



Winter 2010

Bridge for Asylum Seekers Foundation

UnitingCare NSW.ACT

Honorary Chairperson:
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Dear supporters and friends

We would like to thank all those very kind supporters who continue to provide foodstuffs, presents, toiletries and phone cards for asylum seekers who are living in the community. I would like to personally thank Charlene Bradley who has been so kind during the past 12 months. I also want to make a special mention of staff at UnitingCare head office, who have collected beautiful and useful presents for asylum seekers, and those members of the Mosman Uniting Church congregation who provided gifts and phone cards. The recipients of your generosity asked that I tell you how very grateful they are, not only for the actual gifts but also for the kindness you are showing.

Another generous benefactor is Adriano Zumbo's patisserie in Balmain which kindly took one of Kate Maclurcan's collection tins and has so far raised \$366 in change from the sale of very delicious cakes. We are very grateful for this support.

Garage sale in aid of BASF

On Saturday, 30th January, a garage sale was held at a house in Glebe by Mark Stapleton and his housemates Libby Gallagher and Leanne Hillman. They raised \$2,802 for us, which is enough for a week of funding for over 15 asylum seekers. In addition, they donated clothes and household items to asylum seekers and refugees living in our community. We are extremely grateful for this wonderful gesture.

A short history of BASF

In 2003, BASF was formed to provide funding to asylum seekers who were living in our community but were not permitted to work, study or access Centrelink or Medicare benefits. They were not even allowed to undertake voluntary work.

In the early days we believed the number of people requiring our financial assistance would be small and hoped to provide them with payments equivalent to the Centrelink payments they were denied. In fact, the number of asylum seekers asking for help was far greater than we expected, peaking at 131, and on occasion we have been close to exhausting our funds and ability to continue to help. However, with the funds provided by our regular individual donors, other charities and from local Clubs, under the Community Development Expenditure Program, we have managed to continue to provide vital support and to survive each successive year.

We have never been able to meet the level of Centrelink payments, but we were recently able to increase our payments for the first time in over two years — to \$110 a week for individuals and \$90 each for family members.

Asylum seekers we support

We are currently assisting almost 60 asylum seekers. They come from China, the Indian sub-continent (including Sri Lanka and Pakistan), Afghanistan, Iran, African countries and Aceh.

The 60 asylum seekers we are currently supporting bring the total number of asylum seekers we have assisted financially to almost 500 since BASF was launched in June 2003! This number includes 102 children or young adults. It's an enormous achievement and it would not have been possible without our supporters. Thank you for helping us to do this! Needless to say, we will still need your continuing support if we are going to be able to continue to provide this assistance in the future.

...and a bit of heart-warming news

An Afghan couple we recently supported found their refugee son by chance at a Sikh temple in Sydney. Not long after they arrived in Australia as refugees, they had been told by an Immigration Department official that their son and his wife were living in Sydney but the Department staff did not know where they were. Punjabi-speaking Hindus, the parents were taken by other Afghanis to the Sikh temple where they would find people to converse with in their own language. It was at the temple that they came upon their son who has a permanent resident visa. This family is now reunited and being provided with financial assistance through the Red Cross asylum seeker program.

Asylum Seeker Project Co-ordinator resigns

It is sad to announce that Kate Maclurcan, who was employed by Balmain for Refugees to assist us with fundraising and spreading information about the work we do, has decided to resign as of 30 June 2010.

Kate has been responsible for the events which introduced BASF and its work to a large, new audience. She has undertaken a wide range of fundraising events which were very successful. We shall particularly miss her musical talent at our functions.

We are also grateful to Leichhardt Council and The City of Sydney for providing funding for Kate's salary.

The Management Committee wishes Kate well in her new endeavours.

Request from Activities Officer at Villawood

The new Activities Officer at the Villawood Residential Housing facility has approached us to ask if anybody would like to provide English lessons, guitar lessons, art classes, or some sort of activities for asylum seekers who are residents in the 8-cottage facility. If you are interested in providing classes on a regular basis, please contact Dan on 0450 051 694 during the week.

Some families at Villawood needed clothes, toys, books and puzzles, particularly for the children. I have been actively collecting items from various sources and distributing them as required. We do not need any items for families at present, but do let me know if you have something to donate in future.

Virginia Walker
Honorary Chairperson
BASF

Dear supporters and friends of BASF

I have enjoyed a wonderful five and a half years working with the Foundation and meeting many of you over that time. It is now time for me to move on. Please help me boost the coffers before I depart! I would love to see you at these two special events before my final day on 30 June. Be assured there will be flowers, music and singing. If you are unable to attend, could you send a donation or purchase a book, CDs or a DVD? THANK YOU for your wonderful support of our events over the last five years and please keep up your moral and practical support for asylum seekers and refugees - needed now more than ever.

Kate Maclurcan.

**End of Financial Year DINNER
and Kate's Last HURRAH!**

**Wednesday, 30 June
6.30 for 7pm**

Circle Café, Balmain
344 Darling St (opposite Short St)

\$50 per head includes a delicious 2 course dinner generously donated by the new management of Circle Café, and wines.

Bookings: Kate 9810 5826 or katemaclurcan@hotmail.com

A GRAND AFTERNOON

featuring celebrated concert pianist

Ambre Hammond
on the grand piano

Sunday, 23 May 2pm to 4.30pm
Circle Café, Balmain

344 Darling St (opposite Short St)

If you would like to bring something to share for afternoon tea, that would be appreciated.

\$20 suggested minimum (*tax deductible*) donation includes recital, glass of wine and afternoon tea.

Please let Kate know you are coming on 9810 5826 or katemaclurcan@hotmail.com

We are thrilled that Ambre is playing for us before her evening performance at the Sydney Opera House. *Ambre tours as a soloist and guests with James Morrison.*
myspace.com/ambrehammond

CLEARANCE SALE

Order today! Phone **9810 5826** or email katemaclurcan@hotmail.com with credit card details (after 30 June on 9712 7784). Orders can be collected from Balmain or posted to you. Or fill in the donation form with your order and post or fax to BASF.

Acting from the Heart: Australian advocates for asylum seekers tell their stories.

This gorgeous, moving series of stories will both break and warm your heart. Beautiful gifts! RRP \$25. Special purchase through BASF just **\$12.50**.

Behind the Wire, compilation CD with songs about refugees and detention by 15 of Australia's best loved singer/songwriters and choirs. An exquisite collection. RRP \$25. Now just **\$10**. Buy one for yourself and some as gorgeous gifts. Full track listing at www.asylumseekersfoundation.com.

We Will be Remembered for This, a powerful film by Jessie Taylor, documenting the trip to Baxter detention centre by a group of young people of different backgrounds and attitudes. Was \$20. Now just **\$10**. Buy one for yourself and one for your school or local library!

Human Rights Overboard: Seeking Asylum in Australia, by Linda Briskman et al, foreword by Julian Burnside, QC. '...an essential book that will resonate for years...' RRP \$35. Now **\$25**

Blind Conscience, by Walkley Award journalist Margot O'Neill '...will prompt a sharp intake of breath across Australia...' RRP \$35. Now **\$20**

FREE!! As our thanks for your support, all orders will include a complimentary copy of **Australian Dream**, a double CD of poetry & music written by long term detainee Mohsen and read by Tom Keneally, Bryan Brown, John Bell, Claudia Karvan and others, with special guest musicians.

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I would like to help Bridge for Asylum Seekers Foundation provide direct support for Visa "E" and special category refugees.

Circle if required: Please send me information about direct bank or credit card debits for regular donations.

I enclose a cheque/money order or credit card details for a donation of: \$ _____

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Visa or MasterCard. Card No: ____ / ____ / ____ / ____

Expiry Date: ____ / ____ Signature: _____

Donations of \$2.00 and over are tax deductible