



Sanctuary Northern Rivers Inc

A community based refugee support group

PO Box 1146 Lismore NSW 2480

www.sanctuary.asn.au

info@sanctuary.asn.au

Newsletter

August 2009...

From the president's pen . . .

There was a very poignant moment at the recent Gala Dinner, where Djuma, a young man of Congolese heritage who has recently arrived with us, stepped to the microphone. His courage in uttering just a few words was palpable: "I arrived in that camp in 2000 – and there my life was full of darkness", he said. "Life seemed without future; and then, in 2007, some hope emerged". And then it was the words that were not uttered that seemed to move us all. His presence, and that of his extended family spoke the words that could not be found, provoked a silent tear from many in the room. Our defining moments lie in the reflection on the work that we do; though it is seemingly few refugees that we reach, the very action of that reach brings light to many beyond our imagining.

It has been a busy month; we have welcomed four family groups, with another young Somali woman and her child to join us in mid-September. There are a number of other applications in the pipeline – it is certainly our hope that these applications will meet with success.

Many members and friends will be aware of the forum we held in May to seek direction on the extent and focus of refugee settlement within the local community. There was strong endorsement to continue in the direction that we have, and since that forum, a small group have endeavoured to provide guidance as to who should be sponsored; such decisions have not been easy, transitioning from an affirmative response to all refugees who seek our help, to one that is more discerning, focusing upon family connections (with those previously settled), the most vulnerable (e.g. young women), and young families; these prioritised sub-groups will be mixed with others in trying to maintain cultural diversity and links with customary norms – not an easy task! We have not set any definitive annual quota or country/continent specific.

Other events of the month included the hearings for the Human Rights Commission, which again expounded the positive contribution that the African community make to the broader social fabric in our community. We have also seen a transition in support agencies. St Vincent de Paul was awarded to the contract to establish the North Coast Refugee Service – with Mr Phillip Venness responsible for program development for the settled community; this will complement the inputs of Sanctuary Northern Rivers and Anglicare (who are contracted to support Sanctuary during the early months of settlement). Our gratitude to Mark Rusconi and the Lismore Neighbourhood Centre for their efforts over recent years in support of the settled entrants.

Finally, our call for volunteers to assist with the increase in arrivals has been fruitful. We have been blessed with a number of fine and positive people, young and older, who have shown a willingness to give a hand. The first cohort of these are being orientated and informed through a training program, conducted on a weekly basis over the past 6 weeks. This program provides both big picture, as well as detailed 'hands-on' knowledge of needs for refugee support on arrival. Demand exists for another course – we will provide information shortly as to how this will be managed.

We also welcome the efforts of Mullumbimby in wishing to initiate refugee settlement in the community there - hopefully we will soon have families settling in a number of towns out from Lismore.

To all those involved in the Dinner – thank you. We shared in something quite extraordinary. *Michael*



Annual Gala Dinner

It is with much gratitude to all who participated in the evening either as an audience member or as a volunteer, that we report this amazing Sold-Out Gala Event!

Supporters of Sanctuary Northern Rivers gathered in the A&I Hall in Bangalow on Sat August 29th to raise much-needed funds, to have a great night, and in the process, gained a better appreciation of what Sanctuary actually does for refugees!

About 180 guests attended. They were welcomed to the hall by a group of Rythm Konnections Drummers who set the scene for the journey from Africa to Australia. Once inside, diners were treated to some extraordinary chamber music by Ian Bowles' String Trio. Drinks flowed, and canapés were abundant until our MC, local ABC Radio host Bruce Mackenzie, called everyone to their tables. Parissa's Ruby Tuesday Choir took to the stage and stole the show with their enchanting renditions of African songs.

Then the audience were taken on the emotional "Letters of Hope" journey detailing the process that Sanctuary implements when sponsoring refugees in the camps of Africa.

Oh the Food! The Glorious Food! A BIG Congratulations to the Nash family Team! The kitchen seemed to run like clockwork and the food was outstanding!

Not a dry eye in the hall remained after an impromptu, moving presentation of flowers to Sanctuary from the Kikombe and Mapatano family who recently arrived in Lismore after ten years in Kakuma Refugee Camp.

Throughout the night the Raffles, Pick-a-box and Silent auctions kept hands in wallets and with such overwhelming generosity, Sanctuary has raised nearly \$10,000!!! What a night! Thanks again to all who participated, it was such a moving, informative and successful evening!

Gala Raffle Winners

BluesFest tickets: Nick (on the night)
Weekend @ Broadview Apartments
Bruns: Michael Claas
NORPA family pass: Heather Smith
Night@ "Salt" Resort Kingscliffe:
Huw Darnell and Louise

Thanks to all those individuals and businesses who contributed to the Gala Fundraiser, we sincerely hope we have mentioned you all on the opposite page!

Updates for our website www.sanctuary.asn.au :

A new page for volunteers and an information page for refugees

You can subscribe to this newsletter via the website

A new project page is under development detailing the work of the UDHR project
In the member's area:

- You can find all the minutes of Sanctuary's board meetings once they have been approved by the board.
- New policy documents including the selection criteria for sponsorship of refugees as developed from the public forum earlier this year.
- A calendar of board meetings



Thank you to our Major Sponsors:

*The Rug Shop
Bangalow*

Bluesfest Pty Ltd

NORPA

*Millar and Moore
Bangalow*

Peppers 'Salt' Resort

Broadview Waterfront Apartments

Brunswick Heads

Lisa Sharpe Photography

Thank you to all our fabulous contributors!

ABRACADABRA

African Drummers
Alstonville Cellars

Bangalow Cellars

BANGALOW COFFEE

Bangalow Pharmacy

Bangalow Post Office

Bangalow Real Estate

Bangalow Rose Florist

Barebones Artspace, Bangalow

Bay Kaz-Bah New Age Emporium

Be-Be Bold

Blackboards, Lennox Head

Brook Farm

Bruce Mackenzie

*Byron Farmers Market
Assoc'n*

BYRON WEDDING AND PARTY HIRE

Caddies Coffee

Callum Jones

Cevalogistics

Charlotte Parlour Bangalow

Darell Lea Chocolates Lismore

Darling Buds Mullumbimby

DALEYS NURSERY

Don't tell Mama, Bangalow

Dymocks

Earth and Sea Byron Bay

Edens Landing Mullum

ESP Cafe Alstonville

Fish Heads, Bangalow

Fishy Fishy, Lennox Head

Flying Goolie Byron Bay

Goanna Bakery Lismore

Guy (Sound)

Haiku framing and Design Byron

Harvest Cafe, Newrybar

Heart of the Home, Bangalow

House, Lismore Square

Howards Storage

Ian Bowles and Friends

Il Postino Cafe Bar Alstonville

Island Luxe

Jacinta Lithgow | JusticeWorks

Kid's World Byron Bay

Lazybones Bangalow

Left Bank Cafe

LIME, LENNOX HEAD

Lismore Lantern Parade

Lismore Music Centre

LISMORE UNDERGROUND

Lotions and Potions Mullumbimby

Mamet and Associates

Marisa's Yoga

MaryRyans Bookshop Byron Bay

Mitre 10 Byron Bay

Douglas and Nash families

Sanctuary volunteers

My Favourite Video

Natural Healing Place

Noah's Arc

Northern Rivers Writers Centre

Wholly Smoked Byron Bay

Paul Partridge

PHARMACY, LENNOX HEAD

Psycho Mullumbimby

Ruby Tuesday

Shanti Town Mullumbimby

Sweet Pea Gelato cafe, Lismore

Talisman, Lennox Head

TANDOOR MAHAL BANGALOW

The Book Warehouse Lismore

THE BOOKSHOP MULLUMBIMBY

Toy Kingdom Lismore

Traditional Medicinals

Tursa Mullumbimby

UQ Press

Varij Astrologer

Vintage Eastern Antiques

Vitamin Records Mullum

Wholly Smoked
Organic Butchers

Zentvelds Coffee

Zilpha



HOMEWORK CENTRE

After a couple of false starts, Homework Centre has appointed its new coordinator!! Congratulations Jenny McGrath!

Primary and secondary aged students are coming along receiving the benefits of dedicated one-on-one tutoring. With new arrivals this month, the numbers of new students will swell and so the demand for tutors is again critical!



If you can spare a few hours on Monday or Wednesday to help tutor this eager bunch, please contact Community Connections:
Phone: 66223143
frontdesk@communityconnections.org.au
Drop in: 17B Keen St , Lismore

Universal Declaration of Human Rights Project

Goonellabah Public (pictured) and Evans River K-12 have received banners in the past two months.

Each wall hanging costs between \$120 and \$200. They are given to the schools free-of-charge by generous contributors to the project. *Russell*



If you would like more information on either how schools can access the offer or to contribute to the project please contact:
Russell Trebilcock: 6624 7458 or **email:** info@sanctuary.asn.au



Volunteering with Sanctuary

This month has seen great excitement with the commencement of the inaugural Sanctuary Volunteering Course run through Lismore TAFE Outreach.



Happy Sanctuary Volunteers: Brian, Rosalie and Sue

Over-subscribed by more than 50%, the course has brought together a wonderful group of people with great diversity in background and skills. The course is coordinated by Sue Darnell, with support for content development and presentation from Katherine Morrison, Dave Noble and others.

Several of the course participants have had the opportunity for hands-on experience with the recent arrival of two Congolese families. Initially apprehensive, some new volunteers have delighted in the opportunity to assist new arrivals to settle quickly into the Lismore region.

If you would like to participate in volunteering one or more of the following areas please send an expression of interest by email to info@sanctuary.asn.au

Settlement:

meet & greet on arrival
transportation around the local area
furniture assembly
furniture sourcing
assistance with banking, Centrelink,

Homework tutoring: assisting with homework tutoring after school

Driving: assisting with the driver training and experience program

Administration: helping with photocopying & filing, mailouts, grant writing,
fundraising: coordinating a range of fundraising activities.

New Arrivals

Ashagrie Wubet Ayele from Ethiopia aged 28 arrived on the 4th of September. He is the first member of the Lismore Ethiopian Community to arrive.

Adeyemi and daughter Delcilia Johnson have been in Lismore for over a year now and have recently been reunited with wife/ mother Cecilia and their 10 year old son who arrived mid-August.

Gisele Ngabo Dhungula aged 30 and her Daughter Jemima Dhungula Kayoyi aged 1 will be arriving mid-September and will be our first settlers from Somali.

“The community of Lismore proudly welcomes you to a new home of peace and prosperity. We recognise the trials of your journey and the hopes that you now share with us. May your lives be enriched by the future that now awaits you.” Quote from Welcome Certificate presented to new arrivals by Lismore City Council

On the 31st of July two Congolese families related to Aggripine and Eraston arrived at Ballina Airport and were received by an ecstatic welcoming party. They are : Jean Claude Mapatano Mweneciogoha aged 31, DjiDji Sanvura Barhalengehwa aged 32, Daniel Mungu Ankokwa Mapatano aged 3 months, Yves Sanvura Muchungaji aged 17, Guershom Sanvura Murimanya aged 17, and Anuarite Sanvura aged 16. Djuma Ostrinov Strelly Kikombe aged 30, Francine Angelani Sanvura aged 23, Bernard Assumani Kikombe aged 16 and Riziki Jeje Kikombe aged 14.



Up-coming Events

Sanctuary Northern Rivers Ordinary Board Meetings

October: Wednesday 14th 6.30pm, Lismore Workers Club

November: Wednesday 11th, 6.30pm, Lismore Neighbourhood Centre

December: Wednesday 9th, 6.30pm, Lismore Workers Club

All members welcome and encouraged to attend!



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Sanctuary's Annual General Meeting will be scheduled for the last week of Sept or the first week of Oct. Members will be notified by mail or email and notice of the event will be posted on the website.

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Sanctuary Northern Rivers Board Members 2008/09

Executive:

President - Michael Douglas

Treasurer - Brian Nash

Vice-President - Russell Trebilcock

Secretary - Dave Noble

General Board Members:

Sue Darnell

Katherine Morrison

Paul Morreti

Contact Sanctuary Northern Rivers:

Administrative Support Officer: Cherie Mamet

(02) 6621 7397 (Wed & Fri)

Postal Address:

Sanctuary Northern Rivers, P.O.Box 1146, Lismore NSW 2480

Email: info@sanctuary.asn.au

Website: www.sanctuary.asn.au

Office Address: Lismore Neighbourhood Centre, 76 Carrington St

Attended: Wed and Fridays