

REFUGEE REFLECTIONS

Issue 4 : (SEP - NOV 2015)

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Ethiopian New Year Celebration

The Ethiopian community in Christchurch celebrated their New Year on 12th of September with much fanfare. The event was organised by the Ethiopian community. MP Poto Williams was the special guest for the evening and spoke at length about the significance of Ethiopian New Year and how it is a day meant to be celebrated with friends and family.

The day brought a slice of Ethiopia to Christchurch as there were traditional Ethiopian dance performances and food which was appreciated by all. The community had a great time while for others it was a perfect event to learn about the Ethiopian culture and sample the various delicacies on offer.



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Health and Wellbeing Workshop

On 19th September, Canterbury Refugee Council organised a widely successful workshop on refugee health and well-being. The community leaders and various health services played a vital role in making it a knowledgeable affair for the refugee communities. The various refugee communities that participated in the workshop were Somali, Afghan, Bhutanese, Ethiopian, Eritrean, Kurdish, Vietnamese and so forth.

There were presentations and discussions by a host of health services of Christchurch such as CanBreathe, Aspire Canterbury, Psychiatrist Services for the Elderly, Community Services, Older Person's Health Specialist Service based at

Princess Margaret Hospital. In addition, the Princess Margaret Hospital Project Dietician, Jasna Wright gave a very engaging presentation on 'healthy eating and healthy ageing' which was well received by all the attendees.

The primary target of the workshop was to inform older refugee people on the ways to lead both physically and mentally healthy life. The topics discussed were ways of maintaining a healthy lifestyle including the need to have a balanced diet and exercise in everyday life. People could also be advised on Asthma, Type 1 diabetes, blood pressure, migraine, joint pain, eczema etc. Furthermore, the importance of mental health and its role in overall wellbeing was also discussed.

The workshop was also designed to be a one stop place for people to gain comprehensive health information as well to educate people on the different health services on offer in New Zealand and give advice on different aspects of health care. For example, provide information on health insurance; Medication Management facilities; Health system advice including Kids Health system, and Dental care.

All the attendees found the workshop very educational and informative. Due to the immense success of the workshop, CRC has decided to hold a half-day nutrition clinic once per month for the refugee background people in collaboration with the dietitians from the Princess Margaret Hospital.



Speed - The Faster You Go, The Bigger The Mess!

“The faster you go - the bigger the mess” is a punch-line that is used in a lot of road safety advertising. The reason it’s used so often is because it’s 100% true. Speed is the single biggest factor in how serious a crash will be, and a contributing factor in over a third of all serious and fatal crashes.

The speed of cars in town is particularly important, because cyclists and pedestrians (particularly children) are very vulnerable. For example, if a pedestrian is struck by a car travelling at 50 km/h, 45% of the time the person survives. At 60 km/h only 15% of pedestrians struck by a car will survive. That 10km per hour difference triples the chances of death. It’s pure physics, human bodies are not designed for hard impacts.

Police enforce a low tolerance over busy holiday periods, and around schools of 4 km/h. If you are exceeding the speed limit by more than 4 km/h you will be stopped and ticketed. This is to keep speed down when the highways are busy, and to protect vulnerable children.

In Canterbury last year Police Officers issued 33,433 speeding tickets to drivers, and Canterbury speed cameras issued a further 73,121 Infringements. Speed will remain our primary focus to reduce road harm.



Sergeant Huata Martindale and Senior Sergeant Scott Richardson with the new Highway Patrol car and Laser

The penalties:

- You are only allowed 100 demerit points before your driver’s licence is suspended and various offences carry demerit points.
- Speeding carries graduated demerit points, ranging from 10 demerits (under 10 km/h over the limit) to 50 demerit points (more than 35 km/h over).
- Fines range from \$30 to \$630.
- Exceeding the speed limit by more than 50 km/h will mean you will have to attend Court.
- Exceeding the posted limit by more than 40 km/h will result in immediate 28 day suspension of licence (and fine).

The simple fact of life is everyone makes mistakes. If you make a mistake in a car, result can be serious, but if you are going faster, the result will be much worse. This is why the New Zealand Police commit so much resources to road safety, and in particular speeding motorists.

With the summer holiday season there will be many more people on the highways, and more children and cyclists on the city streets. Police will be out there working to keep speeds down, but road safety belongs to everyone not just the Police. Enjoy your summer driving, but please stick to the speed limit, it could make the all difference to your or someone else’s life.

Acting Inspector Scott Richardson

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Refugee Education Conference - Celebrating Success

Presenters, teachers and community members all came together for the 2015 Refugee Education Conference held at Auckland University of Technology, Auckland, to share their expertise, success and experiences working with refugee background communities and students. Some of the speakers included Professor Nigel Hemmington, who's Pro-Vice Chancellor and Dean of Culture and society at AUT University, Dr Julie Mathews, the Associate Head of Research in the school of Education at the University of Adelaide, and Dr Jody McBrien who's an Associate Professor in the College of Education of the University of South Florida amongst others. One of the highlights of the Conference was the presentation by Abdirizak Abdi who works as a Lead Adviser for Refugee and Migrant Education at the Ministry of Education, NZ. He spoke about the challenges faced by the refugee background students who come to New Zealand. A lot of students come to New Zealand with limited or no schooling background, therefore, face a lot of struggles. He outlined the initiatives and strategies in place by the Ministry. Some of these are

- Employment of regional refugee and migrant education coordinators (scholarships for teachers in schools with refugee background students to study towards a TESSOL qualification)
- Funding for supplementary in-school support programmes
- Producing education related material and different languages for the communities
- Providing computers and internet resources for quota refugees to support family learning at home.

There was a panel by Schools in which four schools participated including the Hagley Community College in Christchurch. The presenters talked about the programmes they have available for refugee background students. They also talked about pupils who were outstanding and working very hard to succeed in their education.

Another interesting panel had 3 refugees sharing their personal educational journey towards success. They talked about the struggles they went through, for example, one of the panelists dropped out of high school, due to the fact that some teachers didn't believe in him or his abilities, even going as far as telling him university wasn't a place for him. He had no clear path of what he wanted to do, so he ended up working at a minimum wage job. He realised that wasn't getting him anywhere in life and compromised his happiness. He went to university and worked very hard to complete his studies. It shows that there are teachers other there who aren't doing their best at treating all students.

The event also saw the launch of the Somali Journal, the 6th edition for 2015-2016. The Journal contains 38 graduate stories across New Zealand; it also includes their qualifications and employment success stories among the graduates. The Journal showcases the community successes in the hopes of encouraging more students to take up tertiary education.

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