

ssi news

SETTLEMENT SERVICES INTERNATIONAL NEWSLETTER



March 2014

e info@ssi.org.au | [@settlmntservice](https://twitter.com/settlmntservice) | [f](https://www.facebook.com/settlementservicesinternational) settlement services international | www.ssi.org.au | t (02) 8799 6700

From the CEO Violet Roumeliotis



The SSI Leadership Summit held on February 10 left me with a feeling of great pride in the work that SSI is doing and, more importantly, in the SSI staff who support the goals and values of our organisation.

The summit was a chance to share with about 80 of our senior staff, the 2014 SSI business plan and the goals and ambitions of SSI in achieving the best possible outcomes for our clients.

SSI is now undertaking a series of Employee Roadshows to engage and inform all staff about the business plan and garner their commitment to the SSI mission and its values.

SSI is the second largest humanitarian settlement organisation in Australia and the largest in NSW. SSI is a growing organisation committed to ensuring that refugees, humanitarian entrants and asylum seekers in NSW are supported and resourced to fulfil their potential as members of the Australian community.

SSI is committed to delivering the best quality services to support our clients on arrival in our community, but also during the different stages of their settlement journey.

To help achieve this, SSI is diversifying its funding base and investing in building the capability of its staff.

SSI has grown from an organisation of 69 staff servicing 3,900 clients in 2011, to 450 staff assisting more than 12,000 clients in 2014; an incredible growth and one that can only be sustained by the motivated and committed staff employed by SSI.

I congratulate and thank them all and look forward to working together towards a productive and fulfilling year.

March 8 is International Women's Day, and this year the United Nations theme is 'Inspiring Change'.

I encourage you to take a moment to acknowledge the economic, political and social achievements of women around the world, past and present. It is an occasion for looking back on past struggles and accomplishments, and more importantly, for looking ahead to the untapped potential and opportunities that await future generations of women.

‘Old boys’ on a level playing field with new arrivals

Sport is proving to be a great unifier for refugees, asylum seekers and the broader Australian community.

On Saturday February 15, about 40 people came together to play in a soccer knock-out competition held in Lidcombe. Teams of five players comprised of SSI staff, asylum seeker clients as well as alumni of Knox Grammar School.

The former Knox Grammar students approached SSI at the end of last year to find out how they could support new arrivals.

“It was very inspiring to see how proactive the boys from Knox Grammar School were in wanting to support people who have come to Australia from very difficult circumstances,” SSI CEO Violet Roumeliotis said.

Mr Marco van Westing, 19, who graduated from Knox Grammar at the end of 2012, said he and his former school’s alumni approached SSI to find out how they could participate in community work.



Mr van Westing, right, with fellow soccer knock out team member.

The Knox Grammar Old Boys were invited to attend one of the fortnightly SSI Community Kitchen lunches where they met SSI clients who are living in the community while they await the outcome of their application for refugee status.

“We met some people who have recently arrived in the country and we thought we would definitely like to help them get more involved in Australian culture,” Mr van Westing said.

When SSI Case Manager Javier Ortiz later proposed a soccer competition for clients, the Knox Grammar Old Boys thought it was a great opportunity for them to get involved and develop their relationship with the players.

“Soccer is a universal game and I think it helps break down barriers,” Mr van Westing said.

Mr van Westing said he hoped the Knox Grammar Old Boys could take part more regularly in events with SSI and the refugees and asylum seekers it works with.

Olympic judo coach supports teenage asylum seekers

Talented teenagers Shaheen and Hussain Moghadamshaidie could represent NSW in judo at the National Championships if they can raise the money to travel to qualifying competitions around the country.

The boys, aged 15 and 16, have already impressed state and national coaches after SSI and their Castle Hill judo club supported their participation in the Olympic sport.

Hussain and his brother Shaheen have been living in the community along with their father, mother and baby brother, awaiting the outcome of an application for refugee status since July last year.



L-R: Rob Katz, Shaheen and Hussain Moghadamshaidie training at Budokan Judo Club

Shaheen and Hussain were eager to start judo training as soon as they arrived in Australia but the family is on bridging visas with limited funds to pay for judo costs.

Shaheen and Hussain came across the Budokan Judo Club in Castle Hill, which is run by former Olympic coach and organiser of the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games judo competition, Rob Katz.

Mr Katz and his club have very generously sponsored the boys by paying their costs for the first 12 months of membership. This includes four judo uniforms partially sponsored by the club's supplier Sensei' Martial Arts.

Ali Moghadamshaidie, the boys' father, said Mr Katz and the Budokan Judo Club had treated them like family.

"This club is not only for Judo," he said, "this club, for me and my sons, my wife and baby son, is like a school or family."

"We have no family here or friends, this club is very good for us."

NEWS AND EVENTS



SSI Case Manager, Oliver Zvinaiye Maboreke, proudly accepted a role as a ZEST Community Ambassador in a ceremony at ANZ Stadium on February 26.

“I’m very excited to receive this honour, and look forward to working with my fellow ambassadors to promote ZEST and the great work happening in Western Sydney,” said Oliver. Other ZEST ambassadors include Chancellor of the University of Western Sydney, Peter Shergold AC; Executive Chairman - Western Sydney Wanderers FC, Lyall Gorman, and Manager of the Blacktown Migrant Resource Centre, Irene Ross.

The ZEST Awards showcase the great work of the community sector across the Greater Western Sydney region. The event promotes a positive image of Greater Western Sydney through highlighting its assets, diversity and the creative and innovative work happening throughout the region.

As a ZEST ambassador, Oliver will continue his community engagement work with various sectors of the community, and in particular the African community.

Since arriving in Australia in 2005 from Zimbabwe, Oliver has been active in community development and capacity building, working with a broad range of organisations, and with a strong focus on community health and youth work.

Nominations for ZEST awards included the SSI Community Kitchen for its “outstanding initiative... for vulnerable members of the CALD community”, and former SSI client Amir Gholizadeh, a motivated and committed fitness trainer and wrestler, and coordinator of the Community Migrant Resource Centre’s New Frontiers! program.



A busy and productive meeting was held on February 26 with the reference group of the Fostering NSW Pacific Community Foster Carer recruitment campaign.

Held at the SSI Ashfield head office, the reference group members were updated on the progress of the campaign by a number of bilingual Pacific community presenters, and campaign manager Thanh Nguyen.

The campaign, which is focusing on Samoan, Tongan, Maori, Cook Island and Fijian communities, is aimed at raising awareness of the valuable work of foster carers and the need to recruit more carers from Pacific backgrounds. Awareness raising activities

include radio interviews, translated brochures and community information sessions held across greater Sydney. More information about becoming a foster carer can be found at ssi.org.au/resources/publications

NEWS AND EVENTS cont...



The latest SSI Community Kitchen lunch hosted women and families in celebration of International Women's Day. About 70 people participated in the day, including South Asian women's organisation SAHELI and the Refugee Advice and Casework Service (RACS).

Food was prepared by a chef, and clients joined in to help prepare a spicy vegetarian meal including dhal, Indian-style vegetable curry, and dessert.

SAHELI members led a non-religious yoga meditation for the women, which focused on stress management, and later taught a group 'Garba', a folk dance from Western India that uses clap-sticks, and is usually performed by women at times of celebration. There was also a Zumba class with SSI Case Manager Geneen Reyna, as well as drawing and Carrom playing. Carrom is a popular board game throughout South Asia and is often described as a combination of billiards, marbles and air hockey.

SSI Case Managers from Ashfield set up a table of donated clothing for women and children, which included good quality and undamaged women's clothes, shoes, scarves, and also baby clothes and blankets.

RACS attended and offered pro-bono legal information for clients in relation to their visa status. Bilingual SSI Case Managers and volunteers assisted in interpreting.



SSI staff and clients attended the OzHarvest annual fundraising event, the CEO CookOff, on February 18.

Held at Carriageworks, OzHarvest kindly provided clients with transport to the venue to enjoy an evening of food and dancing.

Entertainment was provided by the Little River Band and Dami Im, recent winner of XFactor Australia, and there were plenty of photo opportunities for star-struck foodies- Matt Moran pictured here with SSI CEO Violet Roumeliotis (on left) and SSI Special Projects Officer, Honey Muir.

The event was hosted by the incredible Roni Khan, the driving force behind OzHarvest.

OzHarvest is a long-time supporter of SSI, providing weekly donations of fresh produce to the organisation's most vulnerable clients. The event raised more than \$1 million.



Congratulations to the SSI Blacktown HSS team – the February winners of the CEO Wellness Award.

The Blacktown HSS team members have made numerous healthy lifestyle changes in both their work and personal lives and are starting to feel and see the benefits.

Team leader Natalia Taha said that the before or after work walks have been a great team building and staff development tool. “A walk before work leaves you calm and ready for the day, and after work it’s great to balance out the sitting at a desk that we do for most of the day,” said Natalia. “We are supporting each other and best of all having fun!”



L-R: SSI Blacktown team-Virginia Kaia, Patricia Pous, Natalie Taha, Kidron Koroma



After work walks

Mindful March at SSI

Medical studies show that mindfulness has many benefits for both the body and mind, including improved immune function, reduced stress and pain, better control of emotions, improved concentration and focus, and greater level of empathy and connectedness to others.

Mindfulness is in focus during March, and staff can learn simple yet powerful techniques at a four-week mindfulness meditation course. The course is being offered at Auburn, Ashfield and Parramatta.

For more information, SSI staff can log onto www.bewellssi.org.au