



Sanctuary Northern Rivers Inc

A community based refugee support group

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Newsletter December 2009...

From the President's pen: prophets of courage and joy

There is an inevitable link between the refugee journey and human rights. The refugee emerges from a compromise of rights. Basic rights – of belief, of conviction, of security, of food and shelter. The refugee seeks protection of these fundamental tenets of social fabric. Their flight most commonly is in the context of fear, shrouded by grief, loss and pain. It is driven by the most ardent, yet primal desire that life has a higher value – and each human being is pursuant on a journey that preserves life. My observation, however, is that while unimaginable circumstances may drive persons on the journey, their ability to continue to walk the road is inflamed by hope. As it may have been belief or conviction that was cause for their flight, it is belief and conviction that sustains the flight. It is an admirable trait of the refugee that bears lessons for us all: 'my journey is destined for a more beautiful tomorrow'.

So it is, have I grown in these recent years. Prior to the local settlement of refugees in Northern Rivers, my personal interaction had mostly been with refugees incarcerated in camps; people in limbo – no home to return to, yet unsure of where they may go. In these recent years, as we now walk those who make our community their home, it brings a new insight of that indomitable spirit: that courage and perseverance will deliver; that joy will emerge, not without its trials, but emerge it does. Throughout this past week, I can cite numerous examples of the new arrivals, refugees who have found a place to call home, who continue to inspire by their conviction and joy:

- A young Burundian who travelled down from Brisbane. Two years ago, Sanctuary Northern Rivers tried unsuccessfully to sponsor him, however, he has since gained a visa, is here alone, and now earnestly advocating for his community who remain in the refugee camp;
- Jean-Claude, a young Congolese man, who was popularly elected to the Board of SNR: "I want to make a difference for all people who come from this refugee experience";
- This morning's early morning call from Djuma to say: "I have a son! My Australian son";

Several years ago, while travelling down the Thai/Burma border, I met two young Burmese ladies, who had been in a refugee camp there for more than five years: "We are off to study law" they said, as we bounced along on the back of an open bus. "If we know the law, then we can confront the government. One day, we will return to our country – where we can live without fear".

Courage and joy are part of the same continuum. What privilege we have with our access to rights and prosperity, sometimes assumed. And indeed, what privilege that we have those now amongst us, who for many years found their basic rights so elusive, that teach us of courage and joy.

This week's Board meeting acknowledged the need to slow our affirmative response to the many refugees who write and seek our support. We simply have too many in the pipeline at this time to absorb additional applicants at present. Currently there are close to a hundred applications with the Department of Immigration and Citizenship awaiting determination; once these are processed, we can then consider further applications. There is much to do – and we continue to depend greatly on the community support – your support - to ensure that we remain inspired and moved by the prophets of courage and joy that continue to settle amongst us.

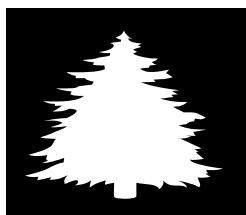
Michael Douglas Dec 2009



*Congratulations to Djuma and Francine!
Their Australian son Elvis was born at about
2am Sunday morning 22nd November.*

Visa Approval is imminent for a Rwandese family of four. They will be our first family from Rwanda and will more than likely arrive before June 2010. More details will be available in the New Year.

Sanctuary's Community Xmas Party



**SUNDAY
13 DEC**

12noon-4pm

**Presby Church Hall
Keen St
(opp Woolies)**

Members of the wider community are invited to share in the celebration of new beginnings for refugees in our area and to welcome the most recent arrivals to Lismore

Bring food and drink to share!!



Do you know anyone who wants to phone loved ones in Africa?
The phone card with the cheapest rates to Africa (that we have found so far) is:
The Lebara Phone Card available from Allphones at the Lismore Shopping Square.



Member's Contributions

Mary and Jack's BBQ

Mary and Jack O'Brien kindly hosted a Ballina Community BBQ in support of Sanctuary. They were able to raise over \$1500 in donations!! Support from Sophie Raston, Wicked Restaurant, Brite Sparks Kids Wear, Office Works and the Ballina Hotel was greatly appreciated! Thanks Mary for an amazing contribution to the on-going work of Sanctuary Northern Rivers.

Curry by Candlelight

Curry by Candlelight

A beautiful evening of Curry, Candlelight and Good Works was organised by Yvonne Pfeiffer, long time member of Sanctuary. Over \$700 was raised during the evening and this money will go towards Sanctuary's valuable work with refugees. We appreciate your fantastic commitment, Yvonne, and look forward to the Chicken Korma next year!

Friends and family of Alison Lucas, were treated to a terrific night of wining and dining in support of Sanctuary Northern Rivers last month. The informal family fun night raised \$180. Alison and Ric, although new to Sanctuary have provided family weekends to a number of new arrivals and also volunteered at the Mullum Music Festival! Many thanks Alison and Ric for your creative input and participation.

The Lucas Family Dinner

Welcome to member Rosalie Ellis who, through Tursa has signed up to do Work Experience in administration with Sanctuary Northern Rivers. Rosalie will be working 6hrs a week with our Admin Support Officer at the Lismore Neighbourhood Centre on Wed and Thurs. Double thanks to Tursa Lismore: for Rosalie's placement and the donation of a much needed 2nd office computer that Rosalie will be utilizing during her work experience.



And also thanks to Rainforest Rescue for donating a marquee for future fundraising or recreational events.



2009 Christmas Hamper Raffle



- First Prize: Hamper #1
(approx value \$100)
- Second Prize: Hamper #2
(approx value \$80)
- Third Prize: Hamper #3
(approx value \$60)

**Tickets: 2.00
Or 3 for \$5**

**Drawn at the Sanctuary Xmas Party :
Sunday, 13th Dec 3.30 pm
Winners will be notified by phone**

Ticket sellers needed at Lismore
Centro Shopping Centre 9th Dec—
10th Dec.
If you can go on the roster please
call Shane Keys on: 66890471 or
0413684466
Email: shanekeys74@yahoo.com.au

Nominate Sanctuary to be the recipient of your Christmas Card Cheer:

Order your Christmas cards at www.ourcommunity.com.au/givingcards.
Or email : sevice@ourcommunity.com.au and nominate Sanctuary as your chosen charity
when you place your order.

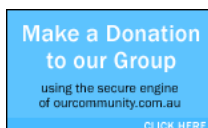
Giving Cards are available in packs of 10 for \$3 per card which includes the en-
velope and the stamp! There are five great designs to choose from.

**Best of all, \$1 from every card purchased will be passed on to Sanctuary
Northern Rivers if you nominate us as the recipient.**

Thanks for your support.



Want to donate to Sanctuary?
You can now do so online with our new
online donations facility.
The new 24-hour-a-day, seven-day-a-
week service ensures that anyone can do-
nate to Sanctuary at any time of the day
or night.
Sanctuary is collecting the donations
through the free online donations service
powered by GiveNow.com.au.
The online donations service is totally
secure and ensures that 100 per cent of
the donation goes straight to Sanctuary.
Only credit card fees are deducted from
the donation. To donate, just visit our
website:
www.sanctuary.asn.au
and click this button:



Norco Community Cash Caps

Sanctuary is happy to announce that we're par-
ticipating in Norco Community Cash Caps—a ter-
rific fundraiser that can help us raise lots of
money for very little effort.

Norco contribute 10 cents to our fundraising for
every specially marked Norco Community Cash
milk cap we collect.

Just collect the caps for us and we will collect
the money from Norco milk. Drop your collected
caps into the Lismore Neighbourhood Centre (or
to a Sanctuary Board member.

Let's make it a great effort.
Remember every cap counts!



Volunteering with Sanctuary



Fundraising at the Mullum Music Festival



Sanctuary volunteers set up a stall and sang songs of freedom and Africa on the busking stage while enjoying the vibe of the Mullum Music Festival. We sold Xmas hamper raffle tickets, collected donations and generally raised Sanctuary's profile in the Byron Shire and beyond. We raised over \$600 in donations. Special thanks goes to Tressa Kennedy who coordinated the event in such a professional and calm manner.

Thanks also to Jean-Claude, Djuma, James, and Anuarite for travelling from Lismore to perform, Megan Dowse from Operation Uganda with her African Jewellery, volunteers Tondi, Simone, Cherie, Rosslyn, Tash, Steve, Jo and Katherine. Special thanks to the performers Oka, Djan Djan, Rebecca Ireland, The Blue Hulas and M Jack B for saying the word & passing the donation buckets around in your gigs! A huge Thanks goes to festival organiser Glen from Vitamin Records!



Sanctuary wishes you all a happy and safe holiday season!

We at Sanctuary hope to catch up with you at the end-of-year Xmas Party on the 13th December. We will be picnicking and BBQing on the grounds of the "Presby" Church Hall, 118 Keen St from 12 noon till 4pm.

Should the weather turn less than friendly we will be in the hall!

Please bring your contributions to the Festive Feast.

Last opportunity to purchase your raffle tickets for the Xmas Hampers before the lucky tickets are drawn.

Bring your friends, family and community, all are welcome to share and celebrate the end of the year, and the new beginnings for refugees in our area.

See you there!





Annual General Meeting Election Results

Welcome to the new 09/10 Sanctuary NR Board Members. In particular to Jean-Claude, and Julie, who join the five others – Russell, Katherine, Dave, Brian and myself (Michael) who have continued on from last year.

We are very grateful to Paul Morretti (2006 – 2009) and Sue Darnell (2008 – 2009) who have served and guided us so admirably over the past years.

We will continue to charter our course with commitment to settlement, and provide increasing focus on advocacy for refugee and human rights concerns amongst the youth. This will be framed by a review of our plan in late January – all are welcome to contribute to this new direction-setting goal.

Michael D

Corporate Support for Sanctuary

On Wednesday 11th November, Sanctuary NR featured as "charity of the night" at Fusion: Hair Body Image and House of Dance's Summer Soiree. The board members of Sanctuary mingled with business people and artists, conversing about how refugees are settled in our area..

Michael Douglas made a moving appeal to the crowd and a number of women from the African-Lismore community attended as special guests.

Donations of over \$120 were collected, Sanctuary's profile in the Byron Shire was raised and networking in the Byron shire began. It is envisaged that Byron Shire become a settlement area for future refugees under the Humanitarian Visa program and that Sanctuary Northern Rivers will continue its work of successfully settling and rebuilding lives in our local area.

Sanctuary would like to thank 'Fusion' and 'House' for the opportunity of being showcased at the Soiree.

In addition, Fusion: Hair Body and Image has joined as Sanctuary's first Corporate Member. In celebration, Fusion is offering 10% off all services when this newsletter is presented! They are located at the beach-end of Jonson St.



Up-coming Events

December 13th : Community Christmas Picnic at the “Presby” Church Hall Keen St 12noon—4pm. Bring drinks and food to share.

January 14th : Ordinary Board Meeting, 6.30pm at the Lismore Workers Club

All members welcome and encouraged to attend!

Office Closure During Holiday Period and alternative contact:

The Lismore Neighbourhood Centre will be closed for the holiday period 23rd Dec–4th Jan inclusive. The Sanctuary Office will be closed during this time and, in addition, the office will be unattended from 14th Jan to the 21st Jan inclusive.

Please contact Russell Trebilcock, during these time on: 02 6624 7458

Sanctuary Northern Rivers Board Members 2009/2010

Executive:

President/Secretary - Michael Douglas

Treasurer - Dave Noble

Vice-President - Russell Trebilcock

General Board Members:

Jean-Claude Mapatano

Katherine Morrison

Julie Webb

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 Thursdays