

# blacktown mrc newsletter

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march 2005



## **inside this issue:**

new arts position  
pathways to communities  
up close and personal  
families first news  
and more

**blacktown mrc**   
connecting cultures. building community.

The **Blacktown Migrant Resource Centre (MRC)** is an independent, community – based organisation dedicated to empowering people from culturally diverse backgrounds and promoting a culturally rich and diverse Australia.

The **Blacktown MRC Newsletter** is a bi-monthly publication

## Blacktown MRC Staff

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**Donna Robertson** Financial Manager

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**Janette Sauterel** Community Project Officer

**Eva Gerencer** Small and Emerging Communities Project Coordinator

**Linda Zaki** Sudanese Community Worker/ Training Coordinator

**Basim Angolla** Sudanese Community Worker

**Santhi Sithamparanathan** Tamil Community Worker

**Bintu Kamara** Sierra Leone Community Worker

**Christina Sarpong** Ghanaian Community Worker

**Sheetal Challam** Humanitarian Youth Worker

**Bernadette Agyepong** Generalist/Post IHSS

**Masheed Ansari/Samina Khan** Muslim Worker

**Margarita Videla** Families and Children Team Leader

**Mushtari Wakili** Families First Early Intervention Coordinator

**Jokbabott Mugo** Families First Sudanese Worker

**Bamathy Somasegaram** Family Education Project Officer

**Maria Mitar** New Estates Project officer

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The views expressed in the Blacktown MRC Newsletter are not necessarily those of the Blacktown MRC Staff or Management Committee.

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## Bi-lingual Community and Caseworkers

### Monday

Afghani*	Maryam	9.00am - 4.30pm
Turkish*	Rahile	9.30am – 4.30pm
Serbian*	Svjetlana	9.00am – 4.30pm
Ghanaian	Christina	9.00am – 4.30pm
Tamil	Santhi	9.00am – 4.30pm

### Tuesday

Sierra Leone	Bintu	9.00am – 4.30pm
Kurdish*	Heval	9.00am – 4.30pm
Sudanese	Basim	9.00am – 4.30pm

### Wednesday

Generalist	Bernadette	1.00pm – 4.30pm
Croatian*	Tadija	10.00am – 4.00pm
Sudanese	Linda	9.30am – 3.00pm
Eritrean*	Samson	9.00am – 4.30pm 1 <sup>st</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup> weeks
Bosnian*	Damir	9.30am – 4.30pm 2 <sup>nd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup> weeks

### Thursday

Generalist	Bernadette	9.00am – 4.30pm
Ethiopian*	Assefa	9.00am – 4.30pm

### Friday

Generalist	Bernadette	9.00am – 4.30pm
Chinese*	Elsie	9.00am – 3.30pm
Arabic*	Mariam	10.00am – 4.30pm
Sudanese	Linda	9.00am – 4.30pm

**Please Note:** Sessional Workers with an asterisk (\*) are employed by other organisations and use the Blacktown MRC as an outreach service for their communities. For details of their organisations contact the Blacktown MRC.

## Blacktown MRC Staff Outreach Locations

**Generalist Worker** – Bernadette Agyepong

Monday: Autumn Leaf Neighbourhood Centre, St Claire, 9834 2708

Tuesday: Nepean Migrant Access Centre, 9833 2416

Wednesday: Mission Australia, Mt Druitt, 9677 0827

**Sudanese Worker** - Linda Zaki

Monday: Liverpool MRC, 9601 3788

**Tamil Worker** – Santhi Sithamparanathan

Friday: Auburn MRC, 9649 6955

**Ghanaian Worker** – Christina Sarpong

Tuesday: Bankstown MRC, 9789 3744

**Sierra Leone Worker** – Bintu Kamara

Monday: AMES Bankstown, 9205 4373

Wednesday: Auburn MRC, 9649 6955

**New Estates Project Officer** – Maria Mitar

Thursday: Baulkham Hills Community Aid & Information 9639 8620

### Families First

Afghan – Mushtari Wakili

Monday: WASH House, Mt Druitt, 9677 1962

Wednesday: Afghan Association, Blacktown, 9831 2436

Sudanese – Jok Mugo

(Early intervention Program)

Wednesday: Children First, Blacktown, 9831 5466

# Culture, Arts and Music in 2005

## Recording Opportunity for Musicians

Blacktown Migrant Resource Centre has been successful in clinching funding from the NSW Ministry for the Arts for a Cultural Arts Officer position and Community Cultural Music Program.

The funding has built on the success of the Blacktown MRC's diverse cultural programs delivered to refugee young people, *Walk in My Shoes Youth Harmony Kit* – CD, video and workshops, and the *Welcome to My World Creative Conversations Oral History CD*.

It also reflects the high quality cultural events coordinated in partnership with Blacktown City Council and the Blacktown Arts Centre and the culturally diverse community such as the *Links Festival* in recognition of Refugee Week and the *World West Cultural Music Program*.

The Cultural Arts Officer will work strategically with Blacktown City Council and the Blacktown Arts Centre to develop emerging, CALD and refugee artists/cultural groups and to foster community cultural practices within the Blacktown local government area and Greater Western Sydney region.

A Community Cultural Music Program will be implemented as part of the position with a series of song writing workshops to launch the program.

The music program will target artists groups from diverse cultural backgrounds, producing and launching a compilation CD to profile the unique and culturally diverse musicians of the region.

For further information please contact Maria Mitar at the Blacktown MRC on 02 9621 6633 or [mmitar@blacktownmrc.org.au](mailto:mmitar@blacktownmrc.org.au).

## Pathways to Communities Training

Pathways to Communities program aims to educate non-government organisations (NGOs) in working with small and emerging communities. The project employs a two-fold approach by providing training to NGOs to actively work with emerging communities, and at the same time training members from emerging communities to deliver modules on culturally appropriate service provision and issues for these communities.

The first stage of the project began in 2003 and identified general training needs at a local government level across the Western Sydney Region. The training was developed within the broader context of working cross-culturally. Seven training sessions were held in partnerships with councils and other migrant resource centres and nearly 200 workers attended the training. An evaluation of the feedback received from the workers revealed that the training delivered was well received and that there was a demand for further training in dealing with specific communities and their specific issues.

The project has now moved to its second phase where it will be providing training tailored to meet individual services requirements.

The training will cover focus on working with families and work with the following small and emerging communities:

- Sudanese
- Sierra Leone
- Afghani
- Somali
- Eritrea

The training workshops will begin on 5 April at Parramatta MRC and will be held across Western Sydney in Bankstown, Blacktown, Castle Hill, Mt Druitt and Liverpool during April and May.

For a copy of the training calendar or further information contact Project Planner, Sheetal Challam on 02 9621 6633 or [schallam@blacktownmrc.org.au](mailto:schallam@blacktownmrc.org.au) or visit our website on [www.blacktownmrc.org.au](http://www.blacktownmrc.org.au).

# Families First

## UPDATE

Blacktown MRC currently runs three Families First projects: Early Intervention, Perinatal and Family Education Project. These projects provide culturally appropriate support for families from Afghani, Southern Sudan and Indian Sub-continent communities. The client groups assisted in these projects are newly arrived refugees and humanitarian entrants and Temporary Protection Visa Holders. The main aim of the projects is to assist parents to raise healthy and well-adjusted children by helping them to solve problems early.

## Early Intervention Project

The Early Intervention Project provides support to families with children 0 to 8 years who live in the Blacktown LGA. Since starting, the Project has established a number of outreach services and groups.

The Early Intervention project had an exciting end of 2004. Parties were organised for the Afghani, Southern Sudan and the Indian Mothers groups. The Afghani Mothers group celebrated their party at the Afghan Association community hall. Over 160 women and children enjoyed a great afternoon of food, dancing and laughter that were the main ingredients to a well-deserved celebration.

The Southern Sudanese Mothers group also had a great end of the year celebration. This took place in Alpha Park Community Hall where around 70 women and children enjoy an afternoon filled with dance to the sound of the

drums and songs sung by the women. The sounds of the drums attracted the attention of the children from the childcare centre next door. The childcare teachers and especially the children joined in and enjoyed the festivities and the wonderful traditional Sudanese food.

The Indian Mothers group had their celebration at Blacktown MRC. Women and children enjoyed Indian dishes and a fun afternoon was had by all.

These groups meet regularly. There are two Afghani Mothers Support Groups for the Early Intervention Project, meeting every Monday at the WASH House and on Thursday at Blacktown MRC. The Sudanese Mothers Support Groups meets Tuesday at Blacktown MRC and Wednesdays every fortnight at the Children First in Blacktown. The Indian Mothers Group meets on the fourth week of the month at Blacktown MRC.

A new male Afghani worker started a Men's Support Group in February. Meetings are held every Wednesday at the Afghan Association. The men are identifying issues that concern them and information sessions will be organised by the worker. The information gathered from session will go towards the resources being developed in our Family Education Project.

### Families First Calendar

The lullaby calendar has just been released representing elements from each of the communities that we are working with. We are currently distributing the calendars to the community and services.

If you are a local service and would like a calendar contact Margarita or Mushtari on 9621 6633.

## Perinatal Project

The Perinatal Project targets families with children from 0 – 2 years and pregnant women in the Blacktown and Baulkham Hills Local Government areas.

Starting at the end of 2004 the Perinatal Project has successfully ran the first Antenatal Classes for pregnant women from Sudan in partnership with Blacktown Community Health. The antenatal classes were delivered in four sessions. The purpose of these classes was to inform the pregnant women on the development of their baby inside the womb, the different stages of the delivery, the different pain relief options, etc. They were also informed on

the services available for the pregnant women and where to go for check ups after the baby is born.

The classes were a great learning experience for both the women and the nurses from the Blacktown Health Centre, to learn how different giving birth is in Sudan compared to Australia.

The Sudanese Perinatal Group meets every Thursday at the Blacktown MRC. For any information please contact Margarita or Jok on 02 9621 6633. The first information sessions for 2005 will be running for six weeks covering Child Development.

## Family Education Project

The project is developing an educational DVD for the Sudanese, Tamil and Afghani communities addressing family and child protection issues. The main purpose of this DVD is to educate communities about the legal system in Australia in relation to families and children. The project is currently undertaking consultations with communities to find out the best way to provide messages as well as working with service providers on developing information.

## Hey Dad

*Hey Dad* is an education program for fathers presented by Centacare. The program was presented to Sudanese men in Arabic during the months of November and December of 2004. Organized by Blacktown MRC with Centacare it was held in Blacktown and continued for 6 weeks presented by Dr Ahmed Ahmed. Dr Ahmed who speaks English and Arabic fluently, has been trained by Centacare and has presented the program several times in different areas in Sydney. His eagerness to work with Sudanese community has seen him take a very active role with several other programs since his arrival with his family just over two years ago.

The topics in the program covered many issues such as stages in children's growth, balancing work and family responsibilities, keeping children safe and child care services in NSW. These were of great interest to the fathers, who enjoyed the program and participated in the discussions and sessions eagerly.

We hope to run more sessions during the coming year and welcome interested individuals to call and register their names for this fabulous program. Other programs we are planning to run are *NESB Family Harmony Program* that is run for parents and their teenagers experiencing intergenerational conflict and explores family dynamics and communication. The program is ideally run with parents and their teenagers in a very relaxed and fun environment.

For more information on either program please contact Linda Zaki on 02 9621 6633.

# Up Close and Personal with Australian Icons

## *An encounter with Australian flora and fauna*

Think about Australia and some of the images that jump into your mind. The Harbour Bridge, the Opera House and of course the iconic Kangaroos, Koalas, and Emus - these are natives to Australia, a part of our unique wildlife and natural beauty.

And what better way to introduce Australia to new young migrants than taking them to the wildlife park for a meeting with these amazing creatures, up close and personal.

As part of their school holiday program, Blacktown MRC held a draw to give seven young people a

Housing over 320 different Australian species, the Featherdale Park is an award winning Wildlife Park that creates a fun wildlife experience in natural bushland settings.

The tickets to the Featherdale Park were donated by Stewart Byrne of Intertag and his generosity was further extended by Karin Cook, the General Manager of the Park which allowed these young people to have a fun day out.

Blacktown MRC, as part of their ongoing programs for young people, are also running workshops to develop numeracy, language and computer skills in



chance to enter the Featherdale Park for free. Most of the young people who went on the trip on Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> January 2005 were of African backgrounds. They were accompanied by Marinella Belmonte Byrne, Secretary of the Blacktown Migrant Resource and Youth Worker, Sheetal Challam.

The young people took great pleasure in patting the local native animals like the wombats, koalas, kangaroos and meeting reptiles, birds and the other flora and fauna of Australia.

young people from refugee communities and small and emerging communities. Also in the pipeline are resume writing workshops that will help young people acquire skills in resume writing, interview skills and job search skills.

Oh! And the consensus from the Featherdale Park Trip: "My most favourite animal is the koala. They are just too cute!"

For more information contact Youth Worker, Sheetal on 02 96216633 or [schallum@blacktownmrc.org.au](mailto:schallum@blacktownmrc.org.au).

# Aged Care Happenings

Another feather in the cap for the Community Aged Care Package staff is the securing of more packages from the Department of Health and Ageing. This will allow Blacktown MRC to provide assistance to more elderly migrants in the Blacktown, Parramatta, Auburn, Baulkham Hills and Holroyd areas.

The Community Aged Care Packages are available to people 70 and over who need help with showering and dressing, preparation of meals, transport, shopping, housekeeping and social opportunities.

The service is expanding and always looking for new ways to provide better service to our clients. Some of the initiatives undertaken in 2004 were:

- Establishing a pool of highly skilled bilingual workers to provide respite services to clients of other organizations.
- In cooperation with the Department of Education we provided a Certificate III Course in Home and Community Care to community members aged 40 years and over at the Blacktown MRC.
- The ENJO fibre based cleaning system has been incorporated in our housekeeping service. This has solved our challenges in relation to chemicals and the effects the cleaning chemicals had on our care workers. Care workers stated that they no longer have breathing difficulties when cleaning bathrooms, the cleaning is faster and more efficient and our care workers are able to use the equipment in their own home. The advantage for us is we do not have to collate all chemicals being used, we do not have to find storage for chemicals and the peace of mind that we are not exposing our care workers to chemical cocktails.
- Several fun programs have been delivered to our clients. We have encouraged our reasonably fit clients and members of the community to participate in the Premiers Gala Concerts which are held during Seniors Week and at Christmas.

In 2005 we are looking forward to continuing to provide information on the services that are available to the elderly CALD Communities. We will also provide information presentations in cooperation with specific community groups. We have already visited the Phillipino Australian Community Services in Blacktown and would be interested in hearing from any community group, who have elderly members, who would be interested in having an information session on the CACP services. For further information contact Susan Vogels on 02 9621 6633 or [svogels@blacktownmrc.org.au](mailto:svogels@blacktownmrc.org.au).

## Community Access Project

The Blacktown Migrant Resource Centre provides **FREE** direct access to the Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs (DIMIA).

Enquiries can be made by direct telephone line to DIMIA using the Telephone Interpreting Service (TIS). You can also download forms that you require using the centre's computers.

The Blacktown MRC is one of three MRC's where the community are able to apply for Australian Citizenship online.

People who don't have access to a computer are able to use the centre's computers with staff on hand to assist with applications.

For more information contact the centre 9621 6633.

## Ghanaian Community Health Program

The Ghanaian Community Worker has been organising a series of information sessions on men's and women's health programs at Blacktown and Canterbury-Bankstown MRC's.

The information session for the men's health has covered topics such as prostate cancer, testicular cancer and general men's health. The women's health sessions looked at issues such as pap-smears, breast checks, and contraception.

The health information sessions have provided both men and women with the opportunity to learn more about services available locally. Both the men and women were particularly happy to find out about the existence of community health centres. For more information contact Christina at Blacktown MRC on 02 9621 6633.

## Thank you

The Blacktown Migrant Resource Centre would like to acknowledge the support of Karunagaran Naidoo IT Consultant (0412 947 955) who has donated a database for collating statistics for the Community Access Project.

**MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM**

**Ethnic Organisation (Category A)**

**Community Organisation (Category B)**

Name of Organisation \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Organisation Representative (Name) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

The Community/Ethnic Organisation hereby applies to become a member of Blacktown Migrant Resource Centre Incorporated. In the event of admission as a member, the applicant agrees to be bound by the rules of the Migrant Resource Centre.

Signature of Organisation representative \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Applicant, position held and date \_\_\_\_\_

**Individual Membership (Category C)**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

- I am 18 years old and over
- I live/work/study/have significant ties to the Blacktown Local Government Area

Signature of Applicant and date \_\_\_\_\_

**FOR OFFICE USE ONLY**  
Admitted/rejected to membership at  
Management Committee meeting  
.....  
Membership No .....  
Annual Subscription  
Categories A & B: \$15  
Category C: \$5  
Unemployed & pensioners: \$2  
  
Receipt No.....



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