



St Vincent de Paul Society
good works

SPARK celebrates 10 years!



Dear supporter,

As SPARK celebrates 10 years since its formation in 2006 we would like to highlight some milestones of 2016. We also welcome a new manager, share updates about new programs, outcomes from ongoing programs and ask for [book donations](#) for Christmas!

As we continue to work with community partners, volunteers, schools and organisations, we celebrate the many successes that have grown from this support along the way.

This will be our latest newsletter for the year as we plan and prepare for 2017. SPARK holiday programs will run in January and regular school term programs will commence in February. We wish all of our supporters a happy holidays however they celebrate!

Watch, Share & Be Inspired by our new SPARK video



Thanks to the generous support of the Janssen foundation, SPARK have a brand new video that was premiered at our end of Year Volunteer Thank You Event. [You can watch it here to get inspired!](#)

Welcome SPARK & Compeer Manager Anne Bouboulas

Last month SPARK welcomed Anne Bouboulas to the team as manager for SPARK and Vinnies Mental Health program Compeer. Anne brings with her many years of experience across a variety of program areas including disability, mental health, carers, CALD, Emergency Relief, aged day centres, dementia specific programs and community aged care programs. Anne's commitment to improving quality of life and opportunities for Australian communities has driven her choice to work in the Not For Profit area her entire career. We look forward to the exciting things in the future for SPARK with Anne as new manager.

Give the gift of language by donating to SPARK's Bilingual Book Club!

SPARK's diverse library of bilingual books means that newly arrived families can engage in reading at home, regardless of cultural or linguistic background. We have hundreds of books but we are in need of more to grow this amazing initiative across more schools! To find out how you can donate [click here](#).



Reading with children at home nurtures their imagination, builds their language and literacy skills, and fosters a love of learning. With the introduction of a facilitated parents circle to the Bilingual Book Club, parents also have an opportunity to come together with other multicultural families to learn how to support their children's learning, share experiences and ideas, and support each other in raising happy, confident bilingual children. If you are passionate about SPARK and reading please consider making a donation!

Thank You Event 2016

On the last Friday of November SPARK held our Volunteer Thank You Event. To the hundreds of volunteers that have given their time in 2016 and the thousands that have supported us since we started in 2006 - a very big THANK YOU!



The event was a great success - there was music, there was dancing, there was laughter and there was a LOT of food! Long-term volunteer Loretto shared her experience volunteering with SPARK. [Read Loretto's speech](#) on our Stories page. Our ever exuberant bilingual facilitator Reem led everybody in some traditional Arabic dancing and many photos were taken in the SPARK photo booth!

The SPARK program could not run without the enthusiasm, passion, commitment and joy of our volunteers. Thank you for your support and we hope you have a lovely holiday season however it is you celebrate it! For more photos please [visit our facebook page here](#).

Community Sparks grows in 2016!

SPARK's commitment to supporting whole families has meant that in the last couple of years we have worked hard to engage newly arrived parents in a range of initiatives. The settlement journey is a long one and there are different types of support that can help parents in their transition to study, work and Australian life.



This year SPARK has invited a range of speakers to talk to parents about health, visas, centrelink, citizenship and more. In addition to linking parents with organisations in the community, we have also developed and run a suite of

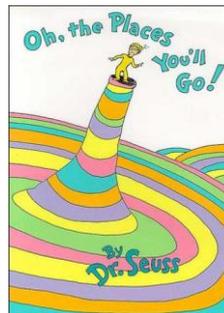
workshops and programs that support parents' own learning and capacity to support their children.

In 2016 we are proud to have ran seven parent excursions and 27 parent workshops this year including 1-2-3 Magic, Benefits of Bilingualism, Parents As Volunteers, Numeracy and Literacy workshops and Information Technology. It is thanks to the work of our bilingual facilitators, whose connection to the language, culture and experiences of the parents we work with, enables us to have such a positive impact. We look forward to continuing to support many more newly arrived families in 2017!

SPARKLE Drumming & Drama workshops run for the first time in Term 4

This year the SPARK team have been developing a series of SPARKLE workshops aimed at supporting children in their transition to high school. At Guildford Public School twelve year 6 children explored peer pressure through drumming.

Children learned to create their own rhythms and one child said *"I learnt not to put pressure on people because it can hurt their feelings."*



Children at Fairfield Public School explored the idea of failure as a First Attempt In Learning and thought about their futures by reading Dr Seuss's 'Oh The Places You'll Go'. The workshops, run by NIDA graduate and teacher Emily, enabled the children to learn to work together to improvise a scene, work through set-backs and create a video that was shown at their final graduation session of Bright Sparks!

With seven SPARKLE workshops held at two schools this year, our hope is that newly arrived children feel confident and are equipped with the tools they need to enter this new phase of their life.

Circus & Active Kids continue to inspire



SPARK recognises the value of running programs for both newly arrived and established children. Both our Circus and Active Kids programs are integrated programs that include a mix of children who participate, work together and have fun in these dynamic programs. As part of our aim to *Inspire Inclusive Communities* both Active Kids and Circus make sure new friendships are made and new connections forged.

This year Circus ran at two different schools and Active Kids ran for three terms at two schools. To date the Circus program has reached over 250 children while Active Kids

has reached over 100 kids in the holiday program and 40 children in its regular school-based programs. We would like to thank all of our partners, volunteers and funders for increasing the impact of SPARK through their support!

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](#).