

Newsletter

No.25 January, 2005

Blue Mountains Refugee Support Group

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A PROJECT OF THE BLUE MOUNTAINS FAMILY
SUPPORT SERVICE ABN 48 765 203 957

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***“There can be no real peace without justice.
And without resistance there will be no justice.”
Arundhati Roy winner of the Sydney Peace Prize 2004***

• Education • Direct Help • Direct Action • Fund Raising

2005

The tragic events on Boxing Day and since have dampened the spirits of all of us. We can be proud of the response from Australia. Congratulations to the Women's Action Group who so rapidly organised the benefit Concert in the Katoomba Civic Centre on Saturday, 8 January to raise money for the tsunami appeal. Well done!

Please let us not forget the continuing shameful plight of refugees in Australia and in crowded camps in places like Sudan and Pakistan.

Direct Help

Christmas Picnic

About 40 people had a fun time at Wilson Park, Lawson. It was lovely to meet several refugee friends and share good food and holiday cheer. The more energetic enjoyed games of soccer and croquet after lunch.

Members and visitors brought presents, which Jim Fitzpatrick delivered, to The House of Welcome for distribution to detainees. A lovely surprise was the arrival at the picnic of four large boxes of gifts collected by the Springwood High School Amnesty Group from the students at the school. Their compassion speaks well for the future of our community.

Marie Standen spoke briefly, outlining our achievements and the challenges facing us and wishing everyone a peaceful New Year.

News of our refugees

A. has returned to country of origin to apply for a spouse visa.

K. has had the court case adjourned for 18 months and is applying for a work permit, has started voluntary work with a dementia day care unit and is looking forward to living in a new share flat in Sydney.

Fundraising

Saturday April 16 6- 10pm

OLD FASHIONED FAMILY BUSH DANCE

Springwood Civic Centre

Enjoy an evening with Patrick Harte's Gang-Gang Bush Band and support our work with refugees

See the accompanying brochure. Please copy and put it up locally or pass onto friends.

We need people to:

- sell raffle tickets (as many as possible).
- distribute of flyers and posters,
- one or two people to undercoat four banners.
- donate raffle prizes (this is urgent as it has to appear on the raffle books)

On the day people will be needed to:

- prepare and/or serve food,
- collect and sell tickets at the door,
- staff stalls and an information desk.
- clean up after the dance.

Please Contact George 4782 7866 if you can help.

Fundraising

Open Gardens, Mt Wilson. May 7th & 8th.
Once again we will join with Bridges for Asylum Seekers to make this weekend at success. Try to keep some time available on this Mothers' Day weekend to help staff the various gardens. More information later. Contact Marie 4751 2120.

Fund raising Dinner

We had a delightful evening! Good food, good service and good music provided by Rob Peters, violin and Julie Cooney, electric piano. Of the 56 diners 44 were members and all enjoyed the event. An amount of \$2135 was raised.

Education

Rural Australians for Refugees Highland Gathering.

This year the Rural Australians for Refugees (RAR) national conference will be in Bundanoon on 19/20 March. There will be only one guest speaker and most of the time will be spent in small group discussion and a plenary session.

For more details please visit the RAR website: <http://www.ruralaustraliansforrefugees.org/> and click on "2005 Highland Gathering".

A cottage on Montrose Berry Farm, Sutton Forest, is available to share - 2 singles and a couple for Friday 18th and Saturday 19th March. The cost is \$220 per night for the whole cottage (with breakfast). Please contact George on 4782 7866. It would be a good opportunity to network and understand the scope of action to support refugees in Australia.

Next Monthly Meeting

7 February 7.00 pm in the hall of the Catholic Church in Lawson.
There is parking in the grounds.

Direct Action

We need to continue the support of those already in our care and continue to work towards the release of those in refugee camps in Australia.

The lie about 'No Children in detention' needs to be exposed.

There are 41 children in Villawood, 13 in Port Augusta, 10 on Christmas Island, 9 in Maribyrnong, 8 in Hotel/house detention, 6 in Nauru, 3 in Baxter and 5 unaccompanied Afghani children.

Total: at least 90 children in detention
Source: Department of Immigration, 5 January 2005.

For Your Diary

Please note new email address for refugee support:

bmrs@bigpond.net.au

Benefit concert April 2nd, 730 pm.

For Blaxland Amnesty, St Finbars, Glenbrook

Saturday April 16th, 6- 10pm

OLD FASHIONED FAMILY BUSH DANCE
Springwood Civic Centre

May 7th & 8th Open Gardens, Mt Wilson.

Committee

- Chairperson: Marie , 47512120 mstanden@pnc.com.au
- Diane Pope, 4739 3445 poped@det.nsw.edu.au
- Fr. Eugene, 47591818
- George, 47827866 see refugee email address
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Please pass this newsletter onto a neighbour or friend.