



volunteer refugee tutoring & community support

Coordinator's message

Hi all,

Firstly, as always, I would like to extend a very warm welcome to our newest team members: the 70+ volunteers who recently joined the VoRTCS program in our November intake. Welcome aboard! It is wonderful to have you on our team and we look forward to working with you into 2009 and beyond.

The November intake was the last of our volunteer intakes for 2008. This year the VoRTCS team has run 6 tutor intakes, with between 45 to 70 new tutors coming on board on each occasion. A big thank you to our very dedicated committee members involved in the tutor training process without whose assistance, expertise and generosity of time the VoRTCS program simply couldn't run.

With the November intake now complete, our volunteer tutor numbers are now pushing well over 800. I am constantly amazed at the continued growth of the VoRTCS program. It is just so heartening to see so many people constantly express interest in, and joining the VoRTCS team and giving up their time weekly to provide real and practical support to members of Queensland's refugee community.

I recently attended a function at which Michael Choi, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Multicultural Affairs, spoke. In the course of his address, Michael reflected upon the notion of "communities" – how they evolve, and what makes them tick. As Michael explained, according to some recent research, the key primary indicator of satisfaction and happiness within an identified community is not the average wage, wealth or employment levels of a community, but the levels of volunteerism within that community. Volunteers make communities tick.

Here at VoRTCS, we've known this for a long time! The great work of the VoRTCS program simply could not happen without the dedication of our army of volunteers on all levels of the program. So as we each begin the mad dash towards the finish line of 2008, and enter into the often-frantic silly season, I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to each and every one of you for the invaluable contribution that you have made to the work of VoRTCS in 2008. It has been a big year – busy, often frantic but always fun! Thank you for your support, generosity and unwavering dedication to the VoRTCS program.

On behalf of the VoRTCS committee I would like to wish everyone safe and happy holidays, and we look forward to working with you again in 2009.

Merry Christmas!

Kind regards, Claire & the VoRTCS team.



> Contact us

- VoRTCS, c/-St Vincent de Paul, PO Box 3351, South Brisbane, 4101
- Email: info@refugeetutoring.org • Web: www.refugeetutoring.org



NOVEMBER- DECEMBER NEWSLETTER

Page 2

> Introducing
Chris Ryan -
VP Community
Development

Page 3

> Tutor meeting
summary

Page 4

> Refugee Youth
Camp reminder
> Volunteers
wanted for Yeronga
ESL program

Page 5

> Refugee Youth
Camp Details

Page 6

> Visible Leaders
Project
> Amnesty Graffiti
Wall

Page 7

> Tutor training
dates Feb 2009
> Employment
Seminary MCC &
BCC

Page 8

> Poem - A Daily
Reflection

Introducing our new Vice President (Community Development)

Hi everyone,

My name is Chris Ryan and I am the Vice President for VoRTCS Community Development Program. I joined the team in October this year after tutoring since 2005.

I am the co-founder and current CEO of Strike Group Australia www.strike.com.au. We specialise in domestic and international wholesale of telecommunications equipment. We currently deal with 78 countries and have been in operation since 2001. I have been a finalist in the Ernst and Young's Entrepreneur of the Year award, as well as keynote speaker at the Young Entrepreneurs Organisation, Australian Human Resource Institute and Wealth Creators Advanced.

But that's enough about me.

The VoRTCS CD team has big plans for the future of the program and are excited about being able to make a significant impact in the lives of the people in need. Next year the Community Development team will be calling for volunteers who share our vision, and our vision is big. Keep an eye on the website for this exciting opportunity.

I look forward to working with you.

Kind Regards,
Chris Ryan



vicepresidentcd@refugeetutoring.org

> VoRTCS is a non-profit, volunteer-run program that provides free in-home tutoring for refugee families in greater Brisbane and the Gold and Sunshine Coasts

> Tutors assist refugee families with primary, secondary and tertiary school work, literacy, conversation practice and life skills

> Please refer to the VoRTCS website for further information www.refugeetutoring.org

> If you are interested in volunteering with VoRTCS contact the Tutoring Coordinator: tutoring@refugeetutoring.org.

> To refer a family to the VoRTCS program contact: info@refugeetutoring.org

> To submit an idea for the newsletter contact the Secretary: publications@refugeetutoring.org

> **DON'T forget to let us know if:**

- You change your contact details
- You stop visiting your family (even temporarily)
- You need another tutor to assist your group
- You need more resources
- You need advice
- You are having problems tutoring
- Your family changes their contact details

ACTION

> The world is a dangerous place, not because of those who do evil, but because of those who look on and do nothing.

- Albert Einstein

> How we spend our days is, of course, how we spend our lives.

- Annie Dillard

> Action may not always bring happiness, but there is no happiness without action.

- Benjamin Disraeli

> We must not allow ourselves to become like the system we oppose.

- Bishop Desmond Tutu

> Nobody made a greater mistake than he who did nothing because he could do only a little.

- Edmund Burke

Schooling high school students from Refugee backgrounds

The speaker at our last **Tutor Meeting** on November 17 was **Helen Byrne**, the **Deputy Principle of Milpera High School**. Milpera is a high school for newly arrived children from refugee and migrant backgrounds, who typically stay for 6 months to 2 years before typically moving on to one of the six mainstream high schools with ESL streams

- Milpera has a range of students from traumatic backgrounds and it can take 3 to 6 months before they are "present" and this affects their learning.

- The schooling level of refugee students can be very low – perhaps only 2 to 3 years of schooling which means they are 6 to 8 years behind their peers of similar age – while there are some amazing examples of progress and success, it's important to realise that some may not be able to close this gap.

- When these students reach mainstream high schools, they will not generally be ready for mainstream tasks.

Some tips for tutors

- o Build confidence – many refugee students are held back by their lack of confidence

- o Help them progress along their path to independence and don't teach dependence on tutoring – for example with homework, teaching how to understand and approach homework is much better than doing it for the students

- o Don't expect the students to learn quickly – most will not have the linguistic foundation in their first language and so education in a second language will be a slow process

- o It's OK to model speaking, writing, and composing as you would with a young child who is first learning – but without the baby content – use teenage or adult content

- In the long term, your students may not be able to close the educational gap, or if they are keen to reach university, then it may take them longer.

- Many schools now also channel their students towards vocational pathways. One of the very effective roles of a tutor can be to help your student understand different vocations. Many of them would not have been exposed to many different professions in the refugee camps and this hinders their ability to choose a future vocation. There is much value for helping them understand the many different vocations that exist in our community

Ian Tanner (Vice President - Tutoring)

A DAILY MEDITATION

Let us be still for a few minutes
Without moving even our little finger
So that a hush descends upon us.
There would not place to go,
Nor to come from,
For we would have arrived
in this extraordinary moment.

There would a stillness and silence,
That would fill all of our senses,
Where all things would find their rest.
Everything would then be together in a deep connection.
Putting an end to "us and them" this against that.
We would not move in these brief moments
For that would disturb this palpable silence;
There would be nothing to be said nor done
For life would embrace us in this wondrous meeting
And take us into its arms as a loving friend.

- Christopher Titmuss

Reminder: Refugee Youth Camp! (details on next page)

Hey tutors, A big reminder that the youth camp is coming up!

So, if you tutor a family with males between the ages of 15 and 17 who would be interested in coming on an adventure camp then please let them know about this. We have a large majority of girls so far.

If you are interested, please phone Stacey as soon as possible.

Stacey: 0431 034 368.

Do you have time to spare during school hours?

VOLUNTEERS WANTED FOR ESL PROGRAM AT YERONGA STATE HIGH SCHOOL

Hours: between the hours of 8:55am – 2:35pm

Days: Monday to Friday, Volunteers are needed urgently for Mon, Tues and Wed.

Work out what days and hours are suitable for you.

No experience necessary, just a willingness to be of help to the teachers and students.

Blue Card essential, Blue card applications can be done through the school.

Contact:

Ros Myers (Volunteer Co-ordinator) on **3249 1427** Tues or Friday
Or **Frances Orford** (Head of Special Education) **3249 1443**.

Refugee Youth Camp

COMMITTMENT

> Only do what your heart tells you.
- Princess Diana

> Effective leadership is putting first things first. Effective management is discipline, carrying it out.

- Stephen Covey

> Individual commitment to a group effort -- that is what makes a team work, a company work, a society work, a civilization work.

- Vince Lombardi

> The relationship between commitment and doubt is by no means an antagonistic one. Commitment is healthiest when it is not without doubt but in spite of doubt.

- Rollo May

COMMUNICATION

> Good communication is as stimulating as black coffee, and just as hard to sleep after.

- Anne Morrow Lindbergh

> We are healed of a suffering only by expressing it to the full.

- Marcel Proust

The Refugee Youth Camp to be held in January has had final approval from the VORTCS committee!

This camp will be a great opportunity for our tutoring kids to have fun in the outdoors and be challenged both mentally and physically.

Where: Department of Communities camp facility, Boonah
When: 14th to the 16th of January, 2009.

During the camp the kids will be participating in outdoor activities like **canoeing** and **ropes courses**. They will also be taught about **leadership skills**, receive constant **mentoring**, and have the opportunity to listen to some amazing **motivational speakers**.

The overall purpose of this camp is to unite, challenge and inspire the young people to be all they can be in life. We will be aiming to develop their leadership skills so that they can positively influence their friends, families and communities.

After the camp, to help 'keep the ball rolling', we will be strongly encouraging the youths to participate in some of our partner programs run through SASSY.

I cannot stress enough what a great opportunity this camp will be, so please, if you tutor a family with males between the age of 15 and 17, let them know about it.

This camp will not cost your family anything but will provide a priceless experience for all the young people who attend. So I urge you to speak to your families this week and contact myself,
Stacey Mills, at
0431 034 368, as soon as possible.

Many thanks,

Stacey Mills - (Project Manager)

Visible Leaders Project - Stafford Skate Park Event

Visible Ink Zillmere is looking for young people who want to design, plan and deliver the next Locale event at Stafford Skate Park as part of the Visible Leaders Project.

The Visible Leaders project provides a great opportunity for young people who are interested in:

- Learning and gaining experience to design, plan and deliver community events,
- Developing group and leadership skills,
- Connecting and working with other young people, workers and services across Brisbane
- Gaining an understanding of other cultures, and
- Connecting with and being mentored by other young producers who currently run and deliver a range of events and festivals across Brisbane.

If you know of any young people who would like to get involved please get them to email or phone **Kelly Rivas: 3407 8109.**

Happy 60th Birthday to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Say Happy Birthday to the Universal Declaration of Human rights with
Amnesty's Youth Network's Graffiti Wall

Where: David Jones End of Queen Street Mall, Brisbane City

When: Saturday 13th December

10 am – 2pm

Add your voice to our 4 metre Graffiti Wall to celebrate
60 years of Human Rights

First Tutor training dates 2009

Session 1: February 2nd
Session 2: February 9th
Both start at 6pm (for 2 hours)

Interested persons can register online.



EMPLOYMENT SEMINAR

Date: Saturday, 6 December 2008

Location: Annerly Baptist Church
560 Ipwich Road, Annerley

Time: 10am - 4pm

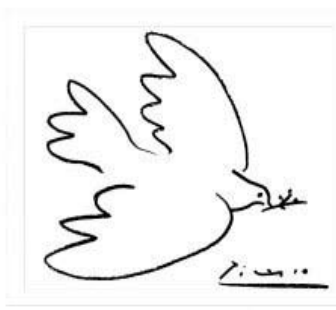
Contact: Thelma or Michael : 3257 1868
thelma@mcccommunitycentre.org

Must be Australian Permanent Resident
Must be from a Non-English Speaking Background (NESB)
Spaces are limited
Book your seat before Thursday 4th December



A
D
a
i
l
y
R
e
f
l
e
c
t
i
o
n

A DAILY REFLECTION



I vow to remember that today is a new day

Full of new beginnings and fresh moments

Today, I will not cling to events of yesterday nor
yesteryear

But stay connected with what today brings.

I will not madly pursue my desires at the expense of
others

Nor flee from challenging tasks.

I will remain true to the unfolding process of today

Without losing myself in thoughts of what was or
what might be.

I will treat today with awareness and sensitivity

Even in the most ordinary of tasks.

I will apply myself wholeheartedly to the fullness of
today

For I know that today holds the resource for
authenticity.

- Christopher Titmuss
(Senior Insight Meditation Teacher)

