
Media Release – Refugee Week 2007

June 20, 2007

The chair of the Canberra Multicultural Community Forum, Sam Wong, has welcomed the active participation of the local community in Refugee Week 2007.

“Canberra has rightful claim to the title of multicultural capital of Australia and the support given for this important event is heartening,” he said.

The week got off to a flying start on Monday night with the Refugee Resettlement Committee of St John the Apostle Parish at Kippax holding a Voices of Youth celebration night featuring a number of guest speakers, including young refugees.

Also on Monday there was a fundraiser movie screening, *Lucky Miles*, at the Dendy Cinema in the Canberra Centre, the film concerning refugees landing in remote Western Australia.

Mr Wong said one of the highlights of the week in the ACT will be a community soccer challenge at the Australian Institute of Sport ground on Saturday, which is World Refugee Day.

Activities, from 10.30am to 2pm, include children’s games, a warm-up match, barbecue and volleyball contests leading up to a soccer match between the representatives of the Sudanese and Sierra Leone communities.

“Soccer is truly the world game, played in every country of the world and is an international language in itself,” Mr Wong said. “We hope that through this event we will bring members of the growing African community in Canberra, including those with refugee backgrounds, more into touch with others who live in the National Capital.”

He said that increasing levels of violence in trouble spots around the world meant that more people are forced to flee. “Faced with the certainty of persecution, torture, rape and death it is no wonder that some will take their chance with an uncertain future in a new land,” he said.

“Australia was built by refugees. From the British and Irish who were the economic refugees of the 19th century seeking a better life, to the vast waves of people displaced by World War II and the Vietnam War, to the present day, refugees have changed the face of Australia, and changed it for the better.”

For further information on the World Refugee Day Community Soccer Challenge, call Vielibo Choka on 02 6247 7227 or email vieli.choka@companionhouse.org.au or call Sam Wong on 0411 417 666.