



St Vincent de Paul Society  
*good works*

## SPARK News

Dear supporter,

We are half way through the year and what an exciting first half it's been! This term SPARK launched Active Kids at Yennora Public School and ran excursions and workshops for parents in Fairfield and Liverpool. Bright Sparks continued to run in 8 schools and will finish the term with drama, dance, art and sports sessions planned.



As we celebrate Refugee Week we thank all of our supporters, partners, volunteers and staff who have enabled us to achieve our vision of *inspiring inclusive communities*.

## Refugee Week 19-26 June

Fittingly taken from our National Anthem, the theme for Refugee Week for 2015 to 2017 is "*With courage let us all combine*". This Refugee Week we take time to celebrate and promote the diversity, resilience and courage of our newest Australians.



Here at SPARK we are always inspired by the courage of the refugees who participate in our programs, the volunteers giving their time and the schools, organisations and wider community promoting inclusion and harmony.

SPARK would like to encourage you to add your name to the [#WithRefugees petition](#) to send a clear message to governments that they must act with solidarity and shared responsibility. We stand together #WithRefugees. Please stand with us.

There are many fantastic Refugee Week events happening all over Australia, [find one near you!](#)

## Active Kids at Yennora

Every Tuesday afternoon 20 children from Yennora Public School have been getting energised with SPARK Active Kids. From skills in European Handball to a Mini-Olympic Session, Active Kids aims to give children an opportunity to experience an inclusive team setting where they build life-long skills and a positive attitude to health.



A big thank you to volunteers Dinesh, Suraj, Ranji, Hareesh, Jenny, SPARK bilingual facilitator Anne and YPS principal Anja for supporting such a successful and well-loved program!

## Marsden Road Parent Picnic

Despite an overcast morning 17 parents, 3 bilingual facilitators, 1 Community Liaison Officer and Program Officer Claire had a lovely outing to Chipping Norton Lakes. A mix of established and newly arrived parents from Marsden Road Public School shared food and conversation at a picnic on what turned out to be a very sunny afternoon!



SPARK excursions are a fun and important opportunity for parents to meet new people, practise their english, explore Sydney and connect to the school and wider community.

## Community Sparks workshops

SPARK have been busy developing and running workshops for parents to better equip them to support their children. Read below about the 3 different courses we ran this term.



### **Pathways to Volunteering Workshop**

15 parents from Iraq, Indonesia, Lebanon, Iran and Cambodia came together to attend a Volunteering Pathways workshop at Fairfield Public School. They learned about volunteering in Australia and how it could help them make friends, learn english and gain local experience. One newly arrived parent gave her reason for volunteering, *'I came here as a refugee and I believe it is our duty to give back.'*

### **1-2-3 Magic Emotion Coaching Course**

8 Parents came to this parenting course delivered over three weeks giving parents tools to deal with their child's behaviour. Delivered in English and Arabic, this course enabled parents to find supporting in raising their children here in Australia. Thank you Gina and Maisoon from Fairfield Public School for helping SPARK reach these families!

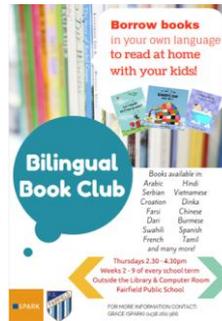
### **Citizenship workshops**

20 parents at Marsden Road have been attending a citizenship course run by our Bilingual Facilitators Anne and

Faye. As they prepare to take their next step in their journey as Australians, these parents have learned about Australian culture, law and history.

## Building Bright Bilingual Futures

SPARK believe in the importance of bilingual learning and have started Bilingual Book Clubs in four schools across Fairfield and Liverpool. Close to 200 books have been borrowed by more than 50 parents in more than 15 languages. These clubs are run by our arabic speaking bilingual workers who themselves know first hand the benefits of knowing both english and another language. Thank you Ghada, Rheem, Anne and Bernadette!



SPARK would like to promote and support bilingualism by highlighting Lost in Books, a similar initiative in Liverpool that is looking for support to create a dedicated space where parents and children can come together to read, share and connect in their first language - please check out their [Start Some Good campaign](#)

## SPARK holds First Aid Training

Last month SPARK partnered with the [Australian Refugee Volunteers](#) to deliver free First Aid training to our Bilingual Facilitators, staff and Volunteer leaders at our office in Lewisham.



As the range of SPARK programs grows with Active Kids, Excursions, Circus programs and other events we want to make sure our Bilingual Facilitators and volunteers receive training to support these.

Thank you to the 12 SPARK members and 9 ARV volunteers who attended on the day!

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

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