



Bridge for Asylum Seekers Foundation

UnitingCare NSW.ACT

Newsletter
December 2005

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Seasons Greetings

The end of 2005 is drawing near and I would like to take this opportunity to firstly wish you a safe, peaceful and happy holiday season.

I would also like to thank you on behalf of Bridge for Asylum Seekers Foundation (BASF) for your support during this year, which has been both generous and inspiring.

It is at times difficult and disheartening for the members of BASF when we are constantly reminded of the misery inflicted upon asylum seekers by the prevailing policies of our current government. However, through the year we have had many, many bright spots to cheer us and keep us going, and they usually come from you, our supporters.

There has been wonderful support at the events we have held, such as Acoustica in April, Gardens Without Borders on Mothers Day, and the launch of *Another Country* in August. From all of these events, and others

during the year, have come donations, volunteers, friends and pledges of help.

Remembering why we are here, I can report that BASF is currently providing financial assistance to 76 adults and 34 children and youths. These asylum seekers and refugees have fled from the persecution, imprisonment and, in many cases, the torture they suffered in their countries of origin.

All recipients of funds from BASF have a genuine fear for their lives should they be returned to their country of origin.

Among the people we assist are Burmese; Chinese; Africans including Ugandans, Ghanaians, a Zimbabwian, a Nigerian, a Senegalese, and a Sudanese; South Americans; a Korean; Iraqis; Afghanis, Kuwaiti Bedoons, Iranians, Palestinians, a Moroccan; a Vietnamese and Acehnese.

The profile and number of people we support

changes as they receive protection visas, Medicare and work rights. However, at any one time it is typical for BASF to be assisting 100 people, including children.

From August 2003, when we first started to provide funding, to the end of December 2005, BASF will have given over \$350,000 in support to asylum seekers. We plan to give a further \$91,180 to cover the period from the end of December to the end of February 2006.

Once again, I thank all our friends and supporters. As you can see from the figures, we have a task ahead of us to continue to assist those we are already helping, as well as those who are sure to come to us in the future. I trust that we can rely on your continuing support in the new year.

With my best wishes to you and your loved ones,

Virginia Walker
Honorary Chairperson.

Upcoming events:

Dance Outside the Wire

Leichhardt Town Hall
Saturday, 26 November

Refugee Art Show
Balmain Watch House
Friday 2, Saturday 3 and
Sunday 4 December

Huge Fundraiser
Sydney Town Hall
Thursday, 23 March
2006

Support from local clubs

We warmly thank the following clubs who have provided grants to BASF via the CDSE scheme:

- Bulldogs Leagues Club
- Burwood RSL Club
- Earlwood-Bardwell Park RSL Club
- Wests Ashfield
- Wests Sports Club

Support from local councils

We are grateful to **City of Sydney** and **Leichhardt Council** who have provided \$30,000 for one year for a part-time Coordinator. City of Sydney has also donated \$4,000 towards a fundraising event.

We urgently need DENTISTS (as well as doctors, psychiatrists, lawyers and just plain friends) to do pro bono work, research cases, sell raffle tickets or help at community fairs.

Call to Refugee Friendly Councils

Leichhardt Council and **City of Sydney** are two of 100 councils in NSW who have signed-up with the Refugee Council of Australia as Refugee Friendly Zones. Leichhardt and City of Sydney

have actively supported our efforts by funding the position of our coordinator (currently Kate Maclurcan). BASF encourages other refugee friendly councils to help fund the coordinator's posi-

tion in the future to ensure our work can continue. Is your council a Refugee Friendly Zone? Is your council willing to support refugees? Why not write a letter and ask?

Coming Events

We hope you and your friends can join us at the following end-of-year events and special event in March 2006.

Dance outside the Wire

Come along to our **bush dance** at the **Leichhardt Town Hall** on Saturday, 26 November from 7-11pm. Music will be provided by **Bushwahzee** and food and drinks will be available. Gather your work colleagues and friends! Make this your work Christmas Party and help refugees at the same time!

Sponsored by Leichhardt Council. Tickets are \$20 and \$10 concession. For **bookings**

call Kate Maclurcan on 9810 5826 or email at katemaclurcan@hotmail.com.

Refugee Art Show

Works by asylum seekers and refugees, including refugee children, will be on display and for sale along with other donated artwork. All proceeds will go to the refugee artists and **Balmain for Refugees**. The exhibition opens on Friday, 2 December 5:30pm, with opening night drinks and meet the artists. All welcome! **Saturday, 3 to Sunday 4, December 10am to 5pm The Balmain Watch House** 179 Darling Street Balmain (Opp Balmain Bowling Club)

Admission FREE Enquiries: Jennifer Porter on 9810 6081.

Huge Fundraiser

Thursday, 23 March 2006 Put this in your diary NOW.

Sydney Town Hall—stay tuned for more details.

If you can host an event, no matter how small, we'd love to hear from you. Call Kate Maclurcan on 9810 5826.

If you would like to join our circle of friends and visit Villawood to meet asylum seekers currently in detention please call Virginia Walker on 0418 261 160.

Where Have We Been Lately?

Since our October newsletter we have been spreading the word at:

- The RAC Forum for refugee advocates—UTS
- Orange Grove Markets
- Lovedale Long Lunch—Balmoral Beach
- Dogs' Day Out—Leichhardt
- St Augustine's Parish—Balmain

Dance Outside the Wire

Dance with **Bushwahzee** at **Leichhardt Town Hall** on **Saturday, 26 November**.

All ages! For Bookings call Kate Maclurcan on 9810 5826.

Refugee Art Balmain Watch House on

Saturday 3 & Sunday 4 December from 10am to 5pm. **Opening night Friday, 2 December 5:30pm.**

Come and meet the artists!

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Yes, I would like to help the Bridge for Asylum Seekers Foundation provide direct support for "Visa E" and special category refugees and lobby for their better treatment. Please send me

- More information about Bridge for Asylum Seekers Foundation
- Information about direct bank or credit card debits for regular donations

I enclose a cheque / money order / credit card details for a donation of \$_____

Visa

Name _____

MasterCard

Address _____

Bankcard

Phone _____

Email _____

Card Number _____

Exp. date _____

Signature _____

DONATIONS to Bridge for Asylum Seekers Foundation are fully TAX DEDUCTIBLE