



WHITTLESEA WHISPER

In this issue

Page One

Whittlesea Community Festival

National survey of volunteering issues 2007

Have your say

Page Two

Volunteer picnic 2006

Volunteer info sessions

Page Three

Volunteer profile

Children checks

Active women's week

Page Four

WCLS legal services info

Welfare to work

HAVE YOUR SAY

Whittlesea Community Connections are conducting a project to see how people in Whittlesea would like to participate in the community. We are conducting focus group discussions and are interested in hearing your ideas, experiences and hopes for participating in the community. There are three focus groups being planned in March. Childcare & transport can be arranged, for more information or to book please contact Emma Sampson on: **9401 6666** (more information in flyer inside newsletter).

IMPORTANT

In earlier newsletters readers were asked to provide stories describing some of the things that may be of interest that could be covered in future issues.

We welcome short stories, or other stories of interest relating to your volunteer experiences.

If you would like to contribute, contact us:

9401 6666

CITY OF WHITTLESEA COMMUNITY FESTIVAL 2007 10th Anniversary Celebrations

Our Community, Our Festival!

Celebrate the 10th anniversary of the City of Whittlesea Community Festival, the largest single day event in the municipality. And admission is free!

The Community Festival is a unique celebration of our City and the people and places within it. Held at Whittlesea Public Gardens, Barry Road, Lalor, the Festival will involve pre-school, primary and secondary school students, community groups, disability groups, sporting groups, local performers and local business. The Community Festival is an electric array of colour, art, food, entertainment, culture, and most of all, our community.

The festival program, put together by members of the community, will offer a huge range of activities and cultural events for the whole family including:

Community Welcome Parade

Big Top Entertainment

Youth Stage

Kid's Arena

Sustainability Arena

Art and Craft Market

FIREWORKS FINALE at 8.30pm

Health and Fitness Arena

Roving Entertainment

Art Workshops

Carnival Rides

Face Painting

Snuff Puppets with First Impressions Youth Theatre



Volunteer at the festival

Would you like to get involved with the Community Festival as a volunteer? The Community Festival relies on volunteers

If you would like to register as a volunteer or get involved by having a stall, running an activity, or even a stage performance, please speak to Daniel or Brooke on 9217 2333 or download the information from www.whittlesea.vic.gov.au/community-festival.

An information session will be held on Tuesday 6th of March from 7-8.30pm. Bookings preferred.

Volunteering Australia National Survey of Volunteering Issues 2007

Volunteering Australia invites all volunteers and not-for-profit organisations that involve volunteers to participate in the 2007 National Survey of Volunteering Issues. The National Survey of Volunteering Issues helps Volunteering Australia understand what issues are emerging in the sector and what factors help and hinder effective volunteering. Volunteering Australia uses this information to formulate policy positions to put to government, and also to target where our research and consultation efforts should be directed.

We have included some questions and themes from last year's survey so that we can make comparisons over time and track volunteering trends, but the survey has also been refined to make it easier for you to respond. The survey takes around 10-15 minutes to complete. The survey is open until the end of February and can be accessed by clicking on the following link:

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.asp?u=313972724201>

The 2007 National Survey of Volunteering Issues report will be released during National Volunteer Week (14-20 May 2007).

Limited numbers of paper (hard) copies of the survey are available upon request.

The 2006 International Volunteer Day Picnic

International Volunteer Day December 3, 2006

The annual celebration of volunteering in Whittlesea was again a huge success with over 120 volunteers and their families attending. The new venue at Hawkstowe Park was well received and many volunteers have now become aware of a local park which previously they did not know about.

Activities throughout the day included, farm animals, face painting, badge making for the kids. Everyone enjoyed lunch that was generously provided through sponsors and discounted goods and served by local MPs and Councilors (Mary Lalios, Kris Pavlidis, Pam McLeod, and Danielle Green)

Parks Victoria supported the event ensuring the day ran smoothly, while volunteers from Plenty Valley Arts & Whittlesea Historical Society assisted with preparation of food & cleaning up.

Whittlesea Connect – WCC's new transport service provided transport to enable many volunteers & their families to attend.



Adding to the success on the day was the hard work carried out by the volunteers preparing and serving food, setting up the facilities for the activities provided for the children, and the doing a big clean up after the event.

2006 IVD Picnic Sponsors

Slades Beverages Pty Ltd
Fitness First – Epping
AMF -- Keon Park
Safeway Supermarket – Epping
Lombard -- The Paper People Head Office
Funfields -- Whittlesea
PC Australia – Epping

Bakers Delight – Epping Plaza
Whittlesea Sustainability & Planning Unit
Intencity – Epping Plaza
Ames Employment
CSR Australia Greensborough Unit
Epping Plaza Fruit Market
Bread Shop – Mill Park

Volunteering Information & Training Sessions

DATE	TIME
Wednesday 28 March	10.00am — 12.30pm
Thursday 26 April	10.00am — 12.30pm
Tuesday 22 May	10.00am — 12.30pm



The Whittlesea Volunteer Resource Service invites you to a **FREE** information session
Open to anyone wishing to learn about volunteering in a friendly and relaxed discussion format.

The sessions are held at Whittlesea Community Connections, Shop 111 Epping Plaza, Corner High & Cooper Streets Epping.

The sessions are FREE, but seats are limited and bookings are essential

Workshops & Short Courses March 2007

First Aid level 1: This accredited nationally recognised one day course provides volunteers with a level of understanding in First Aid that is sufficient to their work as volunteers. This is a **FREE** course for volunteers in the City of Whittlesea & offered in partnership with Lalor Living & Learning Centre.

Date: Wednesday 7 March 2007

Time: 9.30am to 4.00pm

Venue: Lalor Living & Learning Centre
47A French Street Lalor (Melways 8K5)

**A small fee may apply for non volunteers*

Cultural Awareness In Our Community:

This workshop will provide an opportunity to increase understanding of cultural diversity & strengthen skills in communicating with people from diverse backgrounds.

Date: Monday 26 March

Time: 9.30am to 1.00pm

Venue: Whittlesea Community Connections
Shop 111 Epping Plaza
Cnr Cooper & High Streets, Epping

For more information and to reserve a place in any of the sessions, Contact Sarath at Whittlesea Volunteer Resource Service
94016666

VOLUNTEER PROFILE GEORGE KARABASIS



George Karabasis

George Karabasis is the president of the North East Greek Elderly Citizens Club, a seniors group of 130 community members that meets weekly to share lunch, activities, coffee and stories from their home country. George volunteers his time on a weekly basis to organise events, activities and guest speakers for the group, to attend committee meetings and to visit older, isolated members of the Greek community. George says he loves seeing older people get together, to socialise, dance and to talk about life back in Greece. He also regularly organises for guest speakers to address the group, stating, "it is important that older migrants receive up to date information about what is going on in the community, such as changes to their Centrelink payments". George has been president of the club for the past 10 years, and says his involvement gives him a chance to get out of the house and talk to others. George feels it is particularly important to look after older people in the community, perhaps, he feels, because his own parents died when he was younger and after he migrated to Australia, he did not have the chance to do this with his own family. In December 2006 George was recognised for his service to the community, when he received a Victorian Multicultural Commission "Excellence in Multicultural Affairs" award for his service to the community. In his spare time, George likes to spend time in his garden, and with his grandchildren.

New Working with Children Checks

The Working with Children Check (WWC) is a new system introduced in 2006 by the Victorian government aimed at protecting children from physical and sexual harm.

Some volunteers who are doing 'child-related work', such as childcare or volunteering in a school, kinder or children's services organisation, will be required to have a Working with Children Check in 2007. The checks only apply to volunteers who are not directly supervised while volunteering with children, and are free to volunteers and last for 5 years.

More information is contained in the enclosed information sheet, or can be gained by contacting the Department of Justice on 1300 652 879.

Additionally, an information session about the Working with Children Checks will be held to provide you with more information.

The session will be held:

Date: Wednesday 17th March

Time: 10am-1pm

Venue: Whittlesea Community Connections, Shop 111, Epping Plaza, Epping

RSVP: 10th March to Emma Sampson on 9401 6666

FREE WORKSHOP ON VOLUNTEERING FOR WOMEN

An activity run as part of ACTIVE WOMEN'S WEEK

Whittlesea Community Connections invites women of all ages, abilities and backgrounds to participate in a *FREE* workshop exploring volunteering and the many benefits it brings to both the volunteer and the community.

Come along meet other volunteers and learn all about:

- * What is volunteering
- * The benefits of volunteering
- * Different types of volunteering opportunities
- * How to find the right volunteer position
- * How volunteering can connect you with your community



***Light*

Refreshments

*Will be provided***

Where: Whittlesea Community Connections
Shop 111 Epping Plaza
Cnr Cooper & High Streets
Epping 3076

When: Monday March 5 2007

Time: 11 am to 1 pm

Cost: FREE

RSVP: Monday March 1 2007

**For more information and bookings contact:
Susan Perkins on 9401 6666**

COMMUNITY NOTICEBOARD

Whittlesea Community Legal Service
FREE legal, advice, support & education service.

Legal Advice

- Free, confidential and professional advice on most areas of the law.
- Daytime and appointments.
- Evening drop in service-no appointment necessary. Monday 6.30 to 8.30.
- We do not give telephone advice.

Outreach Services Available

- Ring our Epping office to make an appointment.

Ongoing Assistance

We can sometimes do on-going work for people who have a case in which there are important issues of social justice

Law Reform & Community Legal Education

We work towards a legal system, which is fair and just, by developing campaigns, conducting research, lobbying for necessary change

Law reform is conducted using a community development model.

We aim to make people more aware of the law so they can make more informed decisions. We provide education sessions, which outline your rights and responsibilities in various areas of law.

Information and Referral

If we cannot assist someone with a legal service we can refer people to another legal service. However sometimes the most immediate need is not a legal one and we provide information and referral to other community services.

Our office is open to:

People who live, work or study in the City of Whittlesea.

Interpreters

We use both onsite and telephone interpreters.

Access

Our office is wheelchair accessible.

Get Involved as a Volunteer

We have both legal and non-legal volunteer positions

Contact us at: Shop 111 Epping Plaza Cnr Cooper & High Streets Epping 3076
Email: WhittleseaCLS@fcl.fl.asn.au

Phone: 9401 6655

Action on Disability within Ethnic Communities Inc (ADEC)

ADEC is a statewide, community-based, not-for-profit organisation that assists people with a disability from non-English speaking backgrounds, their carers, and families to fully participate as members of the Victorian community. ADEC provides self-help groups and respite activities for people with disabilities and their carers.

ADEC involves volunteers to assist with outings, respite and in groups. Volunteers meet bimonthly and all volunteers receive orientation, ongoing training, acknowledgment, and support. If you have any questions or would like further information, please check www.adec.org.au. For any information regarding the respite service, please contact Alanya van de Wiel (03) 9480 1666 or email Alanya@adec.org.au.

Have you been affected by recent Federal Government Welfare to Work Changes?

Whittlesea Community Legal Service (WCLS) which is a programme of the Whittlesea Community Connections (WCC), is currently conducting a Law Reform project focusing on the recent the changes to Centrelink benefits, which are also known as "Welfare to Work" changes.

In particular, we are looking at the ways in which these changes have impacted on people's **choice to volunteer**. We are also exploring whether they have impacted on people's mental health issues (especially where it is a hidden problem) and had any other affects on certain groups within the community (such as people with disabilities, single parents and recent immigrants).

We intend to consult with those who are directly affected by the recent changes to get an overall feel about the impact that the changes are having on our local community. If you would like more information, or are interested in having your say, by completing an interview, survey or attending a focus group, please contact Nive or Emma S. on 9401 6656



Whittlesea Community Connections Inc
Shop 111 Epping Plaza shopping Centre
Cnr Cooper & High Street
Epping Vic 3076
Tel: 9401 6666

Web Address:

www.whittleseacommunityconnections.org.au