



St Vincent de Paul Society  
*good works*

## SPARK News

Dear supporter,



This school holidays we look back on September and all that has been achieved at SPARK. Two schools have taken a new step forward in their partnership with SPARK, we partnered with The Metropolitan Orchestra for a special first-ever event and our bilingual workers made connections with parent through our Community Sparks excursions all over Sydney.

Read on to find out more and to find the link to our brand new website!

## The Metropolitan Orchestra



For the first time ever SPARK has partnered with [The Metropolitan Orchestra](#) to hold two kid-friendly cushion-concerts of the popular childhood story *Peter & The Wolf*.

Newly arrived refugee and migrant families from Yennora and Fairfield public schools were treated to an unforgettable experience that included a lively, animated concert followed by a meet and greet with musicians. Close to 200 parents and children were able to get up close and personal with their favourite instruments and characters.

Many families had been in Australia a matter of months and for most it was the very first time they had ever seen an Orchestra. Children and parents were curious and excited about this new experience with one young child telling a musician about her new ambition, *'I want to do what you do'*.

Thank you to General Manager Bevan, Chief Conductor and Artistic Director Sarah-Grace and all of the wonderful musicians at The Metropolitan Orchestra for sharing your talent and warmth with the Fairfield Community and SPARK. Special thanks to volunteers, staff from Fairfield & Yennora Public schools and to previous SPARK manager Cyril O'Connor whose vision and initiative made the event possible. For more photos [visit our facebook page](#).

## New Steps in School Partnerships for Guildford & Parramatta West Public Schools



Building programs that are sustainable is a challenge for any community development program and we are proud to announce that two schools have committed to funding SPARK for the next year. Our Bright Sparks program has run since 2007 at Parramatta West Public School and 2010 at Guildford Public School.

Schools' commitment to funding the SPARK program means our partnerships have strengthened and we are able to offer not only Bright Sparks learning club but our exciting SPARKLE program aimed at transition to high school for year 5 and 6 children. Thank you to Principals Anthea and Chris for your commitment and support!

## Community Sparks goes to Manly, The Botanical Gardens and beyond!



Excursions are a key part of connecting newly arrived parents to each other and important sites in Sydney. This September newly arrived parents from three different schools were supported by bilingual workers Ghada, Reem, Saw and Maisoon to make these important new connections.

For the first time parents from *Yennora Public School* hopped on the train and ferry to Manly where they shared a lovely lunch and celebrated one parent's birthday with a cake. Parents at *Liverpool West Public School* took a community bus to the Botanical Gardens where they put on a bountiful picnic in the sun.

SPARK also supported an excursion organised by *Fairfield Public School* Community Liaison Officer Maisoon who brought newly arrived families to key services in the Fairfield area including Centrelink, Fairfield hospital and the library.

Thank you to all of our bilingual workers whose enthusiasm and welcome goes a long way in supporting the parents we work with!

## SPARK has a new website!

We are very excited to announce the launch of our new SPARK website! There you can find up-to-date information about all of our programs and partnerships. For volunteers we have a full list of the roles available and have updated the



application so that it is easier to navigate.

Our new website also includes inspiring stories and pictures from past programs. We hope this new website can better connect SPARK with its supporters, partners and the wider community. You can visit the website [here](#).

## Communities For Children Fairfield grows and shines!



Since becoming a Community Partner with *Communities For Children* facilitated by *The Smith Family* in June 2015, SPARK have been able to grow our presence in the community and our partnerships with other organisations.

Last Friday Program Officers Katherine and Grace attended a workshop facilitated by Communities For Children Fairfield focused on how we can better support the families we work with. Topics included being able to better refer families to key services, better engaging men and strengthening our relationships with schools.

We would like to thank Allyson, Randa and Cate from facilitating partner The Smith Family and our fellow Community Partners, in particular Parks Community Inc, PHOR and South West Connect for partnering with us on a number of initiatives!

If you are interested in volunteering, partnering with or supporting SPARK please get in contact with us at [spark@vinnies.org.au](mailto:spark@vinnies.org.au)

[www.vinnies.org.au](http://www.vinnies.org.au)



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