

# NEWSLETTER

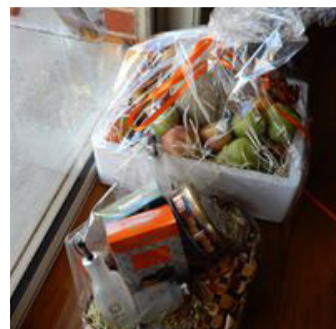
Issue 19



UMSLV'S 4TH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION!

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## Executive Committee Members

President: Arfa Khan  
 Vice President: Khatija Halabi  
 Secretary : Yumna Ahmed  
 Treasurer: Nicky Ogunsina  
 Communications: Hina Faisal  
 Youth Co-ordinator: Zeinab Badreddine  
 Coopted Members:  
 Lubna Chawdury,  
 Syeda A Husaini,  
 Tahmina Tanveer  
 Nurun Nahar.

## UMSLV' Birthday Celebration

By Yumna Ahmed

On 22nd April 2017, the Muslim Sisters celebrated our fourth birthday.

The celebration was held at Trafalgar Anglican Church Hall. We invited everyone to celebrate with us. In keeping with our tradition of having a fundraiser on our birthday celebration, this year we decided to raise money for Berry Street's School. To raise money we had a gold coin entrance and also had an auction of pot plants, gift vouchers, fruit baskets, picture frames and etc. All the things auctioned were donated by the community. We would like to thank everyone who joined us in the celebration, participated in a fun auction and donated on the day. We managed to raise \$400. Wendy Farmer from Latrobe Valley Voices attended the celebration she said that she and her granddaughter had a great time and felt really welcomed at the event.

# Queen of Katwe

By Nicky Ogunsina

Soroptomist International of Gippsland held a movie night as a fundraiser on 18 July. Queen of Katwe is based on the inspirational true story of the struggles of 10 year old Phiona and her family, living in the slum of Katwe in Kampala, Uganda. Phiona's world rapidly changes when she is introduced to the game of chess. Phiona faced a lot of challenges

but with her determination to learn and the encouragement from her coach, she was rewarded for her hard work. Released in 2016, this was a heartwarming story that inspired many. Nicky attended the movie and enjoyed the Ugandan inspired supper that followed the film, as well as the opportunity to socialise with others who supported the event.



## Focus Group

By Yumna Ahmed

UMSLV was invited to take part in a consultation about a building which can house antenatal services to pre-school. Shukrat (Nicky) Ogunsina and I attended the consultation. They asked about what we thought has worked in the past and what has not worked. I understand other focus groups were held as well. Once the facilitators have created a report they will meet with us again to discuss it.

## Symphony of Peace Prayers

By Margaret Mooney

*Celebrating the ONENESS of Humanity  
20th May, Rokeby Hall  
West Gippsland  
an event of Byakko Shinko Kai and the World Prayer Society*

This annual event gathers people of many faiths and all who seek and pray for peace to offer prayers for peace from their own tradition and to join with others in a gathered prayer. Welcome to country was given by a local aboriginal elder and the peace flame was lit. Prayers and meditation followed and the ceremony of world flags enabled each and all to enter into prayer for every country on earth. Arfa and her two daughters represented the Muslim faith/community in offering a prayer.

## Victorian Mosque Open Day 7th May, 2017

By: Margaret Mooney

*Gippsland Event : Federation University,  
Churchill Campus*

This gathering was a credit to those organising and participating in this special 'public relations' event. The local Muslim community proved very welcoming and informative. The venue allowed for the assembly of the Muslim families who all shared in hosting those attending, together with other community groups assisting in providing an excellent lunch.

Leaders of the community gave an introduction to the Muslim faith, Children were invited forward to present verses from the Qu'ran. Powerpoint presentations outlined the Muslim way of life. Guided tours of the prayer room demonstrated the form of prayer, especially as the call to prayer was given, for the midday prayer. One of the Sisters gave a personal talk on the wearing of the hijab, another was busy doing informal henna tattoos. The mayor spoke with appreciation of the contribution of the Muslim community in civic life, and wished one of the elders and his family all the best as they moved from the Valley.

Christine Lee and Margaret Mooney of the Gippsland Interfaith Network were happy to share in this event, and send greetings for Ramadan.



# Iftar Dinner

Sometimes an unexpected invitation will open a new world of understanding! That was my experience when Arfa Khan invited me to attend the United Muslim Sisters of the Latrobe Valley's Iftar.

I have lived in Gippsland all my life and my family have been here for five generations before me, none of us though had ever before been invited to attend a function hosted by Gippsland's Muslim community, so it was a definite first, for myself and for my husband Michael, and I am so glad that Arfa made it so.

We arrived at Churchill not quite sure of what to expect, the friendly welcome from everyone and the gentle guidance on the customary separation of the men and women put us both at ease in a new environment where, Michael, knew no one, and I knew Arfa. I thought it was a bit like an Aussie BBQ, the men in one area and the women in another.

Mick was quickly introduced around, and I found myself amongst a table of friendly women from across the region.

I was stunned by the beautiful clothes the Muslim women wore, the vibrant colours were elegantly draped and enhancing the beauty of those who wore them.

The food was very good, many different dishes of great variety and plenty to eat. What I enjoyed most though was the children, beautifully dressed and so pleased to be participating in such a special occasion. I loved listening to them as they spoke about the importance of the evening, their faith and devotion was evident for all to see.

I learnt more that evening in two hours sharing a meal, conversation and entertainment than I would have learnt in many hours of reading. Thank you Arfa and the United Muslim Sisters of the Latrobe Valley for inviting us both into your world and sharing it with us, it was a truly memorable and most enjoyable experience.





# Ramadan Iftar A Successful Event

By Arfa S Khan

This year Ramadan iftar was a successful event enjoyed by many. This year we had about 130 people enjoyed the iftar dinner.

People came from as far as Bainsdale and Pakheman in the other end

People contributed generously to the zakat appeal This year all the charity was divided between two groups .Trafalgar Anglican Church and a Muslim based organisation CC kitchen Melbourne.

Both the groups provide food and clothing to the needy people on there region .



## EID-AL-ADHA

By Hina Faisal

Is celebrated on the tenth day of Thul Hijjah, the 12th and the last month of the Islamic calendar. It is a very joyous day; it is a feast of self-sacrifice, commitment and obedience to Allah.

*Eid al-Adha is a significant annual Islamic observance for Muslim communities across Australia. It is also known as the Feast of Sacrifice or Festival of Sacrifice as it commemorates Ibrahim's (Abraham) willingness to sacrifice his son to God.*



*Eid al-Adha is a special opportunity to have social gatherings among family and friends.*

## The day of Eid

The Eid prayer was held at Kernot hall and was organised by GAMCI. Men, women, and children are expected to dress in their finest clothing. And was followed by a light one dish breakfast organised by UMSLV.

## Eid dinner

By Hina Faisal

GAMCI arranged another successful Eid dinner on Sunday 2 July. This community event took place at Federation University, Churchill. About 120 adults and children attended and enjoyed the fabulous food cooked by the community. People enjoyed activities, socialising and company of their friends. We thank the community who participated and we look forward to co-hosting another Eid event in 2018.

# Arfa Addresses Dinner

## Warragul & Drouin Gazette

Warragul & Drouin Gazette 27 Jun 2017

United Muslim Sisters of Latrobe Valley president Arfa Khan of Trafalgar was a guest speaker at the recent Victoria Police iftar dinner. Victoria Police hosted its third chief commissioner's iftar dinner to commemorate Ramadan with representatives and leaders from Victoria's Islamic community.

More than 150 people attended the event, including representatives from the Islamic Council of Victoria, the Victorian Board of Imams, Islamic Shia Council of Victoria, Benevolence Australia, United Muslims Sisters of Latrobe Valley (UMSLV), Rabbinical Council of Victoria and the Sikh Interfaith Council of Victoria.

Chief commissioner Graham Ashton said he was proud to host his third Iftar dinner which had a theme of 'social cohesion'.

"The relationship between Victoria Police and the Islamic community is one that we value greatly – and it's one that is continually strengthened," CCP Ashton said.

"We are proud to serve a vibrant multicultural community and believe everyone has the right to live free from prejudice regardless of faith, background, age or gender.

"With the recent challenging events across the globe, it's more important than ever that we focus on those things that unite us, as members of a rich and diverse Victorian community."

These interactions through dinner, and numerous other iftar dinners between local Islamic communities and Victoria Police members across the state, provided invaluable opportunities to share experiences and build understanding and respect.

The evening included a presentation by Ms Khan and Sergeant Ben McWilliams on Victoria Police's 'Social Cohesion Partnership Project', which focusses on the co-design and delivery of projects by culturally and linguistically diverse communities and their local police.

It aims to promote harmony, and cultural understanding in local communities.

Mr Ashton said Victoria Police was committed to remaining connected with all communities:

"We value all faith communities across the state and our commitment to community engagement will only be strengthened over the coming years," he said.

# An invitation to mark Eid

## By Anne Simmons

13 Jul 2017, midnight

United Muslim Sisters of Latrobe Valley president Arfa Khan is working with Victoria Police on a Social Cohesion Project, and the Eid Festival is just

one way it is benefiting the community.

United Muslim Sisters of Latrobe Valley president Arfa Khan is working with Victoria Police on a Social Cohesion Project, and the Eid Festival is just one way it is benefiting the community. United Muslim Sisters of Latrobe Valley president Arfa Khan said she had encountered many Gippsland families who didn't have a clear picture of what the holy month of Ramadan was.

"There are so many families around, I am the first Muslim that they know," Ms Khan said.

"Obviously when they ask questions I don't take offence to any questions, because they don't know anything about it."

The organisation's fourth annual Eid Festival is an effort to share the Muslim faith with the broader community and is a branch in the Social Cohesion Project developed with Victoria Police.

The festival will be this weekend, however the Latrobe Valley Muslim community celebrated Eid together at Kernot Hall on Sunday, 2 July for prayers and a communal breakfast at the end of a month's fasting during Ramadan.

"We don't eat or drink anything when we are fasting, a little before sunrise and till sunset," Ms Khan said.

She said people often assumed she could have water during these daylight hours, however this wasn't the case.

For Muslims, this exercise in self-control is a way to thank God for the "bounties in life" and an opportunity to increase generosity to charity.

Since the hours of fasting are dictated by the sun, she said it was lucky she wasn't somewhere like Canada with extended daylight. "Fasting was for 11 hours or something (in Gippsland) but in some countries it is more than 16 hours, so people do fast there too."

Ms Khan described how the communal breakfast at the end of Ramadan revealed how people coped with the month.

"You can eat all day long so some people go crazy eating, but some people, their body adapts to the change and they eat, you know, in small amounts and small portions, everybody is different," she said.

The UMSLV Eid Festival will run from 10am to 4pm at Old Gippstown, Moe, on Sunday, 16 July, and entry is \$5 per person or \$15 per family.

Pre-purchase tickets at [www.stickytickets.com.au/54269](http://www.stickytickets.com.au/54269)







## Eid Festival a success

By Bianca

What started out to be a quiet and cold morning, turned into an amazingly well attended, beautiful sunny day of fun and activity. It was wonderful to see the multitude of families interacting with each other and having a good time.

Thanks to the many staff and volunteers we were able to provide many free activities such as the Popcorn and fairy floss, bear decorating, henna tattoos, CFA fire truck, bands and so much more. Food vans lined the street and craft and market stalls attracted many customers not only to buy their goods but to get a stamp on their treasure maps.

Families left smiling, thanking us for the wonderful day and how well it was organised. This year having the small committee and support from LCHS, Headspace and FreeZa made our job a little easier. Thanks also to the incredible team of women from UMSLV who undertook many of the tasks and worked together to make this day a success.

One of my favourite parts of the day had to be the old Fire Engine, which sometimes overheated but the wonderful volunteer driver never wavered and kept all passengers happy.



- all gave their valuable suggestions to make it much better  
- for next year. It is impossible to put a price on volunteers and the role of each individuals but it is safe to say that they saved the day by contributing to a range of jobs from highly specialized to mundane and boring - but all jobs were done perfectly.

## Salute to volunteers

By Arfa Khan

United Muslim Sisters of Latrobe Valley (UMSLV) is run by competent group of enthusiastic ladies who volunteer their precious time to give to the community and work for improving the relationships with locals.

The role of volunteers is vital and it would not be exaggerating to say that society would fall apart without them and talking about UMSLV we cannot sustain what we do without the input and involvement of all our committee members and all other friends in the community for their unflinching support to conduct our events successfully. This year UMSLV had another successful Eid festival attended by almost 500 plus people. The event was very well organized. The credit of the event goes to Bianca Pezzutto of Relationship Australia Vic and to all the volunteers from LCHS, Allan Green, Jennifer Green, David Dunbar, Stanely Aguilera, and Alex Pezzutto and from FreeZa Aaron Duurland, Casey Mc Ewan, and Luke George. People from Lions doing free BBQ, Giyathri Savarkudele managing the reception table and last but not least to all the UMSLV committee members.

A morning tea was organized on 11 October at LCHS, Morwell office to thank the volunteers for their involvement and enthusiasm to run a successful event. The debrief session with the volunteers was an interesting one as they



# Faith Stories

Conversations and Story Telling

12 August 2017

(Adapted from WFWP's report)

The Women's Federation for World Peace (WFWP) hold an annual Faith Stories symposium in Melbourne to support and foster peacebuilding between faiths within our diverse multicultural city. This year the symposium focused on the Abrahamic faiths. Presenters shared Faith Stories from the feminine perspective covering: Aboriginal people's stories, Muslim stories, Jewish stories and Christian stories.

Councillor Mike Clark welcomed everyone to his ward in the Shire of Yarra Ranges.

We had two beautiful young women MC for the day: *Kosina Hanson* and *Yumna Ahmed*, representatives from the partnering organisations, WFWP and UMSLV.

Anne Bellavance (National President of WFWP) gave a presentation about the goals and mission of WFWP International and encouraged participants to get involved with their service projects within the Pacific island nations.

Khatija Halabi shared the vision of UMSLV and described some of their activities and work with the communities of Latrobe Valley to fulfill that vision. Some of those activities involved helping to dispel misconceptions about the Muslim faith and culture within the Gippsland region.

## Aboriginal Stories

Aunty Janet Turpie-Johnstone, a Mullum Mullum Elder and WFWP member, gave her Welcome to Country for us. Janet also presented the Aboriginal people's story, outlining the history of Aboriginal communities in early Melbourne.

During her presentation, Janet emphasised that we can learn from our ancient Aboriginal ways of life, which are highly philosophical and religious and are based on a relationship to land and all that is on the land. Janet strongly feels that people need to become more sensitive and humble in the way they relate to the land and all the natural resources.

## Muslim Stories

Khatija Halabi was both humble and proud that interfaith dialogue was not a new concept in her family. Her great grandfather and Mahatma Gandhi had an interfaith conversation in Durban, a city they both lived in, in South Africa. Khatija spoke about how growing up in South Africa during the transitional period between apartheid and a new democracy shaped her identity. She grew up in a community that allowed her to develop a strong muslim identity. The community

leaders got families through the difficult times of lack of opportunity through their beliefs and philosophies based on Islamic teachings. Those community members who felt strongly about social injustice helped the country get over the ills of apartheid by joining the liberation struggle. With Khatija's exposure to people of different races and different religions, her identity grew stronger as she developed the ability to treat everyone that she came into contact with as members of the human race (not an ethnic one)! She is grateful that her children, and the born free generation of South Africa, are now a part of a global community.

**Sarah Price** shared her faith journey to Islam with the audience. After a jet-ski accident, which incapacitated her ability to walk for eight months, Sarah contemplated some big questions about the meaning of life and how fragile our time on this world can be. She wished to travel and live life to the full. After what seemed like the worst thing in the world by taking six months off her university degree and not being able to walk, Sarah decided to take a student exchange opportunity to Malaysia once she returned to university. Raised in a country town, the ability to interact with people of multicultural backgrounds and religious beliefs were limited. Sarah's own views on Muslims and Islam were tainted by what was portrayed in the media. During her year-long stay in Malaysia as a journalism student and intern, she started to observe the lifestyle of muslim women around her. This appealed to her as she had Christian beliefs, but struggled to find logic and meaning in the religion. Her strong sense of belief in God meant Islam became a well-rounded, logical and spiritual religion, which answered all her intellectual questions regarding God and the prophets. She also gained valuable insight into muslim women's lives during her interviews of top profile political figures fighting for their rights as women within Islam, such as Marina Mahathis. After extensive research and spiritual reflection, Sarah converted to Islam. Sarah is admired and loved by the community of Gippsland for her courage, determination and sincerity.

## Jewish Story

Frances Prince is a member of the JCCV (Jewish Community Council of Victoria). Due to the Faith Stories event being held on a Saturday, Frances gave her presentation via video. She explained to us what it means to be a Jewish person in relation to the religion and ethnicity, being that if you are born from a Jewish mother you are Jewish. Thus the religious and ethnic identities overlap, because a person can become Jewish due to conversion and is Jewish even if they do not adhere to Jewish beliefs, but are cultural adherents. Frances openly shared her experiences as a woman





in her faith and the women's role standing in parallel position to a man. Most of Jewish life and tradition takes place in the home and this is under the domain of women. However, the public eye sees the men in the synagogue. The current laws were set up to protect women in the home life, so that women did not need to attend the synagogue, because traditionally women did stay at home rather than working. Today women work and the traditional roles have changed. Modern Jewish women in the orthodox world now push boundaries. Today in progressive communities women have more choices to engage and participate in the synagogue. Sivan Barak answered questions from the audience and briefly shared her story of being raised in a Kibbutz in Israel. Sivan is a cultural Jewish woman and was not raised in Jewish religious traditions.

## Christian Story

Rev. Ruth Harrison was among the first women

in Melbourne to be ordained to the priesthood. Ruth shared the story of how she was drawn to contemplative prayer at an early age, and then was called by God to the ordained ministry in the Anglican Church, before the church was prepared to ordain women. Ruth emphasised that this journey towards ordination should be viewed as a struggle for the right to obey the call of God, rather than fighting for women's rights, per se.

Ruth said, "what emerged most clearly from my experience of sharing my story, was that I could see how those of other faiths - and in particular, the Muslim faith, indicated that they could understand the reality of my faith story, just as I could connect with the reality of those who shared their faith story. This was a meeting of the spirit in each other, something I will always treasure."

## Reflections from participants

*"It is wonderful to hear other people's journeys. A wonderful opportunity to learn new facts about different faiths."*

*"This was a wonderful event of bringing women (and men) together to share faith stories and understands, and to realize our many points of connection."*



# Exploring Individual Religions

By Yumna Ahmed

At the faith stories event organised by Women's Federation of World Peace (WFWP) Sarah Price and I were invited by the Chaplain of Mater Christi College Kathleen Ward to come and talk to their students of the 21st September 2017 about our religious identities. On the day there were two other speakers who talked about their Catholic and Buddhist faiths. Sarah talked about her discovery of Islam and I talked about contributions of Islam to

Science and how that inspired me to study Science. It was a wonderful experience and the students were great listeners. Thank you to Kathleen Ward for inviting us and giving us the opportunity to interact with your students.

## My Story Update

By Khatija Halabi

Since the MY Story project was delivered to Kurnai College in the first term this year, and the launch of the project in April, together with CMY we have worked on remodeling the project. We found the potential for students exposing certain vulnerabilities and we did not want to leave these young people without the correct support in place, if need be.

The new improved model, works around themes thereby reducing that vulnerability. We have developed a manual that is given to the participating school at the start or before the project. The manual highlights the aims of the project and among other things, highlights the roles and responsibilities of the readers and books. One of our aims of MY Story, from an organization point of view, is to work on its sustainability. To this end, CMY provided training to the muslim sisters on facilitation. We then ran a school holiday program on creative story telling. This gave us the opportunity to assess how well our resource kit of materials worked, and what other toys or materials could be added to it that students could use as props. Some of the ladies were paired and they were expected to prepare lesson plans for the sessions with their chosen age group of children. Khatija provided support with lesson plans where needed. On the day, Khatija and Cate supported the facilitation where required. Sisters Zeinab, Hina, Rehana, Yumna and Sarah loved the interaction with the children and enjoyed seeing their creative side. Thank you Arfa for organising the venue for both the training and the holiday activity session; and for the refreshments.

Yumna and Sarah continued as youth facilitators for MY Story. We then took MY Story to Lavalla College. The grade 7 class were divided into 2 groups. Cate worked with one group and Tori worked the other. Each group had a facilitator in training (Sarah and Yumna). During these sessions, Sarah and Yumna did a lot of observation and started doing hands on tasks with students. We took six grade 7 students to St. Michaels Primary School to present their stories to grade six students. Yumna and Sarah enjoyed facilitating these sessions.

Below is an article written by Mr. Mike Hanson, a grade 7 teacher that was published in the Lavalla College newsletter.

## My Story: Bringing Stories To Life

An initiative of The Centre For Multicultural Youth and The United Muslims Sisters of Latrobe Valley the My Story project was activated with Mrs Mustoe's Year 7 English class during the course of this last term. Through a five session package, students had the opportunity to participate in developing their own narratives or personal stories, thus becoming living books. Incorporating independent presentation styles in a creative way they then became tellers of their own story to a small group of their peers in the same class. Five students then volunteer to tell their personal story to the grade six students at St Michael's Primary School.

The interaction between the grade six student 'listeners' and the year seven 'story tellers' was extraordinary . Whilst the day did not start off well with the inability to activate the video of two of the story tellers, the small group audiences scattered around the grade six rooms later on were extraordinarily powerful mechanisms for both tellers and listeners. The five story tellers rotated between the five groups and their own confidence grew as they told their stories over and over again. They seemed to become old hands at self-revelation, perhaps even a little carefree by the end of their rotations.

Whilst we were immensely proud of the story tellers, it was the reaction of the listeners that caused us the most



excitement. The personal stories of the Year seven students were met with bursts of interest from the grade six students. They listened with avid attention and respect whilst the stories were being told and then asked the most searching questions. When asked what they had liked or learned they were able to give astute and clear feedback. Some made the leap into their own lives and expressed openly to their peers how their personal stories matched those of the story tellers. We heard grade six students recalling the hurt of similar broken relationships, hardship at changing schools, familial and sibling difficulties as well as their own engagement in sporting teams and what makes them happy. Making this connectedness with the story of other human beings has been one of the great aims of the My Story project. The sense that all of us share common stresses, hardships and joys. It is a remarkable community building process. As we were able to reflect with all the students at the end of our time with them: When I tell my story to you, I begin to understand who I am; when I listen to your story, I begin to understand who we are together. We thank the Centre for Multicultural Youth and The Muslim Sisters for facilitating this wonderful opportunity to work together. We pass on our thanks to the staff involved and especially the Year seven and Grade six students.

Mike Hansen

Watching them grow in confidence over the six sessions and assisting them in sharing their stories was a truly rewarding experience. Some stories were very confronting, personal and some quite sad. Some were happy and funny. There was an array of different experiences shared by the students, which incorporated some key aspects of what it means to grow and be human. These were demonstrated in various ways, with props such as pictures, trophies, ribbons, videos ... one student even played a song for the class with his guitar as a way of demonstrating his story. Some did not use props at all, but were still as intriguing. There were fundamental struggles of being a teenager incorporated in some students' stories, such as feeling left out, or feeling torn between two cultures and 'worlds'. Some were finding about yourself and being brave enough to be who you want to be. At the end of the sessions at Lavalla, six students volunteered to share their creative stories at St. Michael's Primary School. Watching them start from being shy and unsure, to the confident and proud, was the best thing about facilitating these sessions. In a small way, we can all make a difference in young people's lives. I took away a sense of peace and happiness knowing that in some small way, I may have helped a student become a stronger, and more confident person taking their first steps into the world.

# Facilitating the process

By Sarah Price

CMY and UMSLV partnered to create the MY STORY sessions designed for schools. Each session had a designated plan which included facilitating the students to assist them gaining confidence and design their own creative story to share with the class by the end of the program. This year, the sessions were held at Lavalla Catholic College with a year 7 class. Because this was my first time facilitating a creative storytelling session and being in front of year seven high school students. It can be intimidating and scary, especially if the students do not behave. However, the students were wonderful and were intrigued from the outset.

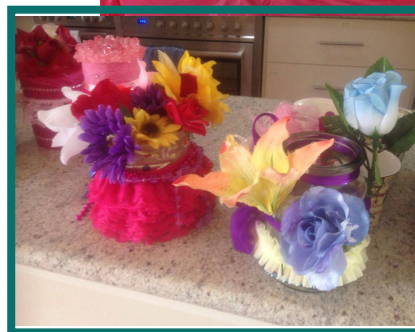




# School Holiday Program

By Zeinab Badreddine

During the September school holidays we ran some activities to keep the children busy and to allow them the opportunity to meet their friends. The first activity was craft; we recycled things such as jars and cans. The children had heaps of fun and I gave the kids a chance to use their imagination to turn these objects into ornaments. The other one was cooking with kids and we made cake pops. It was such an easy and fun desert to make. I have lots of new ideas for upcoming holiday activities and I look forward to having the children come and enjoy their time with us during the school holidays.



## GAMCI officially opens a burial site for Gippsland Muslims at Traralgon Cemetery

After two years of planning and negotiations, the Traralgon cemetery now has a dedicated burial place for Muslims. On Sunday 29th October members of the Traralgon Cemetery Trust, Gippsland Ethnic Community Council and the Gippsland Australian Muslim Community Inc (GAMCI) officially opened the new Islamic Section. An overview of the cemetery was provided by GAMCI, and members of the Traralgon Cemetery Trust explained the plants that were selected including rosemary and

a number of roses. The gathering of some 60 people then inspected the Islamic burial area and participated in planting a Fruiting Date Palm.

The wonderful ceremony ended with afternoon tea held at the Function room.

## Crowdfunding for Rohingya

In the light of the ongoing crisis in Rohingya, Sister Sarah Price in conjunction with GAMCI has launched a crowdfunding campaign to further assist our Rohingya muslim brothers and sisters.

Their aim is to raise \$1,000 to send to Muslim Aid Australia to assist the humanitarian crisis. We thank Sister Sarah for creating this crowdfunding campaign, and hope that we can reach the target quickly. Please pass this site onto your contacts. May Allah reward our sister's efforts here. The site for donating is <http://www.chuffed.org/project/rohingya-emergency-relief>

# The Great Find

(Amna Ahmed Saad, 10 years old)

Once, there was a nine year old girl named Lily. She lived near the seashore with her family. She had a brown horse, and her family also owned a little rowboat. She loved nature and going on adventures. Her hobby was reading books.

One evening, she was reading a book under a tree in the garden, when she thought that she would go for a row to a little island near the shore. She took her blue backpack and packed a water bottle, five apples, a sandwich, a bar of chocolate, a torch, a rope, a raincoat, a compass, a small first aid kit, a pencil, a pocket notebook, and also, four carrots for her horse and went out to the stable. There she fed her horse, Grace, a carrot and gave her some water. Meanwhile, she put her saddle on Grace's back and rode her to the shore. There, she tied Grace to a tree, and put three carrots and four apples in front of her along with a bucket of water which she had brought from the stable.

Then, on shore, she untied the rope of the rowboat, put on a lifejacket, put her backpack beside her, took the oars and started rowing, and in half an hour, she was at the island. She tied the boat to a nearby tree, took off her lifejacket, put on her lifejacket, and got out of the boat. Suddenly, it started raining. Therefore, she went inside a nearby cave. There, she sat on a rock to rest for a bit. Then she started munching on her apple. After finishing her apple, she also ate her sandwich and had a drink of water. Then she geared up to explore the cave and its tunnels and passages. As she went in one of the few passages, she saw that it led into another cave, almost as big as the first one.

When she walked in, she felt that the floor was hollow underneath. She knocked the floor with a stone, and there was the hollow sound again. She brushed off some dust from the floor and saw wooden planks and a hook attached to the floor. She tried to pull it but couldn't. Then she tied the rope to the hook and pulled the rope. Suddenly, some planks came off. She looked inside, and saw some big wooden chests and a small metal chest. She tried to open one big wooden chest, but couldn't as it was locked. Then she tried to open the small metal chest. Its edges were rusted and so was its lock. The old rusted lock gave way in a few minutes and the small metal chest opened. Inside was a bunch of keys with a different symbol on each one. The symbols were very strange. But then all of a sudden, she noticed that there was a symbol on a big wooden chest which matched the symbol on one of the keys. Then she understood, there was a different symbol on each one of the chests which matched the symbol on one of the keys. Lily rowed back home, told her parents what had happened, had a good night's sleep, and then in the morning, went with her father to tell the police what she had seen and then went with her father and some policemen in a bigger boat to the island to see and bring back the chests.

Afterwards, Lily and her family found out that the chests belonged to some smugglers in the old days. And now, the smuggled goods were in the safe hands of the government. And some of the chests were also kept in a museum afterwards. To honour Lily's efforts, the government placed a metal plate with Lily's story engraved on it with the chests in the museum.



*Amna Ahmed Saad (10years old) was awarded the winner of the short story section at a ceremony in Churchill in October. Congratulations Amna! Your writing is incredible!*



# ***Sports Achievement in 2017***



***Mariam & Aamal with their Medals  
- Dusties Netball***



***Gladiators Gold U10 Boys Team with  
their Trophy!***



***Dusties Netball Girls team with  
their Winning Trophy!***



***Gladiators Black U10 - Musa with  
his Trophy!***

***Congratulations!!***

# Information Report on UMSLV

(By Karima Halabi, grade 5)

United Muslim Sisters of Latrobe Valley, also referred to as UMSLV, is an organisation that has two visions. The first is to create an environment where children can grow confidently and the second one is to help women who are new to Australia settle into their new homes. It began with only 7 members but from the established date (17th of April 2013) to now it has grown and is now world known.

**Functions:** UMSLV has organised many functions for the community including Eid festivals, Ramadan Iftars and they have been to schools teaching teenage students how to tell stories in different ways. They call this program Living Libraries. UMSLV doesn't just do Living Libraries for students but for adults as well. The adults are encouraged to tell their life stories like a story coming to life, hence Living Libraries!

**Activities:** UMSLV has also organised activities involving the wider community like kids' holiday programs family picnics information sessions (health, CFA etc), fun walks and they also help women find work. **Fundraisers and Charity:** UMSLV has had a lot of fundraisers for charities which involves grants, funding network selling clothes and toys at market stalls, collecting food for ASRC Foodbank, raising money for refugees and collecting and distributing clothes and food to help the homeless people living in Melbourne survive the winter. The charities that they donated to are Starlight Children's Foundation and Cancer Council which was a morning tea and auction.

**Supporting Organisations:** As well as their own organising UMSLV has helped other numerous organisations including Gippsland Multicultural Services, Latrobe Community Health Services, Relationships Australia, Gippsland Australia Muslim Community Inc and Womens Federation for World Peace.

**Awards and fame:** UMSLV has won a lot of awards during their time including Australia Day event of the year nomination and WFWP's Award for working with families. Members from UMSLV have been interviewed on the local radio and on TV numerous times as well.

**Kids' roles and responsibilities:** In whatever the ladies are doing, the kids are always trying to help. They helped selling clothes and toys at their stalls, they designed most of the flyers and they decorated bookmarks to sell with the money given to Starlight Children's Foundation. By being involved in all the activities the children's confidence has grown.

Each year UMSLV has grown, spreading their vision, their message across and delivering peace to the world.

Together we believe, inspire and celebrate!

## UMSLV AGM

UMSLV is having its AGM on:

**Date:** 17 February 2018

**Time:** 5:00 - 8:00 pm

**Venue:** Gippsland Multicultural Services Inc  
(100 Buckley St, Morwell)

All positions are now vacant, you can nominate one person for each position. The position of office bearers are:

### Executive Committee:

President

Vice- President

Secretary

Treasurer

Communication Officer

Youth Coordinator

### 4 Co-opted Members:

Co-opted members are volunteers and are not obligated to attend all meetings but are willing to help when needed.

Please email your nominations to Lisa Sinha at [lisa@gmsinfo.com.au](mailto:lisa@gmsinfo.com.au) by the 15th February 2018, Thursday 5 pm.

You can also nominate yourself for any of the above mentioned positions as well.