Volume 5 Issue 2 *A Newsletter for volunteers in the City of Whittlesea* June 2009

WHITTLESEA WHISPER

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The Whittlesea Refugee Week Event 2009

The 2009 Whittlesea Refugee Week Event was held on Thursday 18 June at Epping Memorial Hall. The event was held in colloboration with local organisations and refugee communities to recognise and celebrate the City of Whittlesea's cultural diversity, past and present. More than 200 people attended the event and joined in the different cultural performances including Macedonian, Kurdish, Chaldean and Sudanese. The event highlighted their inherent strengths and celebrated the contribution refugee communities have made to the broader community.

Around 500 refugees have settled in Whittlesea over the last 5 years, making Whittlesea one of the top 10 Local Government Areas for settlement in Victoria. Despite the barriers, refugee communities living in Whittlesea have strongly identified the need to contribute and be part of the local community in meaningful ways. Events such as the 2009 Whittlesea Refugee Week event aim to help raise awareness of the refugee experience and this is the first step in creating broader community connections.

Free Tax Help 2009

FREE TAX HELP is available to people who earn under $40,000 per annum?

Two agencies within the City of Whittlesea will be running the Tax Help Program again in 2009

Tax Help is a program of the Australian Taxation Office, and offers assistance for people on low incomes to gain assistance to fill out their taxation forms.

The service is free of charge, and generally available for people on incomes less than $40,000 per annum. For no dependents with an increase for one or more dependents some conditions do apply, so you are encouraged to ring the below centres for further information:

Whittlesea Community Connections will take appointments from Monday 6th July onwards, with the program starting on the 14th July 2009. Phone 9401 6666 to make an appointment.

Lalor Living and Learning Centre at 47A French St, Lalor will also have appointments available each week, and more information can be obtained by phoning 9465 6409.

SECOND BITE

Food for people in need

Our Mission

SecondBite is committed to making a positive difference to people by identifying sources of nutritious surplus food and produce, that might otherwise go to waste, and facilitating its safe and timely distribution to agencies and people in need.

Our Values

- Respect for people
- Integrity
- Honesty
- Collaboration

The Facts

In 2007, 312,312* Victorian families ran out of food at least once during the year and 23,713 people were registered as homeless on any given night. At the same time, 3.28 million tonnes of fresh food ended up as landfill in Australia.

"Improving health and wellbeing is fundamental to economic and social inclusion"

"The link between poor health and poverty is startling, with the highest burden of chronic disease experienced by the poorest Victorians. Those with the least resources suffer the most illness, pain chronic disease and reduced life expectancy."

Source: - A Fairer Victoria - Strong People, Strong Communities May 2008

Some Volunteer opportunities with Second Bite

The following list of volunteer roles are available to people wishing to support second bites mission. So if you have some time to spare and would like to volunteer contact Lucinda or Sue from Whittlesea Volunteer Resource service on 9401 6666

Fund raising volunteer, a guru who can manage internal and external fundraising events

Telephones' volunteer to answer phones in case of events and emergencies

Proposal coordinator' volunteer who can manage and issue proposals to generate funding

PA and Administrator; 2 volunteer with strong administration skill and experience with Microsoft

Food Run; volunteers required to deliver and pick up fresh foods to various locations within Melbourne

Warehouse/logistics/store person; involves storting, packing and preparing daily deliveries

Whittlesea International Women's Day Awards 2009

International Women's Day is an occasion marked by groups around the world and commemorated by the United Nations. In the City of Whittlesea, Whittlesea Community Connections holds an annual Women's Day Awards Ceremony that recognises the voluntary contributions women make to their local community.

This year, the ceremony was postponed from it's original date in March to Friday the 3rd of April due to the devastating bushfires in February. This allowed those many volunteers that helped throughout the bushfire period to have an opportunity to nominate or be nominated for an award. A minute's silence was held before the commencement of the award ceremony lead my Mayor Mary Lalios to pay respect to those affected by the fires.

The awards ceremony provided an opportunity to reflect on the progress women have made. It's about raising awareness of issues important to women in the general community and bring together women from different ethnic linguistic, cultural, economic and political differences.

Dawn Ciechomski of Epping CFA was awarded the Whittlesea International Women's Day Award for her commitment to community safety and the local brigade. The following awards were also distributed.

Young Achievers- Deepty Cusima
Rural Women's Award- Gail Short
Senior Citizen Award- Elizabeth Pratt
Personal Achievement Award- Grace David

Newly Arrived Women's Award- Janet Bismyf.

The volunteer contribution to the black Saturday bushfires
Volunteer Profiles Mimi Malone & Gail Short

Volunteers have been key to the emergency and continuing support given to those impacted by the Victoria bushfires. They have contributed in a range of ways and in a variety of roles including feeding survivors and emergency services personnel, organising and distributing material aid, providing accommodation, information, transport and personal support to name just a few.

Mimi Malone and Gail Short have been volunteering in Whittlesea from the Tuesday after the fires began. They met when they were paired up to volunteer at the Information Desk set up by Whittlesea Community Connections. Both Mimi and Gail approached the centre 2 days after the fires to register as volunteers and were called in the following day to help. They worked together as a team to develop the info desk into a contact point for people as they arrive at the recovery centre in Laurel St Whittlesea, providing support and information to community members and helping them to navigate their way through the services at the centre.

'It's a very humbling experience and upon reflection, we've got more out of it than we ever thought we would. We have developed a wonderful friendship that will last beyond this experience".

Both Mimi and Gail continue to contribute their efforts in Whittlesea each day and are valued both by community members and service providers at the recovery centre. Gail recently received the *Rural Women's Award* at the Whittlesea International Women's Day Awards Ceremony for her contributions, and is also completing her Community Information Certificate with Lalor Living and Learning Centre.

Calendar

VOLUNTEER INFORMATION SESSION

Introduction to Volunteering sessions coming up : Tuesday June 30th 10:00am-12:00pm at Whittlesea Community Connections
Call Lucinda on 9401 6666 to register.

FREE COMPUTER TRAINING

Plenty Valley Salvation Army are providing Free Computer Courses starting on Wednesday 8th of July.
Ring David on 9436 9200 to book in.

COMMUNITY NOTICEBOARD

Volunteer Profile: Grace David

Grace David began her Volunteering with KidsUp when she came to Whittlesea Community Connections. "Sue knew that I had a son with a disability and that I was looking to do some volunteer work so she suggested I might be interested in coming to a meeting to form this new group. I was inspired b the enthusiasm of the people in the group". Grace decided to volunteer because she was at the receiving end of some very kind people who volunteered their services for her son, and she wanted to give back to the community. Grace attends meetings about once a month and spends some time at home organising events and keeping records. Last year, grace was treasurer for KidsUp and as also taken on the role of Secretary in 2009. " I have had to learn a lot, especially in my role as treasurer; this has helped me to gain confidence in my own abilities. I have met many new people which is wonderful. I have also gained better understanding of how community groups work and what supports are available. Grace says the best thing about volunteering is that she gets to meet and interact with new people all the time. "Some of the highlights of my role have been the smile on kids faces at our events and the sense of pride and achievement after a successful event. Away from her time as a volunteer, Grace enjoys spending time with her family and friends. This year, Grace received a Personal Achievement Award at the Whittlesea International Women's Day Awards for her contribution to the local community. Well done Grace! Keep up the good work!

Volunteer Position

Community kitchen facilitators (CKF) are required at Plenty Valley Community Health Ltd for the new 2009 Community Kitchen Program. As a CKF you would support a group over a 6 week period with further opportunities to facilitate follow up groups. Food handling and first aid courses Provided free of charge.

For more information contact:
WVRS on 9401 6666
At Whittlesea Community Connections
Shop 111 Epping Plaza, Epping.

COMMUNITY TRANSPORT SERVICE VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

There are volunteer opportunities now available in our community transport program!
We would love to hear from you if you have time to volunteer as a driver or navigator. No special license is needed and full training with a qualified driving instructor is provided. Men and women from all backgrounds and ages and those who speak languages other than English, are encouraged to get involved. If you are interested or need further information, call Lucinda on 9401 6666.

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