

REFUGEE REFLECTIONS

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National Refugee Resettlement Forum held in Wellington

The National Refugee Resettlement Forum was held on 2nd & 3rd of June at Te Papa Tongarewa – Museum of New Zealand, Wellington. The event held annually is facilitated by the Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment and provides refugee resettlement stakeholders with the opportunity to actively engage on strategic refugee resettlement issues. Some of the prominent speakers included Thomas Albrecht, Regional Representative – UNHCR, Dame Susan Devoy, Race Relations Commissioner, New Zealand. There was also a networking event for all the attendees with His Excellency, Lt Gen The Rt Hon Sir Jerry Mateparae, GNZM, QSO Governor-General of New Zealand.

Every year the event sees attendance from the Government agencies, non-government organisations, service providers, former refugee communities and international organisations. The theme of this year's forum was Active Participation – establishing a sense of belonging. The intent was to explore, the challenges, opportunities and the channels available to support former refugees to engage with and feel a part of the mainstream community. The priorities for the implementation of Phase Three of the New Zealand Refugee Resettlement Strategy in 2015/16 was also presented and discussed.

One of the highlights of the forum was the panel discussion and sharing of personal stories by former refugees and Zhiyan Basharati the youth coordinator of the Canterbury Refugee Council was also one of the presenters. The former refugees shared their personal journeys and described their experiences of the time when they felt a sense of belonging in New Zealand.





Elderly People Outing to Akaroa

On 2 May 2015, Canterbury Refugee Council Inc. (CRC) along with PEETO-The Multi-Cultural Learning Centre organised a trip for 80 elderly people to the beautiful town of Akaroa. The trip was a part of Supporting Isolated Refugee Individuals and Communities programme, an initiative by the CRC to prevent social isolation and loneliness amongst the former refugee people in Christchurch. The refugee community in Christchurch is diverse and there was a good representation from most of the ethnic backgrounds. The members came from Somali, Afghan, Nepalese, Sudanese, Bhutanese, Eritrean, Ethiopian communities in Christchurch.

Sally Pitama, from Ngai Tahu was a part of this trip and performed the karakia. An interesting aspect of

the trip was when Sally Pitama told the people about the Maori history of Akaroa and how the town was originally called Hakaroa which piqued the curiosity of many. An interactive question and answer session took place where people through the aid of translators asked Sally questions about the role of Maori and their place in history since the arrival of settlers. Since, many have come from war torn countries and have had traumatic experiences themselves they shared a sense of empathy with Maori.

On the way back to Christchurch people got an opportunity to visit Barry's cheese factory at Duvauchelles which falls in between Akaroa-Christchurch road. Barry's is a famous cheese shop that also shows people

the process of cheese making which everyone thoroughly enjoyed. People not only tested the various products on offer but also bought goodies for themselves and their family or friends.

People also got a chance to practice their English language skills with the locals while venturing into shops on their own. Since, it was not possible for translators to be there all the time for everyone most of the people took the initiative and started conversation with others. This in turn gave them a chance to be independent which also fulfils the purpose of any activity that we organise. Our aim is to not only make people happy but also provide them with opportunities to build their sense of confidence as well as foster a sense of belonging with the host community.



World Refugee Day marked in Christchurch

Every year on 20th of June world refugee day is celebrated across the world to not only raise the issues of refugees but also to commemorate their spirit and resilience in the face of adversity. Canterbury Refugee Council (CRC) observed the World Refugee Day on 13th of June, it was celebrated early due to the Muslim holy month of Ramadan which begins from 18th of June. Like every year Hagley Community College partnered with the Council to organise the event and this year English Language Partners Christchurch and Christchurch Resettlement Services too joined hands.

The function was held at the Addington Primary School and the programme for the day included a wide array of performances and was opened with mihi whakatau (Maori welcome as practised off marae across the Ngāi Tahu) by Sally Pitama.

Dr. Megan Woods, the MP for Wigram was the special guest for the event. She noted the diversity of the refugee communities and how they have contributed richly to Christchurch's multicultural fabric. The highpoint of the programme was the presentation by three young people from the refugee background. All of them spoke on the subjects they feel most passionate about. One of the presenters spoke on the importance of education which according to her is a vital tool to become independent. Another young student who arrived from Afghanistan ten months ago shared her feelings on her new home in New Zealand. She also shared her dream of becoming a dentist and the opportunities she has in New Zealand and loved the fact that she gets to use technology for her studies.



An interesting experience for the people was witnessing the traditional Ethiopian coffee ceremony which was held. The traditional way is often fragranced by beans roasted table-side or with incense burned for an added impact. The proceeds from the sales will go to the ReUnite Trust Canterbury, an organisation working to bring the families torn apart together by financing the airfares to New Zealand.



Other notable performances included Korean musical band, Nepalese dance and the Japanese drumming band which was a hit with the younger members of the audience. The day was celebrated by both refugee background and non-refugee background people alike making it a truly international day.



Improving Road Safety for Children in Refugee Communities

The Canterbury Refugee Council is working in partnership with the New Zealand Police to raise awareness on the road safety issues for the new as well young drivers. The aim of the collaboration is to provide the CRC with practical guidelines to carry out community engagement initiatives pertaining to road safety. Constable Phil Goto, Canterbury Ethnic Liaison Officer, the New Zealand Police emphasised that it is important for the communities to be aware of the rules and regulations especially in regard to child safety. As a part of this initiative the Council

will distribute road safety pamphlets in the wider communities. For example, some of this information includes the importance of use of booster seats for children by parents. The Strengthening Refugee Voices group of the Council will work to spread information in their respective communities. The Council will also organise safety presentations facilitated by the New Zealand Police. The core of the presentations is to encourage new as well as young drivers to be aware of safety rules and regulations. The presentation will also showcase examples of how injuries and accidents

can be prevented if safety measures are followed and contribute to the overall improvement of road safety. For example, using the booster seat by parents. The presentations will be delivered by expert speakers, including the representatives from the NZ Police. The presentations will also have participatory sessions and open sharing platforms through which the attendees can gain insight into examples of programmes addressing road safety in New Zealand. For further information please contact: contact@canterburyrefugeecouncil.org.nz



canterbury refugee council inc.

Canterbury Refugee Council Rebranding News

After 11 years in the community development sector, Canterbury Refugee Council Inc. launched the new logo to better showcase the impact that we bring to communities and individuals around Canterbury. The intent of rebranding is not to replace the previous ethos of the organisation but to show its evolution in the past years. Keeping the history and the theme of the previous logo which symbolises the coming together of different ethnicities and background, the designer beautifully managed to keep the message intact as signified by the use of rainbow colours and that too with limited budget and time. The Council has also launched a brand new website which is the source of all the news and upcoming events. The website can be visited on www.canterburyrefugeecouncil.org.nz

Canterbury Refugee Council



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