



# Refugee

Newsletter of the Australian Refugee Association

## Employment Services wins award

Since late 2005, The Australian Refugee Association's relationship with Thebarton Senior College has flourished to the point that more than six groups and 150 students have participated in a range of pre-vocational training courses in the areas of carpentry, welding, building and construction and metal workshop skills.

As with ARA's other employment services, these training programs demonstrate our commitment to providing industry appropriate and innovative services in the refugee sector and ensure that participants are given the opportunity to develop the skills and experiences imperative to securing meaningful employment across a range of South Australian industries.

On Tuesday the 1st July, the ongoing success and originality demonstrated by this partnership was recognised when ARA Employment was awarded the "Adelaide Airport 2008 Community Partnership Award" at the Western Futures School and Business Partnerships Dinner held at the Lakes Resort Hotel.

ARA would like to acknowledge the support of the South Australian government through the South Australia Regions at Work program and Western Futures for their commitment and enthusiasm for ARA's work.

We would also like to acknowledge the continuing good relationship we enjoy with Thebarton Senior College and trust that our positive collaboration will continue into the future to the benefit of both South Australian refugee communities and local businesses.



Manager, Employment Services Hafez Zamani (left) and Director Kevin Liston proudly display the award and certificate.

### Are you looking for staff?

ARA has a large client base experienced in industrial, production, commercial and manufacturing environments.

Please contact the Manager, Employment Services **Hafez Zamani** on 8354 2951  
304 Henley Beach Road, Underdale 5032  
[www.ausref.net](http://www.ausref.net)

ARA gratefully acknowledges the support of its Corporate Partners and supporters. Together we can make a real difference to the lives of many.



## Director's View

The number of refugees arriving in South Australia in 2007-08 tells part of the refugee story – 1,108 arrivals in total, evenly divided between male and female, just over half were under 18 years old with 49% from Africa, 40% from the Middle East (incl. Afghanistan) and 11% from Asia.

But the refugee story is much more personal than the numbers show. For me a few events stand out and show the quality of the people involved.

The first is 8 year old 'Tieng' who came to see me with his Dad in July. For the previous 18 months, he had been shuttled between Southern Sudan, Kakuma refugee camp, Nairobi and Nakuru, being transferred from one carer to another as his father tried ceaselessly to get him to Australia. Because of problems related to payment of the traditional dowry, 'Tieng' had not been able travel to Australia with the rest of his family in 2006. His father 'Achieng' is an amazing man. Almost every effort of his resulted in a setback, the stress was clearly showing and his wife was at her wits' end. But he never gave up. Eventually, with the help of ARA staff, Barbara, Sandra and myself, UNHCR in Canberra and Nairobi, IOM in Canberra and Nairobi and the Australian High Commission in Kenya, 'Tieng' arrived in Adelaide on 29 July. Being able to speak to this little boy in person in the safety of the ARA office after all he and his family had been through was a remarkable experience.

The second relates to a young man 'Deng' who returned to Kakuma Refugee Camp to marry his girlfriend but got caught up in a robbery, had his money stolen and was shot in the leg. He was transferred to a hospital in Nairobi. His cousin 'Manyok' in Adelaide, concerned at the mounting costs and the possibility that treatment might cause him to overstay his visa, asked ARA to raise a loan to meet the immediate need. Three very generous members of Circles of Friends put up the money and saved the day. "Deng" paid his bills in Nairobi and returned home. 'Manyok' and 'Deng' were as good as their word and paid back the loans in full and on time.

These are people whom we can be proud to call friends, neighbours and countrymen.

The expressions of relief, happiness and achievement that were produced and shared all across the land when the changes to immigration detention were announced by the Minister in July were truly an appreciation of the triumph of good over evil

The changes remove the most insidious, harmful and abhorrent elements in the system. Ensuring that children will never again be held in detention and that only people posing a risk to the community or refusing to comply with visa conditions are detained restores integrity to the system. Placing the onus on the Department to show why people should be detained is a major step towards transparency and due process.

This policy change is a tribute to all who would not accept that the brutality witnessed over the last ten years or so should never have happened.

**Kevin Liston**  
Director



ARA's Adrian "Bok" Bok, with Rotary Club Presidents at Rotary's Group 6 Meeting where he recently made a presentation on the housing needs for refugees.

## Give me shelter

It is often said that there are three basic things that a person needs to survive. They are food, water and shelter. In a society as prosperous as Australia it is shocking that people are still denied access to essential human needs.

Families from a refugee background in Adelaide are working extremely hard to obtain one of these basic human rights – housing. To secure public housing in Adelaide can take a 4 – 12 year wait (with most refugee families around the 12 year waiting time)

Private rental, is a more realistic alternative but this is now a landlords' market, rents are increasing, and competition between prospective tenants is extreme. Many newly arriving families are disadvantaged in this competition due to barriers such as racism, large families, detailed application forms, lack of transport to get to inspections, lack of knowledge about how to access the private rental market and false beliefs.

Some families are living in cars or staying with friends in overcrowded conditions whilst they continue to apply for properties. Many people vent their frustration at the system saying *"They think just because I am a refugee that I have lived in the trees all my life and can't take care of a house."* Many families are from urban backgrounds and are quite experienced in looking after a household. Once people do move into their private rental accommodation they have a sense of achievement and pride that they have been able to secure that accommodation for their family. That pride also means they treat that house with love and care.

ARA provides practical assistance to overcome some of these barriers by helping to search for accommodation via the internet, contacting real estate agents, advocating with Housing SA for access to public housing, helping clients to understand the terms and conditions of their leases, referrals to emergency accommodation, providing information sessions that contain helpful tips and information about how to improve the chances of securing private rental.

ARA's Winter Appeal asked for support in this vital area of assistance. The very generous support of our members and friends is gratefully acknowledged. The success of this appeal will enable us to support more people to achieve their accommodation dreams.

*ARA's accommodation assistance program is partially supported by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship.*

ARA is supported by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) through the Settlement Grants Program (SGP)

# Reuniting families



Suzanne Carlton, Manager, Migration Services with Susaneh and her family

Susaneh, a Liberian woman of the minority Krahn ethnic group, fled Liberia for Cote D'Ivoire in the late 1990s. Later under attack in Cote D'Ivoire, she fled to Guinea with her young children and her husband. In late 2000, her husband disappeared and despite her best efforts, could not be found. She feared the worst. She had also not heard from her parents and siblings for some years. When an opportunity arose for her to be resettled in Australia in late 2004 with her four young children, she accepted.

Susaneh's brothers and sisters later fled to Cote D'Ivoire and then on to Guinea, where they were recognised by the UNHCR as refugees. The family had suffered horrific abuses and several family members were murdered. The surviving brothers and sisters learned that Susaneh had gone to Australia and that her husband was missing.

Once Susaneh was in touch with her brothers and sisters, she came to ARA in 2005 to propose these family members to come here and join her. She felt very isolated with her children as her only relatives here.

Communication between Australia and Guinea was difficult and it was August 2006 before we could apply for Susaneh's family. The process took 18 months of ARA's efforts but earlier this year Susaneh welcomed her brothers, Garretson, Gibson, and Larry and her sisters, Jenowen and Jeawoya.

Even more exciting than this family reunion was the news that through tracing services, Susaneh has now learned that her husband is alive and she will be seeking to reunite her children with their father.

## Suzanne Carlton

Manager, Migration Services

## Annual General Meeting

**Tuesday 21 October 2008**

**6.00pm for drinks and nibbles**

**Meeting starts promptly at 6.30pm**

### Venue:

Bethlehem House  
12 Sudholz Place (off Flinders Street)  
Adelaide



### Guest Speaker:

**His Excellency Rear Admiral Kevin Scarce AC CSC RANR**  
Governor of South Australia

### RSVP to ARA

Telephone: 8354 2951



## Welcome Peter

Peter Laintoll has been appointed Manager, Corporate Services with the Australian Refugee Association.

He will be involved in strategic planning and operational management of the business aspects of the organisation with responsibilities in the finance, administration and marketing areas. He was formerly Manager of Program Development with Aboriginal Family Support Services.

Peter has over 20 years of management experience in the not-for-profit sector. He is keen to see ARA realise its potential for growth and financial sustainability whilst retaining its existing strong community links.

We welcome Peter to the ARA family.



Participants proudly display their certificates at a graduation morning tea

## Working Women's Project

ARA has used funding secured through the Coles Community Grants scheme in the past twelve months to provide customised pre-vocational training for women looking for work in the cleaning industry. The program was designed to increase the marketability and confidence of the participants. The program had a practical vocational focus and the material covered included competencies in commercial and domestic cleaning, manual handling, food preparation and handling, occupational health and safety and first aid.

ARA gratefully acknowledges the support of the Coles Group, Community Grants scheme for their substantial support of this program.



## Congratulations Isatu

Isatu Fofanah, a student at the Adelaide Secondary School of English has won the ARA Achievement Award for her progress since arriving in Australia in August 2007.

Board member, Patricia Muncey presented the Award to her at the end of term School Assembly.

From Sierra Leone, Isatu has proved to be a committed and hard working student. She is polite and helpful and has set realistic goals for her future. She was chosen for this award, by her teachers, for the 'special quality' that makes her stand out.

Her achievements in Australia, after a difficult life before her arrival, are a credit to her and we join her teachers and fellow students in wishing her well for the future.



Isatu Fofanah with ARA Board member Patricia Muncey



Helping Refugees Transforming Lives

## Film Night – Double Feature

Sundays 12 & 19 October 2008 - 6pm  
Chelsea Cinema, Kensington Park

### The Duchess

Drama/History  
Keira Knightly, Ralph Fiennes

### Taken

Action/Thriller  
Liam Neeson

This event is held in partnership with the  
Adelaide Combined Lodges

**Tickets:** Adults \$14.00 Students \$8.00

**Bookings essential:** Please contact Erika  
on 8161 3322 or email: [erika.marshall@ausref.net](mailto:erika.marshall@ausref.net)



## Computers for ARA

Communication is important to us all. This need is even more vital when you find yourself in strange surroundings and in a different culture.

Recently retired, John Read volunteers at ARA to bring the gift of communication to the people we assist. John is a former teacher and adult educator.

He saw his knowledge of computers and love of teaching as a perfect vehicle to assist the community. John refurbishes donated computers and then provides 'one to one' tutorials for clients to improve their computer literacy and job skills and gain the tools required for using a computer in schools.

ARA is always grateful for donations of working Pentium 3 or later computers that can be refurbished for use by refugees. Please contact ARA on 8354 2951 if you have a computer you are able to donate.



John Read refurbishing a donated computer.

## Thank You!

ARA gratefully acknowledges the support of the following for their generous help.

- **Blackwood Circle of Friends** – Badge Day at Blackwood
- **Diana Bleby** – donation in lieu of gifts for her special birthday
- **Inner Southern Community Health Centre**
- **Marion Quilter's Circles**
- **Michael McClaren** – Bentleys MRI
- **Terry Wollaston**
- **RobMeree Foundation**

## Simplify Regular Donations

ARA is fortunate to have the generous support of many donors who have chosen to make a regular monthly donations by either credit card or direct debit from a selected bank account.

Donations are made on a monthly (or as requested) basis with receipts sent at the end of the financial year for tax purposes.

This simple method of donation saves you time, cuts our administration time and allows ARA to put the pledged money to the best use.

Our thanks go to all regular donors for their commitment and interest in ARA and the vital work we do with the refugee community.

If you would like to give regularly in this manner, please contact Erika Marshall on 8161 3322 or email: [erika.marshall@ausref.net](mailto:erika.marshall@ausref.net) or download the form from our website: [www.ausref.net](http://www.ausref.net)



### Editors Note:

ARA welcomes contributions to REFUGEE. Please contact Erika Marshall for details. [Erika.Marshall@ausref.net](mailto:Erika.Marshall@ausref.net)  
Direct: 8161 3322

*Please note the views represented in REFUGEE are not necessarily those of ARA.*

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## Win \$5000



### 2008 Power of 'U' Community Raffle

Tickets are now available in the United Way Power of 'U' Community raffle. For \$2 per ticket (in books of 10) you have the opportunity to win:

- \$5,000 Cash
- Accommodation package for two in the Barossa Valley – Valued at \$400
- Holden Promotional Package courtesy of Peter Page Holden – Valued at \$175
- Mixed Dozen bottles of wine – Valued at \$120
- Bickfords assorted drink basket – Valued at \$35

The draw will be conducted at Elizabeth Shopping Centre on 12 December 2008 with results in the Advertiser 13/12/08. 12,000 Tickets. Lic No. M11804

**Please contact Erika on 8161 3322 if you are able to help with the sale of tickets or would like to purchase ticket(s).**  
**Email: [fundraising@ausref.net](mailto:fundraising@ausref.net) or [www.ausref.net](http://www.ausref.net)**

ARA retains part proceeds of all tickets it sells