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If you would like to support our work, your donation will be most gratefully accepted. Your donation will enable people from refugee and Indigenous backgrounds to continue to benefit from our educational programs. The Edmund Rice Centre Western Australia is a registered charity.

All donations over \$2 are tax deductible. As we are required to issue a tax receipt for all donations, please send an email to info@ercwa.org.au when you donate, including your *full name, postal address, email address and donation amount*. You may also choose to make your donation to a specific project.

Please make cheques payable to "Edmund Rice Centre"
Donation via Website, Paypal and Direct Deposit
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Account name: Edmund Rice Centre Mirrabooka Inc
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Newsletter

Issue 52

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Message from the Director

For me, Christmas is about giving. I don't necessarily mean the giving of presents and material things, on which we can all become too fixated, but I mean the act of giving of kindness and love. From this comes compassion and empathy for others.

We have just released our annual report for 2017/18, which also celebrates our twenty years of service to the community, so I hope you will take time to read it over the Christmas break. It is available on our website <http://www.ercwa.org.au/> or contact us at the Centre for a hard copy.

In recent times we have learnt that our funding from the Federal government has been reduced significantly. This has resulted in having to reduce some staff who have made very valuable contribution over many years. We will have to discontinue at least two programs in 2019.

I am sure 2019 will hold many challenges for the Edmund Rice Centre WA, but I have great trust that these will be overcome with continued dedication, support and innovative ideas to meet our changing world. I know we can continue to forge new connections in the community to make Western Australian a better place.

My thanks to the many staff and volunteers who throughout the year have continued to give generously of their time and talents in the service of others and to the members of the Board of Management for their ongoing support and advice.

I would like to thank our many service partners including Local, State and Federal Government Departments as well as non-government organisations in the delivery of our programs. I also acknowledge the support of the Oceania Province of the Christian Brothers, the Edmund Rice Foundation, private donors and a number of philanthropic supporters.

May I wish you all a Merry Christmas, an enjoyable and peaceful holiday and a new year filled with hope. Remember that it is the simple acts of kindness and love which have the biggest impact at Christmas time.

Stephen Bowman

Reflection

The board of Management meet monthly at the Centre. This Christmas reflection is from board secretary Michelle Blank

"I would like to use this reflection to reflect on what the Christmas holiday represents. It is a time to deepen the connection you share with family (near and far); to experience gratitude for your many blessings; to remember the precious lessons you've learned in the year just past (however disguised they were at the time); to laugh at yourself as you wonder why it took you so long to learn some of them; and most of all, to think about how you can use your hard-earned wisdom to create a more meaningful and rewarding future... in 2019 and beyond. I would like to read an Irish blessing:

The light of the Christmas star to you
The warmth of a home and hearth to you
The cheer and good will of friends to you
The hope of a childlike heart to you
The joy of a thousand angels to you
The love of the Son and
God's peace to you..

You can help us to save money!

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Meet our new Patron Ron Alexander

In November, the Centre welcomed Ron Alexander as its patron. As a former Director General in the Western Australian government, Ron has combined his passion for sport and education to forge a successful career both professionally and in a voluntary capacity. His journey crosses many disciplines including professional sport, sport management, coaching and community service. He was recently named Western Australian of the Year in sports.



"I am continually impressed with how the Centre finds new and innovative programs."

First Hike Project

A group of young people from a refugee background at the Edmund Rice Centre WA had their first bush walk and camping experience along the Bibbulmun Track supported by The First Hike Project in October. Everyone had a great time.



Thanks to the Volunteers

Reflecting on the past year I recognize the contribution of everyone who gives their time as a volunteer to support the Edmund Rice Centre. The Edmund Rice Centre would not be able to operate effectively without the passionate commitment of all these amazing individuals.

Perhaps we don't thank them enough. I hope that they know that they are the life blood of the Centre.

This year we had 46 volunteers including English teachers, teaching assistants, life skills support workers, youth workers, bus drivers, migration agents and admin assistants. Everyone has given up something to be with us on a regular basis expecting no reward. It is gratefully appreciated.

I wish everyone a joyful holiday and we look forward to your return in the new year.

Christina Ward

Volunteer Coordinator



Harmony Camp Weekend

In August 2018 100 people joined our annual Harmony Camp at Camp Kelly in Dwellingup. On Saturday morning Aboriginal elders welcomed us to country. There was dance, storytelling and music. We shared our own life stories, faith stories and discovered the similarities that exist between faiths. In the evening we shared a multicultural meal followed by dance and karaoke and concluded the weekend with a multi-faith service. Funded by Lotterywest and supported by Aquinas College, Supported by the Edmund Rice Centre staff and volunteers.



International Human Rights Day

This year, Human Rights Day marks the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, a milestone document that proclaimed the inalienable rights which everyone is inherently entitled to as a human being regardless of race, colour, religion, sex, language, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. ERCWA leadership and art group collaborated with Community Arts Network to produce a free pocket book, posters and short videos linked to a smartphone App, to celebrate the 30 Articles in the declaration.

The official launch of the pocket guide of the 30 articles of Human Rights was launched by the Federal Member of Cowan Dr Anne Aly MP on Monday December 10 2018.



African Relationships

Congratulations to our Deputy Managing Director Christina Ward for being recognized by the Organisation of African Communities WA for her continuing support. Chris was awarded the Community Pillars Award for Impact.

