

Multicultural Project 2006-2007

Last year our office moved to new a premise (as temporary) at the Bourke Street Public School but all activities have been running from different places in Surry Hills. It has been a challenging year for us to deliver our services successfully and keeping our visibility in the community.

The highlights of this year's services are:

English conversation classes

This year we have offered 5 -4 English classes per week. The levels of language are beginner and intermediate. Classes help students to improve conversation, reading and writing skills as well as pronunciation. Besides teaching English conversation information sessions have been provided on NSW education and Health systems, Human rights and TAFE depending on the interests of students. Time to time students went on different excursions relating to the learning components.

This project has continued to work jointly with the Hope Street Community Centre. We have some volunteer teachers who have been dedicating their valuable time for the classes. I would like to thank Carolyn Benn, Carlyn Chen, Christine Macgeorge, Nancy Bennett, Liz Jacka, Annabel Walz and special thanks to Josh Knuts for their wonderful work throughout the year.

Days: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday Cost: \$10.00 donation per month

Multicultural cooking classes

Cooking classes are informal. People bring their own recipes and try them at the class. We have a roster for a month. People from the class put their name down as volunteer cooks. Other participants take part in cutting, chopping and cleaning. After cooking everybody has lunch together. Students from English classes and other services also attend these classes. Cooking classes are a good source of building up social gatherings, networking and as well as sharing cultural values and beliefs.

Time: 10.30 am on Friday Location: 320 Riley St, Surry Hills Cost: \$2.00 donation

Tai Chi

Tai Chi classes have been going well throughout the year. Johnny Lee is a master of Tai Chi, who has been involved with our centre for a long time. Johnny teaches different techniques of Tai Chi including balancing and gentle stretching. Classes held every Friday morning at the courtyard of Riley St hall.

Time: 10 am on Friday Location: 320 Riley St Cost: Gold coin donation

Monthly Excursion

This is a joint project with Central Sydney Community Transport and has recently been taken over by South Sydney Community Transport. Every month the community bus takes people to different scenic places in NSW. Elderly people from Surry Hills and other neighbouring suburbs join the trips.

Time: Once a month

Sewing Classes

This is a joint project with Northcott Community Centre. Public tenants and non-public tenants attend the classes. Ilda Mirdigya is a community worker who has started to teach recently. Classes are informal. People can bring anything to sew - new garments or something for alteration. Besides sewing, socializing and building up networks within the community are other aspects of this project. Thanks to Tracey Jones our former sewing teacher for her contribution to the classes.

Time: 10 am – 1pm Thursday Location: Northcott Community Centre Cost: Free

Walking Group

Walking group has been going on for many years. Every Wednesday the group meets at the Shanon Reserve and then they go for an hour walking after gentle stretching. Attendance has been low this year. Kate Melhopt our centre Manager will be involved in the group soon. Kate will lead the group. I am optimistic that people will enjoy Kate's company and will have a great time while walking and exploring our inner city.

Time: 8am on every Wednesday Location: Shannon Reserve Cost: Free

Others

Besides these the Multicultural project arranged different information sessions, excursions, conducted several focus groups and surveys to identify the needs of the community and to get feedback about our services. Information about different services, different organizations gets distributed among the clients. We have telephone and drop-in referrals also. Attending different network meetings and seminars, visiting different organizations were also interesting tasks.

The project also has advocated asylum seekers, public and private tenants. It has worked together with other services such as Occasional Care, OOSH, Monthly Market and the Yearly Festival. Recently we have compiled a recipe book. These recipes were provided by the cooks at the cooking classes.

Over the year we have worked closely with the City of Sydney Council, Northcott Community Centre, the Department of Housing, TAFE, AMES, Asylum Seekers' Centre, Central Sydney Community Transport, Sydney Multicultural Community Services, and other local community organisations. This year we have received the Small Grants from the City Of Sydney Council for our English classes, Multicultural Cooking classes and Sewing classes.

I would like to thank to my colleagues at the Centre, the Management Committee, Sandy Henderson, Carmen Rupe, Jann Piggott, Denyse Roberts, Barry McFarlane and all our volunteers, the City of Sydney Council, Central Sydney Community Transport and the Department of Community Services for their enormous supports and contributions.

Salma Begum
Multicultural Community Development Worker