NEWSLETTER

Issue 18

Proud Moment for UMSLV

By Arfa S Khan



The year started with very exciting news for UMSLV on 26 January 2017 at the Latrobe City Australia Day Celebrations. UMSLV was awarded a Latrobe City -Recognition Award for Community Event of the Year category.

The UMSLV Eid festival received the award for the Community Event of the Year. The festival was organised with the help and support of Relationships Australia. The event was well attended by more than 300 people form Muslim community and by wider community. People enjoyed free food, petting animals and did shopping from various stalls.

UMSLV feels highly privileged to be the recipient of the award. The award was presented by Mayor Kellie O'Callaghan.

The award means a lot to all the executive committee members who worked diligently to make a successful event. The contribution and support of Bianca Pezzutto of Relationships Australia was second to none. She looked into every detail needed for a well-planned and beautiful family event.

No event can be successful if the local community doesn't support it. The award is therefore, for all those people who attended, and for those who came from as far as Pakenham to Bairnsdale on the other end to make our event a success. UMSLV executive would like to acknowledge all the community members who came to encourage and attended the Australia Day celebration held in Kernot hall, Morwell Congratulations!



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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.



Empowering Immigrant Women in Rural Victoria

By Amira Rahmanovic, **MCWH Health Education Manager**

Just recently we were invited by Gippsland Multicultural Services to facilitate couple of health education sessions with amazing group of immigrant and refugee women who have settled in picturesque La Trobe Valley, small town Morwell. It was a long drive from Melbourne and made me think how isolated some of migrant communities might be feeling over there. Being through migration and settlement experience myself, it is not hard to imagine how difficult and emotional settlement in a new country could be at the time when confidence, language, understanding of the system and navigating various fields of it is scarce and feels as total luxury!

All of that is compounded with constant reoccurrence of the past (usually traumatic) events, constant worry about the future, and luck of family and community network and support. This is not first time Multicultural Centre for Women's Health (MCWH) is visiting Gippsland and Morwell in particular. We have established great connections

with services there, in particular Gippsland Multicultural Services. We shared the same concern and similar goals towards immigrant and refugee women's empowerment and building their capacity in making informed and healthy choices for themselves and their family.

The group of local immigrant women were from various cultural and linguistic background, mostly Pakistan, Philippines, Columbia, Afghanistan, Iran, and Bangladesh.

Our Bilingual health educator, Gagan Cheema, facilitated health educations on women's health over two consecutive Fridays in Gippsland Multicultural Services.

It was astonishing to be part of these women's-storiessharing experiences. It was a great privilege to be part of very intimate stories and heart breaking journeys that women took us with them in their quest to empower other women in the group with similar issues.

These experiences are always reminders for us why we are in this kind of industry and what is our driving force to get with our education to as many women as possible no matter where they live or work.

When we see women with the new, brighter spark in their eyes after the session, and when we see them walking taller out into the world, we know, we did achieve our goal! It is

priceless experience!









Learning happens when women are provided safe and nurturing environment that is also culturally appropriate. In such environment, women are willing to exchange experiences and learn new information relevant for their age, specific circumstances and other peculiars that is going on in their life. We are looking forward to many more meetings and workshops with immigrant and refugee women in Latrobe Valley region.



Our Women's Health and Wellbeing Group concluded with an amazing feast and a fabulous chat with local service providers.







GMS Article By Yumna Ahmed

Gippsland Multicultural Services organized classes for Multicultural women. There were six sessions conducted on Fridays from 10 am to 1

pm. In the 1st two weeks the ladies were given assertiveness training by Linda Rowley. Ladies were taught techniques on how to be assertive and what is assertiveness. In the next two weeks ladies had a talk on women's health. Ladies were taught about women health and well-being and various topics were discussed: how to look for cancerous lumps and some of the complications that can be attached with women's health.

The next session was a talk by Rohan from the Apex Institute about struggles faced by Multicultural people when looking for jobs. He told the ladies how to overcome the barriers and find jobs. In the last session GMS invited ladies on a 'speed dating lunch' and ladies sat across table with a complete stranger and got to meet new friend. There were ladies from various service providers and ladies from Country Women's Association. It was a wonderful way of meeting and chatting with new people. Everyone one bought a plate to share. Course participants cooked traditional foods from their countries. Ladies who took part in the sessions came from a range of diverse backgrounds that included: Lebanese, Filipino, Columbia, Afghanistan, Bangladeshi and Pakistani. All the participants were given 'Certificates of Comlpetion'by the Director of GMS Lisa Sinha.





















The muslim sisters were very excited to launch the [MY] Story project on 9 March at the Moe library. As people were settling in their seats, a video on the TFN experience was played https://www.facebook.com/UMSLV-478619088876072/

The event started with our President, Arfa S. Khan reciting a verse from the Quran, which highlights the purpose of the project, ie. Building respect and understanding by getting to know one another. 'O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you nations and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of the Almighty is the most righteous of you. Indeed, the Almighty is Knowing and Acquainted'. (Surah Hujarat 49:13)

Mayor Kellie O'Callaghan described [MY] Story as a "wonderful project to build tolerance and understanding in our community". She spoke about the courage it takes to tell a personal story and commended the bravery of the students involved. She thanked "the United Muslim Sisters of the Latrobe Valley, Centre for Multicultural Youth, Gippsland, Kindred Spirits Foundation and Nanoo Nanoo Arts for their support of this important project".

Arfa thanked all those involved in the project including our partners, supporters, Soroptimist International (Gippsland), TFN Donors and Dave Bushell who assisted with outcome measures. Rhonda Renwick from Kindred Spirits spoke about the relationship between the two organisations. She said "We at Kindred Spirits are passionate about the region and we fund projects which make our region a place to reckon with". Kindred Spirits invited UMSLV to pitch for this project at The Funding Network (TFN) event in Melbourne that they organised. With Soroptomist International (Gippsland) making a very generous donation as an initial pledge and Maneesha Nambirajan as our advocate, the outcome was very favourable!

[My] Story Launch

By Khatija Halabi

Khatija spoke about the story behind [MY Story]. Schools are a place where all students should feel safe regardless of their race, religion or ethnicity. There are teenagers in Gippsland who feel racially vilified. Students who are considered different, feel isolated and thus are open to being victimised or bullied. [MY] Story is a project that compliments policies that schools already have in place for students to feel like they belong to the school community.

Shukrat explained who was involved in the delivery of the project at schools from CMY, UMSLV and Nanoo Nanoo Arts and what their background is.

Yumna spoke about learnings from our pilot project at Trafalgar High School as was evident from the outcome measures that she was in charge of collating. Khatija then explained how what was learnt from that pilot project was used to develop a new model, which was described by Cate Chaiyot from CMY.

Through a five session package students have the opportunity to participate in social cohesion activities, engage with multicultural students from Gippsland, be supported as they develop their own narratives, develop independent presentation styles in a creative way and become role models to younger students. This package can be tailor made to suit each school individually.

The launch was well attended by representatives of Kindred Spirits, Gippsland Multicultural Services, Soroptomist International (Gippsland), Centre for Multicultural Youth, Nanoo Nanoo Arts, School principal and students from Trafalgar High School, school teachers, and a representative from Latrobe Valley Authority and service providers to multicultural families. The Question and Answer session was very interactive and a good discussion ensued. The highlight was listening to Alan and Ellie, two 'books' from the pilot project, talking about what involvement in the project meant to them. They described their increased self confidence in telling their story that they shied away from previously. Jane Mersey, school principal of Trafalgar High School, spoke about the ripple effects it has had on other students who were at first also too shy to speak about their backgrounds and who are now starting to engage in these conversations. To read the article in the Latrobe Valley Express

To read the article in the Latrobe Valley Express newspaper on the launch please go to the following link:

http://www.latrobevalleyexpress.com.au/story/45382 231/story-to-spread-across-gippsland/

Another article about the launch entitled "Story telling builds respect" was published in the Warragul Gazette. A video of the [MY] Story process as we carried out the pilot at Trafalgar High School can be viewed on Youtube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hPAfvhAoOpI&t=30s A big thank you to all our partners, affiliated associations, schools and students for making this project possible and to all those who attended the launch.

Thank you Hina Faisal for your technical support and taking photos on the day.and Zeinab Badreddine for preparing a delicious lunch. And thank you to all who assisted with setting up and clearing on the day.

We look forward to taking [MY] Story, which covers

Learning outcomes as stipulated by the VELS curriculum for literacy, to schools around Gippsland. For more information please e-mail access.umslvpresident@gmail.com



Ieda's farewell By Khatija Halabi









leda Azhari served on the UMSLV committee for 2 years; as Vice President in her first year and in charge of communications in her second. On 11 February the committee held a farewell for her at the Lions Park in Moe. Ieda was thanked for her dedication and hard work on the committee and for her contribution to the community. She touched the lives of many while living in Australia. It was really sweet to see that each of the children who attended had something special to say to her to bid her farewell.

Ieda, her husband Fabian and Marissa lived in Churchill for about 4 years while Fabian studied for his PhD. GAMCI organised a farewell for them before they left to return to Malaysia because as a family they had provided great support and assistance to the Gippsland Muslim community. On the night they were thanked not only for assisting at Jumuah prayers every Friday and assisting with every community event but also for being there for families on a personal level. "We'd like to thank GAMCI for organising such a thoughtful and amazing farewell <3 We felt so honoured and blessed to be surrounded by members of the community who are like our own family. Thank you to the community for making time to be there and for the wonderful dishes that you prepared. To those who were unable to come, you were dearly missed. Alhamdulillah for the opportunities that have been given to us to be with all of you these past few years. It was not easy to leave, but in'shaa'Allah we'll meet again one day. Til then, Allah hafiz "<3"

Talking about diversity with Medibank staff

By Donna Caneleo

Arfa S Khan and Yumna Ahmed from the United Muslim Sisters of the Latrobe Valley spoke with staff of Medibank and Centrelink in the Morwell and Warragul offices during Cultural Diversity Week. The stories and knowledge imparted were very well received, memorable and interesting. The staff was particularly interested in the stories of settlement in Gippsland, the challenges faced and the success that came from hard work and getting involved with the local community.

Staff enjoyed learning about Pakistan culture with regards to the geography and architecture and marriage traditions of another country. The staff enjoyed the interactive session where they candidly asked questions about the culture and of other interest.

Later, Arfa Khan shared an all-time favourite recipe of 'butter chicken' with the staff.

Harmony Day event at LCHS

By Ann Roberts

Harmony Day is celebrated on March 21st every year, within Cultural Diversity Week. The purpose of Harmony Day is to celebrate Australia's multiculturalism, and spread the message that inclusion, respect and a sense of belonging is for everyone.

On Tuesday March 21,, Latrobe Community Health Service hosted a free morning tea at their Morwell site for all staff and the general community. Over 200 people enjoyed an hour of entertainment and a banquet of snacks from across the world that were prepared by members of the local International Women's Group and LCHS's 'Planned Activity Group' programs.

ABC Gippsland radio broadcast live from the event in a supposedly 'quiet' corner, surrounded by smiles and the enthusiastic din of conversation.

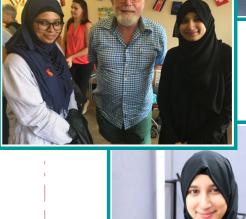
Some of the crowd energetically joined in local dance teacher Adriana's belly dancing demonstration.

Yumna Ahmed's brief and eloquent story of her family settling in the Latrobe Valley epitomized the spirit of Harmony Day as she recounted feeling welcomed, included and assisted to settle into a new country by the broader community.

Eager queues kept UMSLV member Naila busy creating beautiful and much loved henna tattoos.

LCHS is grateful to UMSLV and other partners including CMY, Centrelink, IWG, ABC, Federation Training and GMS who helped make the morning so vibrant and fun.







Happy International Women's Day

By Khatija Halibi

RMIT University with City of Melbourne have organised leadership courses for African Australian women. It is so inspiring to see these wonderful women giving up their Sunday afternoons to attend these classes so they can break glass ceilings, extend themselves and do something for their communities. The ladies attending and co-ordinating the classes are amazing!

Khatija was invited as their guest speaker to talk about "Building resilience of community members through effective networking".

She caught up with the ladies a few weeks ago at their graduation ceremony and was very pleased to hear about one lady running a family daycare service and another studying to become a police woman.



https://www.facebook.com/hashtag/beboldforchange?source=feed_text&story_id=1416635848407720 BeBoldForChange

Muslim Women Embrace Aussie Students with Open Arms

By Zena Chamas

VICTORIA – Noticing a worrying increase in Islamophobia incidents in Australia, a group of Muslim women in Eastern Victoria, Gippsland, decided to take an action, creating a platform to bridge the gap between different cultures and religions.

"We want our children to learn about our faith, culture and also respect for new homeland's culture and values," Arfa Khan, president of United Muslims Sisters of the Latrobe Valley (UMSTV), told AboutIslam.net.

Living in Gippsland, home to hundreds of immigrants, Khan said that the majority of residents have little or no contact with Muslims.

In a bid to change the status quo, United Muslims Sisters have come up with an awareness program that fits in to English curriculums throughout Gippsland.

The first of its kind in the region, it gives students from multicultural backgrounds a platform to share their experiences with their classmates—bridging the gap between different cultures and religions.

She says the basic purpose of the woman-based organization is to give a platform for ladies to talk about issues.

At first, teenagers were reluctant to speak about where they came from and their interactions at schools, but after a while the stories started to pour out.

While in Gippsland there have been rare occurrences



of Islamophobia, Khan said working closely with police has helped.

"This region is very peaceful for Muslim women there are rare elements of islamophobia. Women who wear hijab have faced a few statements like 'go back where you have come from'," she said.

Initially the United Muslim Sisters intended to limit the project to the Latrobe Valley, however after such a successful pilot, supported by The Funding Network, they are welcoming all primary and secondary schools across Gippsland to participate.

Muslim Women Embrace Aussie Students with Open Arms_1

Eye Opener

Turning four this year, the UMSLV has had a long history of eye opening workshops in the small town of Traralgon.

One of the most successful projects they have run are the hijab workshops; where women are invited to try on the hijab, and ask questions about its importance.

"We ran quite a few sessions on Hijab and the response was overwhelming," Khan said.

"We had array of comments such as, 'we thought ladies who cover themselves are oppressed, but we didn't know most of the ladies do it by choice," she recalled.

She added that the basic aim of running the hijab workshops is to create awareness and knowledge for locals, who might have never met any Muslim to teach them about the faith side of hijab. Khan believes hijab is not only a piece of clothing for women, but it represents modesty and the safeguarding the pious aspire.

"The scarf is not a weapon," Khan said.
There are elements of racism prevalent in every society, and the UMSLV aim is to break those stereotypes and embrace cultural cohesion with open arms.

A mentor to her peers and a leader in her community, Khan leaves words of advice for her fellow Muslim sisters, calling for unity and a better understanding of each other.



"Being a Muslim, I believe Islam is the religion of peace and my piece of advice to the newly converts are; welcome to the religion, don't make a generalized understanding of Islam, rather read and understand the holy book and learn the true meaning of religion," she said.

"In its true manifestation Islam is a way of life; so incorporate it in your daily lives, and if you come across any ambiguity about any aspect of religion read more about it and talk to religious scholars and talk with your Muslim peers for more clarity about religion."

Neighbour Day Pop up Café

By Bianca Pezzutto

Relationships Australia Victoria's Neighbour Day Pop up Café was abuzz with visitors and passers-by until the sky opened up and created a down pour over our celebrations. Despite this we had about sixty people come and join us and learn more about the community around them and the services available at RAV. Sheltered by her umbrella Administration coordinator Caitlin Grigsby walked to each surrounding building and took orders for teas, coffees and hot

chocolates and promptly delivered them so they didn't have to brave the cold, windy and wet weather – what an example of a great neighbour. Neighbour day looks to raise awareness in communities around the health and wellbeing of our elderly neighbours, our families and streets. Neighbour Day falls on the last day of March each year and is a great way to say thanks to your neighbours, meet new neighbours and help us all feel part of the community.

Arfa khan attend the event with her neighbor Jo Johnson. They both shared there wonderful relationship with each other and how the neighbourhood in there area is supportive, helpful and caring towards each other. With the rain washing us out and impacting on our neighbours we thought there could be no more bad luck but it seems the wonderful photographs have also disappeared, bring on 2018 Neighbour Day.

Holiday activities

By Arfa khan

UMSLV always arranges a holiday activity to keep our children entertained during the school term break. This term activities were organised in Trafalgar Public hall. About 20 children attended the session.

This term three activities were organised for two different age groups. Group one was conducted by Sister Aneela Kamraan for the age group of 2-6 years. The children made the Olaf character from the movie Frozen and they also made caterpillars.

Sister Waheeda Moon made Dory from paper mache with the 7-12 years age group.

The activities were thoroughly enjoyed by all the children. The activities were followed by light refreshments.





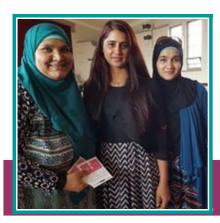
















UMSLV'S Coverage in Media













Practice of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in Ramadan

By Arfa S Khan

The blessed month of Ramadan is approaching soon. As Muslims, we all should make a special preparations for this month. If we see clearly this month gives us the opportunity to correct our deeds and become a better human being. We can seek forgiveness from Almighty and Allah has promised to forgive.

An authentic Hadith says about this month:

"Whoever fasted in Ramadan out of sincere Faith (i.e. belief) android hopping for a reward from Allah, the all his past sins will be forgiven, and whoever stood for the prayers in the nights of Ramadan out of sincere Faith and hoping for a reward from Allah, then all his previous sins will "

Therefore, it is imperative for us that we observe this month in the true spirit and increase our faith by hoping for mercy and forgiveness from Allah Almighty.

One of the pertinent question is what should one do to gain the maximum benefits of this month. The best and most simplest way is to follow the footsteps of our beloved Prophet Muhmmad (PBUH) and incorporate the deeds in our lives for attaining the virtues.

Recitation of Holy Quran:

Quran was revealed in this holy month. So read Quran as much you can.

Hazrat Ibn Abbas (RA) narrates:

"Jibreel used to meet Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) every night in Ramadan to study the Holy Quran carefully together." (Bukhari)

Traweeh:

The other major Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) during the month of Ramadan was the night prayer after the mandatory prayer of Isha.

Night of Decree and Supplication

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said in one of His hadiths:

"Search for the Night of Qadr in the odd nights of the last ten days of Ramadan." (Bukhari) Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) use to make special supplications.

Itekaf:

Another great Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) specific to the month of Ramadan is the Sunnah of Itekaf. Usually, the Prophet use to perform Itekaf for last ten days in this month of Ramadan. Thus, Muslims must also try observing this Sunnah of Prophet (PBUH) as well by taking time out of the busy life of this world and dedicating some time to Allah Almighty.

Charity:

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) also used to give sadaqa and Zakaat to poor and needy. The importance of giving Zakaat can be understood

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said: "Every Muslim has to give in charity." The people then asked: "(But what) if someone has nothing to give, what should he do?" The Prophet replied: "He should work with his hands and benefit himself and also give in charity (from what he earns)." The people further asked: "If he cannot find even that?" He replied: "He should help the needy who appeal for help." Then the people asked: "If he cannot do (even) that?" The Prophet said finally: "Then he should perform good deeds and keep away from evil deeds, and that will be regarded as charitable deeds." - Sahih Al-Bukhari, Volume 2, Hadith 524

Ramadan is the vital pillar of Islam. In short all Muslims must try to imitate the way Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) spent His Ramadan.

May Allha Almighty accept all our

May Allha Almighty accept all our fasting and supplications in the blessed month and hereafter. (Aameen)



Colour In

The Five Pillars of Islam

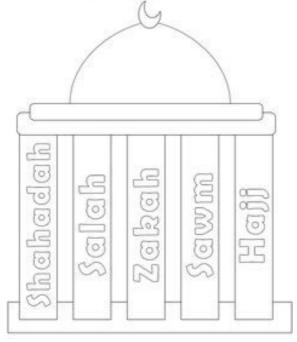
Word Scramble

Instructions:

Unscramble each jumbled arrangement of letters to form words related to Ramadan. Try it out!

Puzzle:

DIMSAJ	
ABAKA	
NADMAI	
MANDARA	
ARUNQ	
LISMA	
SALHILMIB	
DHUMMAMA	



n Word Search

Instructions:

Find out the words given in this list from the puzzle.

0	Н	Ε	С	W	W	Т	Ε	I	C	В	Q	٧	0	L	K	Н
В	R	0	Т	Н	Е	R	Н	0	0	D	М	R	Ν	D	I	Т
Ι	٧	Υ	W	S	н	Υ	D	F	В	Ι	U	Α	Ν	Р	Υ	В
W	R	I	C	Ν	F	Н	Х	Α	0	S	R	М	С	М	J	М
U	Ν	J	R	М	Ν	Р	K	S	Α	L	S	Α	C	Q	W	М
Т	М	J	U	U	0	J	Υ	Т	Q	Α	Ε	D	J	D	Т	Υ
Α	Р	Α	1	Н	В	Q	D	I	W	М	W	Α	Р	S	W	Α
В	D	S	Q	Α	F	В	Ε	Ν	Q	Ι	Ι	Ν			U	U
S	N	Р	U	М	Х	D	Q	G	K	G	D	W	В	L	0	Н
Т	0	F	Α	М	Ι	C	٧	D	Н	U	Х	U	Т	Ρ	J	W
Ι	F	W	L	Α	F	G	0	Z	В	C	N	L	С	G	Х	G
Ν	D	D	L	D	Υ	C	В	В	Ι	Х	K	L	Υ	٧	N	٧
Ε	Р	R	Α	Υ	Ε	R	S	S	K	G	Α	Ν	Υ	K	G	Р
Ν	G	R	Н	Υ	L	Х	Α	Υ	Р	U	0	D	F	J	Α	K
C	C	R	W	В	٧	C	Н	Α	R	Ι	Т	Υ	R	R	U	Ν
Е	R	D	R	S	U	Α	W	Q	S	C	0	Υ	В	Н	D	Z
Q	Н	Χ	3	S	F	Ε	G	Ν	Χ	С	Q	U	R	Α	N	Х

WORD LIST

ALLAH

RAMADAN

ISLAM

QURAN

FASTING

CHARITY

PRAYERS

ABSTINENCE

BROTHERHOOD

MUHAMMAD

UMSLV Receiving Global Women's Peace Network Award



By Khatija Halabi

Representatives of United Muslim Sisters of LaTrobe Valley receiving the Global Women's Peace Network Award.

From the left: Anne Bellavance (WFWP Australia President), Arfa Khan (UMSLV President), Khatija Halabi (UMSLV Vice President), Dr. Mimmie Watts.

On Saturday 8 April, the Women's Federation for World Peace (WFWP) celebrated their 25th anniversary at a communities fundraising dinner.

It was wonderful to hear about some of the projects that WFWP is involved with, such as providing solar panels to a kindergarten in Solomon Islands and sponsoring women and girls' education.

WFWP is founded on the belief that a peaceful world begins in the heart of each person and in each family.

WFWP is committed to the Global Women's Peace Network (GWPN), which is a global network of

women leaders who are Peace builders within their community.

This year, WFWP presented their GWPN award to UMSLV. It is an absolute honour for us to receive the award and acknowledgement for what the Muslim sisters do in Gippsland.

Thank you WFWP for the acknowledgement and congratulations ladies!



CONTRIBUTORS

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