



St Vincent de Paul Society
good works

SPARK News

Dear supporter,

In this newsletter we look back at the month of March to share highlights from programs we've run, resources on Refugees and staff updates.



As Term 1 comes to a close we would like to thank all our school partners, partner community services, volunteers and staff for the contribution they've made. Read on to find out more!

Farewell Program Officer Claire



This month SPARK farewell Program Officer Claire Phillips, the longest serving member of the team having joined in 2013. Claire has developed strong partnerships with communities, schools and volunteers in Liverpool to ensure newly arrived families settle well and thrive. We thank her for her dedication and passion to inspire inclusive communities and wish her all the best for the future! A message from Claire:

'I have loved my time working with SPARK – it is a program close to my heart and it has been a privilege to work alongside such an incredible team of staff, volunteers, community partners, children and families, school teachers and executives – and to see the positive impact that this kind of collaboration can have in our community. It is with a multitude of fond memories and loads of learning that I leave, and I would like to thank everyone I have met along the way who has made my experience so worthwhile. Farewell!!!'

March SPARK Program Highlights



Last Thursday dozens of newly arrived and established families were welcomed to Fairfield Public School for the second SPARK and [Joining the Dots Welcome Dinner](#). Families shared conversation, food and connection before ending the night with some dancing! A special thank you to all our partners and volunteers who pulled off such a wonderful welcome event.

Bright Sparks Learning Club continues to support newly arrived children make friends, build on a sense of belonging

in school and practice their English conversation skills. Last week Bright Sparks finished at seven schools with fun Active Sessions including a scavenger hunt, paper planes competition and Party Session.

Over thirty parents attended **1-2-3 Magic Emotion Coaching** run at Guildford and Old Guildford Public Schools this term. The evidenced based parenting program continues to be a popular and accessible way for many parents to learn strategies and share in ways to support their children and themselves through parenthood. Their toddlers were supported at **Little Sparks**, a supported play group run by SPARK Play group leaders and volunteers.

Engaging in Health for New Arrivals

SPARK have partnered to deliver dynamic and informative sessions on health. At Liverpool West Public school **UNSW Paediatric Society** ran a *Teddy Bear Hospital*, an interactive and fun set of activities where children learn about what to do in an emergency, what doctor's do and key parts of the body.



Primary Health Network South Western Sydney spoke to parents at Community Sparks Yennora Public School about the why and how of keeping children healthy. Parents had lots of questions about oral and ear health and were able to have their questions answered!

Community Sparks - Supporting Newly arrived Parents



For newly arrived parents from refugee, migrant and asylum seeker background Community Sparks encapsulates all the programs and activities we run to support them to settle well and thrive.

SPARK ran a *Parents as Volunteers Workshop* at Parramatta West Public School to introduce parents to volunteering as a pathway to education and employment. At Yennora and Fairfield Public Schools SPARK invited **Community First Step** to deliver two workshops to parents around mental health and managing budgets.

Next term SPARK are partnering with the **Liverpool Migrant Resource Centre** to run an *English Conversation Class* and *Citizenship class*. SPARK will continue to run parent groups, Bilingual Book Clubs, Excursions and English conversation in three schools in Fairfield.

Refugee Resources

Last week was the first **Refugee in Trauma Settlement Recover Conference** for Australia and New Zealand. The conference explored the most innovative and successful ways to support refugees as they recover from trauma and

resettle. SPARK attended a workshop on the delivery of Evidenced Based Programs to parents. The workshop highlighted the importance and relevance providing support and strategies to parents so that their families are strong, connected and resilient.

To learn more about the challenges and realities of the Refugee settlement experience in Australia you can [read this publication](#) from the Australian Institute of Family Studies. The study highlights that 89% of humanitarian migrants experienced traumatic events before migrating with an average of 40% of adults at high risk of psychological distress. Despite this and the ongoing challenge of securing housing, 80% said they felt welcome in Australia and 84% reported their settlement experience as good or very good.

Have a background in education? Apply to volunteer with Bright Sparks Tutor!



SPARK would like to call on volunteers who are qualified teachers or are working towards a teaching qualification. You'll work with children to support their academic development and English language acquisition. This would be an awesome opportunity to gain real life experience for beginners and an opportunity to share the skills and joy of giving back to the community for an experienced professional. For more details please click [here](#).

If you are interested in [volunteering](#), [partnering](#) with or [supporting](#) SPARK please find more information on our [website](#) or get in contact with us at spark@vinnies.org.au



If you are no longer interested in receiving Vinnies emails you can [unsubscribe instantly](#).