Our In Search of Safety Education Program team this month visited the Great Southern region and delivered seven information sessions during their week long visit.

Migration Support Program (MSP) staff Claire Collery and volunteers Doug O’Reilly and Pat Faulkner visited the Denmark Senior High School, Albany Library, Flinders Park Primary and St. Joseph’s College. The team was joined by Mahsa Anderson who is a local of the region and also a refugee from Iran. Mahsa shared her personal experience of seeking asylum after fleeing Iran many years ago.

It was a mixed week of incredible synergy and energy. The sessions presented opportunities of addressing some challenging opinions in a rural high school classroom.

Claire said that they received great support from the community of Albany. She also noted that many people who attended the Albany Library session were open-minded and very welcoming of refugees. She further added that the teachers were well-informed and the Primary school kids asked a lot of knowledgeable questions.

Francine Seymour, the Albany Red Cross Shop Manager and an active Red Cross member was very thankful to have the team visit Albany. “Wow! What an interesting night tonight. Great turn out by the community as well,” said Francine. “You should be very proud of your crew. Thank you for having this in the region. It is very special and needs to be common knowledge.”

To date, the In Search of Safety Education Program has grown from strength to strength. The next upcoming regional trip is in August 2016 to Margaret River and Augusta.

Following vigorous preparation and audit exercises, the MSP SRSS program (Nationally) was recommended for ISO 9001 certification, a globally-recognised quality management system standard. This was wonderful news for the program, for MSP and for Red Cross more widely and is the result of a concerted team effort. This achievement is recognition that our systems and processes are of a consistent and high standard, helping us meet the ongoing and ever-changing needs of our clients.
Refugee Welcome Day

The Red Cross MSP team, comprising of Mel Di Dio, Raelene Palmer and Clare Collery, joined the Refugee Welcome Day celebration event held at Carine Regional Open Space on the 30th of April 2016. This was organized by the City of Stirling, City of Wanneroo and City of Joondalup.

(MSP at IMPACT training in Victoria)

Australian Red Cross maintains a register of specialist aid workers who can be sent overseas at any time to support humanitarian field operations. This registry is managed by the International Programs team in Victoria. Each year specific technical profiles are advertised according to needs. The selection process includes extensive interviews, a behavioural assessment centre, psychometric testing and criminal history checks. The final step is a six-day residential training program, IMPACT - International Mobilisation and Preparation for ACTion. After completing IMPACT and relevant health clearances, candidates join the aid worker register and can be considered for missions.

Mel Di Dio and Liz George from MSP attended IMPACT training at Lyrebird Park Conference Facility in Yellingbo, Victoria from 2 – 7 May. Facilitated by experienced trainers from the Federation, ICRC and Australian Red Cross, the course focused on the role of a delegate working with a host National Society and other Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement partners. It also covered practical subjects such as dealing with stress, security and cross cultural awareness. “Such a valuable experience for understanding the role of the Federation, ICRC, National Societies and other stakeholders during times of conflict and disaster. So much of our effectiveness in the field is determined by the strength of those relationships and how well we communicate and share information,” said Mel Di Dio. “Much of the IMPACT training was centred on a simulation to assist us to understand those complexities – it was such a great learning experience, especially in regards to how groups operate under pressure and recognising our strengths and weaknesses. It was great to work and socialise with people from such different backgrounds – whether it be medical or disaster logistics – and how we all come together as one movement. I left feeling very proud to belong to such a dynamic and extensive network, with 17 million volunteers and 165,000 branches/units throughout the world, our reach and capacity to assist vulnerable people is second to none.”

Women’s Morning Tea

The Red Cross MSP held the Women's Morning tea in Mirrabooka this month. Sian Gair, Red Cross Migrant Link Officer and Estere Mancuveni, University of Western Australia (UWA) Student on Placement, organized the event which was attended by many of our female clients. The women created arts and crafts on this day.

(Women’s Morning Tea)

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One man’s gift of giving back
Mohammad Almadi started volunteering at the Red Cross MSP in January 2014. This gentle and good-natured individual, was born in Iraq to Palestinian parents. Mohammad, his wife and his four children came to Australia as refugees, in July 2012. Mohammad worked as an engineer for 20 years back in Iraq and has learned to speak English during that time. Mohammad said that Australia accepted him and his family generously by giving them a home and protection.

Mohammad continues to volunteer with Red Cross because he likes to give back to the community by helping people as well as working with diversity.

“I love working and learning from people of different backgrounds. Everyone has a passion and mine is knowing new people and knowing their traditions,” he added.

Initially, Mohammad and his family struggled and found it very challenging to start their lives in Australia. However, with perseverance, they were able to establish strong links and friendships within the community.

Mohammad is teaching his children about the value of education and giving back to the community. Since arrival, Mohammad has finished a Diploma in Electronic and Communication Engineering at Central TAFE as well as achieving two Master’s Degree within a year (Masters in Engineering Management and Business Administration). His eldest child is also an engineering student and his second eldest is in Year 12, hoping to study dentistry.

Mohammad wishes to tell his community that being a refugee is not the end of the world and Australia is open to many opportunities.

Mohammad has helped with informal interpreting for newly-arrived migrants who have been released from the Detention Centres, taking clients to medical appointments, providing English tutorials at libraries, administrative work in the office and employment assistance in our Hub.

To finish off the interview, Mohammad sends his message to future Red Cross MSP volunteers: “Come, join the trip and the journey. It’s a wonderful experience!”

Mohammad Almadi is with Caseworker Shammy Baijnath who is one of the caseworkers who recruited him at the Education Expo event in Perth 2 years ago.

( Photo from L>R: Shammy Baijnath; Mohammad Almadi)

HAPPY VOLUNTEERS WEEK!
Volunteering is a core part of our organisation. We have many volunteering opportunities with Migration Support Program. For more information, contact: Jonathan Richards 9318 2103 or email jorichards@redcross.org.au
How we can help

You might be eligible for government support. This can include financial help and casework support.
You will need to lodge an application with the Department of Immigration. We can help you to gather
the information you will need to include in your application.
We may also be able to help you with the cost of health and character checks.
Red Cross can help you with your application however the Department of Immigration will decide if you are
eligible for support.

For more information about whether you can apply please visit redcross.org.au/asylumseekers
or visit your local Red Cross Hub:

Visit your local Hub
118 Bennett Street
East Perth WA 6004
Hub Opening hours:
Monday to Friday:
9am - 4pm
T 08 9225 8830

May 2015
redcross.org.au

Are you an asylum seeker in need of financial support?
If you have applied for a protection visa and are experiencing financial hardship Red Cross may be able to help you.