participate in a day of team building activities and fun together.

The focus of the day was on how great things can be achieved when a group of individuals can communicate effectively and work collaboratively to conquer difficult tasks such as the Rope Swing, Spider Web, Marble & Pipe and Log Crossing activities. The mentees saw, through trial and error, how important listening, taking turns in being the "leader" and encouraging others are integral to success. One highlight was working together to fit 10 mentees and 10 mentors onto the Rope Swing platform without falling off! We finished the day by cooling off in the pool and playing soccer.





# Brother Frank Perkins Farewell BBQ at Woodland Park

On Sunday 3rd April 2016, Edmund Rice Community & Refugee Services held a farewell event for Brother Frank Perkins. Frank has served as Director of ERCRS for five years, and has seen this ministry through a period of strong growth.

A well-deserved farewell was held at Woodland Park in Essendon and was attended by ERCRS board members, staff and other associates. All acknowledged Frank's significant contribution with gratitude.

At the helm as ERCRS's new Director, we welcome Brother Jim D'Arcy.

We wish Frank all the best in his new call and future endeavours.

Thanks to everyone who made this farewell a success.



## Sunshine Harvester Program Newsletter update By Erin Byrne-Gurung

This term at Sunshine Harvester Primary School we introduced a brief art activity to engage students and to help them settle into each session. Students spent the first 15 minutes of a session working individually, in pairs or with their tutor to complete a prescriptive art task before moving on to their homework or program workbook.

Some activities this term included: drawing with two hands simultaneously to create a mirror-image picture; sitting opposite a partner and copying their image exactly as they drew; describing an image to a partner who drew while listening.



This has now become part of the routine at Sunshine Harvester and students often ask, "What art will we be doing this week?" We will continue with this next term and will also include activities such as making playdough (requiring students to follow instructions) which will be followed up with a writing task about the activity.



## Kids Camp

By Asunta Deng

Over the Easter holiday, ERCRS sent 20 primary students from both St. Albans and Sunshine on a five day camp run by Edmund Rice Camp Victoria.

The camp was packed with a lot of excitement, fun and energetic participants. I enjoyed this camp particularly because it was a mix of children from Sunshine Harvester and St Albans homework club students. All the participants were great, especially with lending me a hand in the kitchen whenever I needed one.



The children had a variety of planned activities including camping outside in tents, which they were so pumped up about, and having BBQ. I think being the cook at the camp was definitely the best thing of all for me.

On behalf of ERCRS, I thank Edmund Rice Camps for putting smiles on children's faces.



## Students Farewell Brother Frank Perkins

On Tuesday 12th April, during a normal secondary school tutoring session, two students from the program set up a surprise birthday and farewell event for Brother Frank Perkins. Towards the end of the session that afternoon, while Frank was busy tutoring for the last time at the program, two students walked in singing happy birthday to Frank. Although Frank didn't get to blow out a candle due to the fact that candles were missing from planning, he got a cake, a few gifts, a card and a lot of laughter.

The two students year 11 students (pictured here) have worked closely with Frank at the program for a few years now. Through regular attendance at the program and their hard work, they are leading their class in many subjects. They are very disappointed that Frank has to leave but, on a good note, they ended their long term relationship with a celebration. ERCRS thanks them both for their initiative and thoughtfulness.





## ERCRS Meets The Governor

by Jim D'Arcy

On Saturday 9th April, Biong Biong, Edmund Rice Community and Refugee Services Program Coordinator, was invited to represent the programme at Melbourne Victory Soccer Club's Chairman Event. This is a special corporate event where supporters and partners of Melbourne Victory Soccer Club are invited to be thanked for their ongoing support.

ERCRS is very grateful for the help received from Melbourne Victory who are responsible for running the soccer program every Thursday afternoon of school term for the Brighter Tomorrow Boys' Mentoring Group. This partnership has continued for over a year now and ERCRS values it very highly.

As well on the night, we are happy to report that Biong had a chance meeting with the Governor of Victoria, the Honourable Linda Dessau AM, to discuss with her the work of ERCRS and the Edmund Rice Network. The governor was so impressed that she invited Biong to another meeting at Government House to talk further about the work being done at ERCRS and how to assist with such programs.



## Swimming Lessons with Life Saving Victoria

During the term one school holidays, ERCRS in partnership with Life Saving Victoria again ran swimming lessons for children and families from the St. Albans and Sunshine Harvester programs.

As in previous opportunities, children were provided with one week of free lessons which trained them in swimming skills, and how to be safe around water.

This is becoming a regular partnership between Life Saving Victoria and ERCRS. Since it started last year, many children have received training in these

important life skills. Many can now swim more confidently and are aware of water safety.





# Thomas Deng visits Brighter Tomorrow Boys' Group

By Kaitlyn Krahe



On Thursday 17th March, Thomas Deng visited the Brighter Tomorrow Boys' Group. Thomas is a Kenyan-born Sudanese refugee whose family came to Australia when he was quite young to seek safety. Though he had humble beginnings, at just 19 years of age Thomas is currently a professional footballer, playing in the A-League with Melbourne Victory! Many of the Brighter Tomorrow boys were excited and surprised to know that Thomas also attended Catholic

Regional College in St. Albans! After playing soccer, Thomas shared lunch with the group and answered some of the questions that the boys were buzzing with. In particular, they talked about how he was able to pursue his love of soccer and make it to the A-League. He emphasised that success is not accidental, and spoke of the importance of self-discipline and dedication to training, and how it is often necessary to say no to peer pressures and negative external influences in order to live a prosperous life. Thomas Deng is an inspiring and positive role model, and ERCRS would like to thank him and Melbourne Victory who made this great afternoon possible for all.

## Brighter Tomorrow Boys visit Victoria University

On Thursday 25th February, the Brighter Tomorrow boys walked through the doors of the Victoria University Health and Fitness Centre. For the majority of the group, this was the first time they had ever been inside a fully furnished gym, and we were all excited for what the afternoon had in store. The enthusiastic gym instructor Matt, took the group through a quick warm up before the boys paired up and learnt a series of strength building exercises using their own body weight as resistance, where they had to use balance and coordination to avoid falling over! We then got on the spin bikes and, using the different levels of resistance, we cycled through a fiercely challenging and mountainous terrain, without even leaving the gym! After a sprinting, downhill race that left our legs feeling like jelly, we got straight into the final activity, the tug of war game. With ten people on each side of the giant rope we heaved and pulled with all our might to make each team topple over the middle. It was great fun and very funny watching each other slide over the slippery gym floor to the other side. ERCRS would like to thank Matt and Alana who helped organise this great day at the VUH&F Centre.





# The Brighter Tomorrow Boys Meet an Inspirational Guest

By Kaitlyn Krahe



On Thursday 10th March, the Brighter Tomorrow Boys Group welcomed a very special guest to Errington Halls, St. Albans.

Elgaili Mangati is a young man who arrived in Australia as a teenage refugee, escaping conflict in his birth country of Sudan. Elgaili is actively involved the Centre for Multicultural Youth, working as a guest speaker within the “Shout Out” program, an innovative public speakers agency enabling people from refugee backgrounds to share their experiences.

Elgaili captivated the Brighter Tomorrow boys’ attention immediately by discussing the hardships he faced as an adolescent arriving in Australia and going to school knowing hardly any English. He spoke candidly of how he struggled to feel as though he belonged in a foreign community and how his frustration led to disengagement from his studies and family, and to getting mixed up with the wrong crowds.

Elgaili turned his life around and followed his dreams of playing soccer at a high level and studying further education. Having learnt from his own personal experience, Elgaili emphasised the importance embracing challenges when they arise and to always keep pursuing success in life. He also captured the value of family and reminded us of the many sacrifices our parents often make so that their children can have better lives, through a catchy and poignant original hip hop composition.

Elgaili’s message is one of particular importance and inspiration for young men today who face similar difficulties in finding their place and identity.

ERCRC extends a huge thankyou to Elgaili for taking the time to meet and inspire the Brighter Tomorrow Boys, and to Tizita Yohannes from the Centre for Multicultural Youth for facilitating this wonderful opportunity.



# 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, 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 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, 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 3:30-5:30pm, and Saturday mornings in the library at the Catholic Regional College, St Albans, Cnr Theodore and Winifred Sts, from 10:30am-12:30pm.

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On behalf of the  
Stan Willis Trust

