



Multicultural Youth Services ACT Newsletter



Australian Government
Department of Families, Housing,
Community Services and Indigenous Affairs

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MYS Newsletter

January 2010

Young People Settling in Canberra

I guess everyone has a story to tell however it is inspiring to hear the stories of the many young people choosing to settle in Canberra.

Of the migrant and refugee youth who drop into the Multicultural Youth Services, over 80% have arrived in Canberra either on their own or with only one parent.

Yet their spirit and determination is inspiring with many going on to achieve things that were once only a dream.

In this newsletter, you can read about...

- Young refugee mum's career club and the self-support of this enthusiastic group
- Making a music CD "Know Your Rights"
- Young people learning to drive with help from the AFP police
- Mentoring program for young people seeking a job
- The popular MYS holiday program.



Canberra youth find a new friend on the MYS holiday program.



MYS Wins YOGI

MYS has won a YOGI for 'Collaboration for Change' with its AFP Police driver training program. The YOGIs recognise outstanding practice in working with young people in the ACT.

We congratulate the MYS team and the partners in the driver program including the AFP, YWCA and Arrow Driving.

See details of driver training program inside.



Young Refugee Mums' Career Club



In discussions with young refugee mothers, MYS found that many were not accessing or aware of many services such as child care, play groups, parenting groups, community services, family services, women's services, training or employment services. Mothers with very young children who did not have a driver's license were also finding it difficult even to go shopping.

Added to this, social isolation for many young mothers is leading to both mothers and their children having limited English language skill development. Children were subsequently more at risk of struggling socially and academically at pre-school and school. While the isolation reported can lead to depression for some, all of the women involved in the discussions said they would like to work. MYS has developed two approaches to address the needs of young migrant and refugee mothers. One is the young drivers training program and the other is the Refugee Young Mum's Career Club.

The "Refugee Young Mum's Career Club" meets regularly and supports over 20 young refugee mothers aged between 15-25 to overcome barriers to joining the work-

force and engaging in education, training and community activities.

Through the support of a bi-cultural worker, the group is participating in discussions and workshops on child care options, Centrelink's Career Reference Centre, and applying for Return to Work Grants to assist with driving lessons, course enrolment fees, child care costs.

The young women often meet in their homes and other safe places and together they help

one another apply for relevant assistance and grants as well as help each other through the language barriers.

The Refugee Young Mum's Career Club is an important project in helping a very isolated group of women to begin looking at options and to address barriers to engaging in the ACT community and the workforce.

Young Refugee Mums' Club is funded by the ACT Office for Women under the "Women's Return to Work" grants.



MYS Career Mentoring



MYS has had an overwhelming response to its Career Mentoring Program with many volunteers registering to support young refugees as they face the challenge of employment on arrival in the ACT. The mentoring program links refugee young people with volunteers in the community who provide information and insights into local



employment practices from their own experiences. Catriona Heath, MYS Regional Manager said: "One of the great benefits of the mentor program is that it brings together people from diverse backgrounds, promotes cultural awareness as well as assists with the integration of newly arrived young people into the ACT community". Mentors receive training and attend briefing sessions run by the young people themselves on the young people's experiences particularly as a refugee working and studying in Australia. Catriona said that currently there are around 20 clients and 30 mentors with many more keen to participate. "The ACT has many volunteers who are keen to support young newly arrived people".

The Career Mentoring Program is sponsored by IMB.

Multicultural Youth Forum

MYS received a Community Support and Infrastructure Grant to conduct a client consultation with findings to be incorporated in a MYS business plan and to hold a broader Multicultural Youth Forum.

The grant will also assist MYS staff to further develop their skills in marketing, promotions, liaison, networking, advocacy, grant & policy writing.



Minister for Multicultural Affairs Joy Burch MLA and MYS Manager Catriona Heath at the grant announcement held at Pegasus Riding School.

Multicultural Youth Driving with Police

Atta, a 22 year old newly arrived migrant who is currently seeking employment and is the only driver for his family. Atta has a learner's permit which is about to expire for the second time however he has acquired a security guard license, but his job applications have been rejected continually as he does not hold a full driver's license.

Beng was using public transport to travel to and from work however his position was revoked once the employer became aware of his reliance on public transport. Beng was offered use of a friends car but he could not afford driving lessons and had approached MYS for assistance. Beng is subject to enormous pressure from family and peers to provide transport. He is aware that driving without a license is illegal but this conflicts with the cultural expectations of his family and community and his own sense of obligation.

The names have been changed however the scenarios are not uncommon for youth in Canberra.

The Young Driver Program was initiated by MYS in response to its most common request from clients – driving lessons. The driver program

is assisting 18 young people from refugee backgrounds to learn about road safety, Australian driving rules and car maintenance, as well gaining some hands-on professional lessons. Part of the program included 3 days Police Driving Education where young people were able to learn about and appreciate the role of ACT police in the community.

There was much laughter, plenty of questions directed to the AFP and a chance to discuss personal experiences with police both in Australia and in their home countries. Participants were provided with driving lessons from professional instructors with Mini buses from the YWCA to help young people get to the AFP driving school in Majura for the workshops. ACT Police provided a number of classroom lectures on driving safety, road rules and car maintenance, as well as lunch for participants in the Police canteen.

Many newly arrived youth face a complexity of issues around transport:

- pressure to assist family and friends
- limited financial resources
- barriers to gaining employment
- resources (ie drivers and cars) spread thinly amongst the community

- no access to driver education.

Some of the comments heard after the sessions were:

- "I didn't know there were such kind police men"
- "I really like the policemen taking this course"
- "I wish there were more policemen out there like these"
- "That was really great. When do we get to drive again?"

The success of the MYS/AFP education day is assisting to build rapport and relations between police and young people.

A significant outcome is helping to develop better understanding between the multicultural youth population of the ACT and police officers working within the community.

The MYS youth driving program was provided in partnership with ACT Police & YWCA through the support of ACT Office of Multicultural Affairs and ACT Office for Women.

See case study at: immi.gov.au/gateways/police/



"I didn't know there were such kind policemen."



MYS at the Recording Studio

MYS youth recorded tracks for the 'Know Your Rights' competition run by the Children and Young People Commission.

Angeer Chut's track 'Never Give Up' won second place in the competition and recordings by Kamilia Ahmed, Achol Garang and Achol Yong were brilliant.

This was a great opportunity for MYS youth to learn about recording music and to experience a real recording studio at ArtSound FM in Manuka.

Musician and ex-MYS youth worker, Heidi Gill, helped the young people through the complexities of the studio and in the preparation of their songs. As well as producing their first CD, it was a great opportunity for young people to learn about the music business.

Thanks to Brianna, Advisor to the Children & Young People's Commissioner for her support, and also congratulations to Angeer



Chut for producing a great track and to Kamilia Ahmed, Achol Garang and Achol Yong for producing some lively music.



MYS - A Place for Young People

MULTICULTURAL YOUTH SERVICES ACT

Griffin Centre
Level 2, 1 Genge St
Canberra City
ACT 2601

We're on the Web
mys.org.au

MYS Hours Open

Talk to MYS Staff
Mon, Wed 1:30-3pm
Thurs, Frid 10am-3pm

Drop-In Centre
Mon, Wed - Frid 3-5:30pm
Board Games
Computers
Pool Table
Internet
Friends
Coffee

The MYS Newsletter is supported through the ACT Government's, Community Support & Infrastructure Grants Program.



Multicultural Youth Services has operated in the ACT for 10 years. It supports migrants and refugees aged 12 – 25, with a focus on the settlement of newly arrived young refugees. MYS provides support services to migrants & refugees settling in Canberra ACT, Goulburn & Queanbeyan SE NSW Australia.

These services include:

- accommodation
- employment
- education
- finance
- welfare & emotional support
- youth & family support
- English language & homework support

MYS runs regular holiday programs and skills development workshops for young migrants & refugees between 12 and 25 years of age.

If you need assistance as a young migrant or refugee, or would like more information, please contact us.

MYS Holiday Program



Horse Riding



Excursions



Basketball



Bowling



Soccer



Swimming



Beach Trips



Movies & Pizza



More details at www.mys.org.au



Skying

“Soccer for Life” Multicultural World Cup

The Cup, facilitated by U-Turn Youth Services in partnership with MYS and the Cancer Council ACT aims to increase community participation and decrease health disparities in marginalised young people.

Various studies have found that playing sport can have a positive effect on a person's well-being and can ease some common mental issues such as depression and anxiety as well as being good fun to participate in.

U-Turn hopes to sign up 32 teams of 8 for a 5-a-side tournament plus there are bonus points and freebies including lunch for those attending training sessions.

Next training is 5-6:30pm on 1st Feb at Hawker Football Centre. Call Merin or Tim on 6264 0260 for more info or to register.



Clients and Staff on a MYS Holiday Excursion