

Hub Highlights

THE MERCY HUB NEWSLETTER
WINTER EDITION 2022

In this Winter edition of Hub Highlights we are delighted to share news of some of the gatherings and activities that have been part of our work together here at the Mercy Hub in these past months. World Refugee Week and associated awareness-raising gatherings at the Hub were a special highlight in June. I mention just three events here – details below.

A vibrant panel of speakers joined us at the Hub and hosted a lively discussion about refugee issues globally and locally as we pondered the humanitarian crisis in this refugee week. Awareness of the needs of newly arrived Afghan refugees was brought to us through an inaugural Yoga Event held at the Hub in collaboration with OLMC Heidelberg.

Young Mercy Links helped raise awareness of the challenges that refugees and asylum seekers face through the launch of a wonderful book called 'The Shape of Hope.' This publication highlights the impact and difficulty that asylum seeker students face in trying to access higher education.

Other activities included: the regular Comfortable Cuppa, Young Mercy Links Retreat, Reconciliation Week, Sunday afternoon Poetry, a visit and talk from Mercy Works, staff of some of our schools, as well as some trustees of Mercy Ministry Companions calling in for a cuppa. All have made for an enriching few months despite the winter cold!

Margaret Moore rsm

Refugee Week - Your Voice, Our Voice - Responding to the Global Humanitarian Crisis

In support of Refugee Week, the Mercy Hub hosted a panel discussion to offer perspectives from individuals who are asylum seekers and those who provide a voice and assistance through their endeavours. It was a privilege to have in dialogue, Naser Moradi, a Hazara man from Afghanistan who is currently detained. Ban Maroky, who arrived as a refugee from Iraq in the 90s and is currently the Project Leader at the Good Samaritan Catholic School; Deborah Zion, Associate Professor on Ethics – Healthcare for Asylum Seekers and Chair of Victoria University's Human Research Ethics Committee; and Libby Saunders, Coordinator of the Brigidine Asylum Seekers Project.

All our speakers demonstrated care, and concern for refugee communities and the policies made by the Australian government. We were so fortunate to have Nasir and Ban share their journeys as refugees in Australia, and Deborah and Libby to share their experience working with refugee communities.

We were joined at the Hub and on Zoom by Sisters of Mercy, students and staff from Mercy schools, Carlton agencies, University students and staff, and local Carlton neighbours.



Young Mercy Links

Young Mercy Links has had an eventful quarter. "We are excited to be able to come together to come and create awareness for the challenges that refugees and asylum seekers face." - Angela Scarafilo, Young Mercy Links Victoria Coordinator

YOUNG MERCY LINKS HOSTS BOOK LAUNCH OF *THE SHAPE OF HOPE* WITH HOPE CO-OP

Young Mercy Links hosted the book launch of Hope Co-Op's, *The Shape of Hope* at the Mercy Hub which "tells the personal stories of a group of asylum seekers and the Australians who, through radical and creative advocacy, were able to open doors for them." It informs of the human impacts of government policies in Australia, as well as what actions people are taking to change them.

Members of Hope-Co-op's board, Ali and Sally provided insight into their non-profit's role in helping address the disadvantages asylum seekers face in gaining access to higher education. Two of the authors featured, Mujtaba and Sohrab, gave a reading from their perspectives. Proceeds from book sales will go towards Hope Co-op's Living Support Fund which covers transport costs and a small weekly allowance to enable students to finish their education.

- Isabel, Young Mercy Links - Victoria

Copies can be purchased at: <https://www.hopecoop.org.au/shop>



RETREAT AT PHILLIP ISLAND



The theme of our retreat was 'Passion, Presence, Purpose' – drawing in our awareness of self and other forms of life to strengthen our authentic compassion as leaders. It was only fitting to explore this concept on Philip Island as we immersed ourselves in the sound of crashing waves and felt the mild warmth of the sun on our faces. A highlight activity among the members was morning yoga on the beach. We were occasionally interrupted by passing dogs in the area but the exercise invigorated our muscles and energised us for the schedule ahead.

- Elise, Young Mercy Links, Victoria

YOGA FOR THE BENEFIT OF REFUGEES



The Mercy Hub hosted an inaugural Yoga Event to benefit an Afghan Refugee family who has recently settled in the North-Western suburbs. Funds were raised on behalf of Melbourne NW Refugee Mentors.

22 keen yogis braved the cold and the traffic to support the cause, stretch their bodies and calm their minds. Attendees and generous donors raised over \$500 for the family which will go towards driving lessons for one of the young adults. Bi-annual events to coincide with cinema fundraisers are being planned to provide ongoing support for these families.

- Lauren, Our Lady of Mercy College

Cook Houses N' Tanks a Lot

Changing relations in remote Papua New Guinea



On a cold June night a group of people gathered at the Mercy Hub to listen to a talk given by Associate Professor Monica Minnegal from Melbourne University. Monica is an anthropologist who has lived among the people of a remote northern region of the Western Province of PNG with her husband and the topic she addressed was, "Changing social relations in remote Papua New Guinea".

Those who attended included members of the PNG Wantok Association here in Melbourne, professional associates of Monica, a doctor who has worked in many areas of PNG for years and others who have a strong interest and/or links with the people of PNG.

This talk was the first of a series intended to strengthen our understanding of PNG culture and how we might also strengthen our relationships with the people of PNG. It was very well received, and all made connections with each other over a meal that followed the talk.

The next talk is on August 12th at 6.30 pm in 617 Nicholson St. with Hilda Wayne, ABC reporter who hosts ABC National podcasts to and by women of the Pacific community, including Papua New Guinea. All welcome.

Margaret Ryan rsm

Reconciliation Week

We acknowledged Reconciliation Week at the regular Comfortable Cuppa gathering on the first Wednesday of June and with a Laudato Si' Circle, hosted by Juliet Talarico, that focused on Indigenous Spirituality and Ancient Knowledge. In Laudato Si', Pope Francis says that indigenous communities "should be the principal dialogue partners" in the work of healing and caring for the earth. Participants found these sessions both enlightening, challenging, and inspiring.

All is not lost. Human beings... are also capable of rising above themselves, choosing again what is good, and making a new start... and [embarking] on new paths to authentic freedom. (#205)

– Pope Francis



Remembering National NAIDOC Week.

Celebrations are held across Australia in the first week of July each year (Sunday to Sunday), to celebrate and recognise the history, culture and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. NAIDOC Week is an opportunity for all of us to learn about First Nations cultures and histories of the oldest, continuous living cultures on earth.



Mercy Hub Staff Feature - Juliet Talarico

Juliet Talarico is member of the Mercy Hub team, working as the Program and Activities Facilitator.

Mercy Integral Ecology Fellowship Program

When did this journey towards love of earth, love of the environment begin for you?

It really began in Primary School. I developed a deep love for animals. I became saddened by their habitats being destroyed. Much later, while at University, I developed a broader understanding of ecology and the concept of having a healthy landscape.

What do you hope to learn through the Mercy Integral Ecology Fellowship Program?

I am keen to immerse myself in the mentoring aspect of the program. It is an enriching experience as it provides numerous opportunities for learning from one's mentor and the other fellows. I am privileged to be under the guidance of Margie Abbott.

How has the company/ circle of the leaders' program nurtured your sense of wonder?

Through the company of the other fellows, we have the ability to learn and grow from one another through this program. My area of interest is in regeneration and conservation. Tara and Bridget are looking into expanding the ideas we learn into the schools they teach. Priscilla works in the heart of where our integral ecology programs are established. There is a rich intermingling of ideas.



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