



St Vincent de Paul Society
good works

SPARK News

Dear supporter,

Here at SPARK July has been full of reviewing and reflecting on our programs while also preparing for the term ahead. We're proud to have been able to deliver a range of innovative programs for the first time and to be always improving upon the quality of all SPARK activities.



The work that goes on behind the scenes includes a huge team of volunteers, interns, bilingual workers, partners and funders so thank you once again for your continuing support!

The Dramas of language learning

Learning English is often a daunting and key part of the settlement process for both adults and children.

To support the language learning of newly arrived families, SPARK staff and bilingual workers attended a fun workshop run by TEFL trained teacher and volunteer Noreen. Noreen's experience teaching English in Spain included using drama and plays to increase confidence and fun.



SPARK Staff put themselves in the shoes of those learning a new language and attempted putting on a play in Spanish. We hope to incorporate this training into our english learning programs with both adults and children in the future.

Bright Sparks End of Term Activities

Our End of Term Special Sessions have been super dynamic this term with volunteer teams across schools running activities that use their skills and engage children to think outside of the box.



This term Bright Sparks children created monsters and rocket ships out of recycled art, learned to dance the hokey pokey, got active with sports stations and games and even completed a scavenger hunt! Great work to all schools and in particular volunteer leaders Sarah, Jan, Jane, Chris, Courtney, Ranji, Lorraine and Leta.

Active Zone

Here at SPARK we want to make sure our programs are making a difference. A key part of this is evaluation - gathering information from volunteers, staff and participants themselves. Here are some highlights from our review of the first Active Zone Program that ran at Yennora last term:



100% of children reported enjoyed playing sport and active games at Active Zone while 86% of students felt part of a team.

We asked children 'Why is team work important?' and one child replied *"Because when you all work together, you can achieve more."* One volunteer remarked, *"You could tell that the kids knew each other's names and were cheering each other on. They had more friendships than at the beginning."*

Thank you to our intern Amelia for putting together the Active Zone Booklets that include tips of healthy living and to all volunteers who gave their time to make this program so successful!

Community Sparks workshops



At our Liverpool Schools last Term SPARK ran Numeracy and Bilingualism workshops for parents. These workshops aim to equip parents to support their children's learning.

SPARK Volunteer and ex-teacher Wendy McKay developed and ran the **Numeracy workshop** at Marsden Road PS with 18 parents and then at Liverpool West with 12 parents. The workshops were very popular and parents found it extremely useful. Thank you Wendy for your support and contribution!

At the request of Liverpool West PS, Program Officer Claire delivered a second **Bilingualism Workshop** for parents. A wide range of parents attended to hear about the importance of bilingualism and some tips on how to support bilingual learning in their children.

Spotlight: Reem

SPARK are fortunate to have a fantastic team of bilingual workers who run many of our parent programs. Reem Brown was our first bilingual worker joining the team over a year ago. Reem is an Iraqi Arabic speaker with a refugee background and is a student in Acup college studying a Master Degree in Social Work.



'I work with communities to help them support refugees. They have often suffered in their journeys. I support the

SPARK program to help children engage and build networks with other kids. I believe if you want to build a future without fear, in a healthy environment, you need people to start supporting refugee families and children.'

Reem is one of two bilingual workers running the Parent Space at Yennora Public School and has also worked on our Circus Program at Fairfield Public School.

If you are interested in volunteering, partnering with or supporting SPARK please get in contact with us at spark@vinnies.org.au



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