



St Vincent de Paul Society  
*good works*

## SPARK News

Dear supporter,

It's well into Term 2 and SPARK's programs have started up again. Along with Bright Sparks we are also running Parent Welcome Spaces, Bilingual Book Clubs, Parent Workshops and Little Sparks across our 9 partner schools.



We couldn't do this work alone and we'd like to give a special *Thank You* to our funding partners Gresham Partners Limited who support us through their Charitable Giving Program and The Smith Family Communities for Children.

SPARK is a small program with a big reach and it is thanks to our partners that we can continue. Read on to find out how we've been connecting communities!

### Welcome Indu

Last month SPARK welcomed Indu Pandey to the team as Volunteer Community and Engagement Officer. Indu will be working to build local volunteer engagement and strengthening links to other community organisations.



*'I have worked with The Smith family as a coordinator in their Volunteer engagement unit and come with solid experience in human resources and client engagement. I am delighted to join SPARK am looking forward to working with this wonderful team in the future. SPARK is set to change lives and bring inclusion in the community and I am thrilled to be part of this journey.'*

### SPARK supports Mega Seek A Skill

Over two days in the first week of May SPARK held a stall at Mega Seek A Skill. This exciting annual event offered real-life insight and advice to hundreds of primary and high school children about their future careers and SPARK was there to share the role of work of community development workers.



Apart from Year 6 students exploring their futures, scores of high school students from Sydney's South West asked about

volunteering with SPARK while parents were able to see what was on offer at SPARK schools. A special thanks to South West Connect for organising such a great initiative!

## National Volunteer Week

As part of National Volunteer Week SPARK staff member Claire and volunteer Ranji attended a lunch with MP Jenny Leong at State Parliament. SPARK was delighted to be recognised along with organisations such as the Asylum Seeker Centre, Welcome Dinner Project and other local initiatives.



Thank you to the thousands of volunteers who have supported the SPARK program since its beginning in 2006. We have grown and changed throughout this decade but the commitment and passion of our volunteers has remained exceptional. Happy National Volunteer Week!

## Bright Sparks in focus

Term 2 has started at all 9 of our partner schools in Liverpool, Fairfield, Parramatta and Auburn. Last term we asked volunteers if we were achieving our stated outcomes. This term we are putting into action their suggestions and focusing on reaching these through a range of activities. Bright Sparks aims to help newly arrived children:



1. Make friends and develop their social skills
2. Build a sense of belonging and trust at school
3. Develop an awareness and understanding of their wider community and society
4. Develop their confidence and resilience
5. Build aspirational thinking and goal setting
6. Develop their English language and conversation skills
7. Develop their literacy and numeracy skills

We are always excited to see how we can improve and grow in all areas and will keep you updated on our progress!

## Spotlight: SPARK Bilingual Workers

SPARK have a dedicated team of bilingual workers who help us run parent programs across different schools in Fairfield and Liverpool. An essential part of the team, these Arabic speaking workers are able to connect with and support parents in



their first language. Ghada is a bilingual worker currently working at Marsden Road and Yennora Public Schools:

*'I am studying social work in university. My goals are: Help new refugees settle in as I was a refugee myself when I came to Australia so I know how being a new arrival feels and I would love to help them feel safe. I would also like to achieve my other goal of encouraging parents, especially women to create goals for themselves, gain knowledge in their life and make new friends.'*

## **SPARK Active Kids school holidays volunteers needed!**

Do you enjoy playing energetic games with children? Are you enthusiastic and passionate about sport? Do you have time to spare this July school holidays? SPARK are looking for volunteers to assist with our Active Kids holiday program that will run on three separate days in July. If you are interested please email [spark@vinnies.org.au](mailto:spark@vinnies.org.au) with 'Active Kids' in the headline.



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