



Edmund Rice - Networking WA

Volume 3 Issue 10

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Special points of Interest:

- ERN October Harmony Weekend
- Aquinas College Philippines Immersion
- ERISJ – What's Happening?
- ERN WA Christmas Drinks Dec. 6th 2010
- WA Regional 'Now is the Time' Gathering Nov. 27th 2010.

OCTOBER HARMONY WEEKEND 2010

As usual, there was much excitement as the bus rolled in the gate at Camp Kelly, the Trinity College Outdoor Camp, for our second Harmony Weekend this year. Music was playing and the marquee had been set up with coloured lights and the flags of the nations of all present.

After joyful greetings all round and much confusion, people deposited their bedding and belongings in their rooms and assembled for the customary soup, sausage sizzle and fresh fruit.

Once again the little flags of our country of origin were very popular and there was a buzz as everyone put their flag and name on their badge. All were warmly welcomed and guidelines for the weekend were outlined while the children could not wait to get outside and congregate around the camp fire.

Saturday morning was bright and sunny as we had breakfast and assembled for the session about **Aboriginal Culture**.

George Walley, an aboriginal man from the Pinjarra area led this session with his usual flair and respect for the earth and all its creatures. George and his family are a great favourite at the camp. His cousin Frank Nannup came along again and this time he brought two young boys to entertain us with the kangaroo and emu dances. George played the didgeridoo and everyone was delighted when his teenage nephew, who has been learning since he was six years old, played it for us with such expertise.



Sharing Story is also a much appreciated time when we get to know each other better and learn about the difficulties and terrible traumas that our refugees have had in their struggle to find a peaceful place to live. They also get to experience Australian Culture and the acceptance and affirmation that comes from understanding one another.

Twenty five similarities were found between the different religions during the session on **Multi Cultural Beliefs and Practices** and

the session finished with a beautiful song during which people spontaneously linked hands all around the marquee. Looking around at the unity of all there I felt a strong sense of Spirit.

The Edmund Rice Story was portrayed with great humour as Jacqui Scott (from Jamaica) took the part Of Edmund in the story about the way he greeted his students as they arrived at the gate of his school. (Showing how he treated all people as equals and with dignity) Ahmed (from Sudan) took the part of a student. Both Jacqui and Ahmed entered into their roles with great enthusiasm and had us all in fits of laughter.

The **Wind Down Fun and Games** session followed, and judging by the noise, laughter and cheers it created a lot of fun.

Preparation for the **Multi Cultural Meal** is always a big job and this time it was the Aussies turn to organise the meal and wash-up.

(Everyone contributes food from their culture). Ahmed had done the roster and was determined the men do their part. They were certainly a great help and the teamwork was superb. A highlight for the children at this time was toasting marshmallows on the campfire while being supervised by members of ERCM Youth Leadership Group .

Ladies dressed in their national costume and danced to the music of their country. After this there was Karaoke and music for all including the teenagers .

We awoke Sunday morning to a change in the weather. It had been raining during the night and the wind was blowing in gusts and stirring up the red dirt. So much so that during the **Multi**

Faith Service Br Cliff Fogarty, our resident photographer commented

as a willy-willy of red dust swirled gracefully through the marquee, that the Holy Spirit had arrived .

Thank you to all the committee and volunteers who worked so hard to make the Camp a success. There is not space to name you all. Special thanks to Cliff for the way he filmed the weekend unobtrusively while contributing to the spirit of it at the same time.

When the dust has settled at the end of each camp (It hadn't actually done so at this one), I always feel so humbled at the core of love that exists in all people when we have the chance to know each other.



AQUINAS COLLEGE PHILIPPINES IMMERSION 2010



On Friday 24 September, twelve students and three staff members embarked on the third Immersion program to the Philippines. For thirteen days, we journeyed from the traffic and busyness of Manila to the rice and sugar cane communities on the island of Negros Occidental. From the first moments when we boarded our flights from Perth and then Singapore, we began to take a step back in time. From having a meal at Maccas on the night of our arrival, we slowly but surely left the 'fast food' and 'internet' environment we have become accustomed to and became truly immersed in local foods, accommodation and culture of the Filipino people.

As usual, our visit was very much anticipated by the local community of Dancalan where we spent nine days in the local school and Parish of Immaculate Conception. As with previous years, the community spared no efforts in putting on a welcome ceremony everywhere we went. Imagine arriving in their small town to the beat of marching bands, dancing and song!

Over the past three years, the student population at the Immaculate Conception Academy (ICA) has grown by over one hundred students. This is significant because Catholic schools are fee paying. Immaculate conception Academy has continued to attract families (many of whom can not afford the full fees for a year) because of the quality of staff and educational resources it now has – partly due to the donations of laptops, projectors, English books and Science equipment that Aquinas College has been able to donate in such short time. It is becoming the first school of choice for some. This increase of students has caused problems of overcrowding in classrooms, necessitating the need for a building plan to create new rooms over the next few years. We were thrilled to see the foundations of the first of three second story rooms being laid, and our boys took the opportunity to help shovel concrete and sift gravel for mixing the concrete on their second afternoon after they arrived.

During the week, they stayed two nights with their ICA buddies' families and during this time, they had many conversations about Filipino and Australian culture, politics, family life and religion. Some of the homes were very basic, requiring a short walk from the main road into a jungle. The visit to Anawim (Boarding Home for Deaf Children) is always a highlight of our Immersion program. We finished off some external painting of window grills and gutters in the morning and then returned in the evening for a dinner and concert with the kids. It was an emotional day at Anawim. The boarding house is a labour of love for Milladie Chia who works as a support teacher for the deaf during the day and then volunteers as a House Mother looking after many children in the evenings. Milladie founded Anawim and all her staff are volunteers. Of course it was difficult to leave at the end of the day because the boys were inundated with the children's' Address and Autograph books to sign. **What could not be heard or spoken, was conveyed in the smiles and hugs between us.** The next day we travelled to the hill community of Lunoy. We were the first group of Westerners to specifically visit this community and many of the little children and elders in the community were shy and curious because they had never met or conversed with outsiders before. To reach Lunoy, we took a short bus trip to the base of the hill and then walked for forty minutes via stony and muddy tracks over rivers and streams. We had the help of a carabao-drawn cart to carry our water containers and food. We went to Lunoy as part of the ICA Parish Outreach Feeding Program. We were accompanied by student and staff volunteers who themselves were visiting the village for the first time. After an early lunch, the skies opened up and it poured for over two hours. Our boys (as well as their buddies) found a way to keep themselves entertained by playing basketball in the rain! Others found cover inside the church. While this was happening, the local women cooked the cassava, bananas and rice that the boys had collected in the morning. Because of the rain they did their cooking inside one of the huts over an open fireplace. The boys themselves helped to separate the grains of rice from the stalks using their feet and then took part in pounding the rice with the help of the local men. **What we collected, we prepared and then we ate.** We then fed the children and their parents in the late afternoon. Before leaving Lunoy, we participated in local games with the community and despite the differences in our cultures, everyone in our group enjoyed the day and the chance to learn about how the poor lived with what little they had. There was a small delay in going back down the mountain because the river had flooded the bridge. This was a reminder to us about how isolated the hill people can be when roads and



tracks are not accessible due to bad weather. The final school day was filled with cultural entertainment and sports. ICA students presented themselves in brightly coloured costumes. They danced and sang for us and we, in turn, did some singing of our own (we need more practice). The cultural sports segment took on a new flavour this year. Valerie Gannon of Gannon Trophies donated a beautiful crystal trophy titled 'The Magic Shield' which we named after Parish Priest and Director of ICA, Father Fernando 'Magic' Villanueva. To win the shield, Aquinas students took part in three local games (one point each) and one high profile game of basketball (three points). We happened to win two of the local games and everything came down to the basketball. It was a great game. After being belted for most of three quarters, our boys showed spirit to win by just one point.. Hearing our war cry in victory so far away from home was surreal. Saying goodbye is never easy on these Immersion Programs. For nearly ten days, we became part of a loving school and parish community.

They took care of us at the Convento, preparing all our food and washing our clothes. Those who were more 'well off', hosted our group for dinners and lunches and many friendships were made. It will be an experience that none of us will ever forget.

EDMUND RICE INSTITUTE FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE



COMING SOON TO THE ERISJ

1-day Seminar Intensive, Friday 3 December: Core Insights That Underpin Social Justice

ERISJ Director David Freeman repeats this Intensive that has proven useful whenever delivered to groups in Perth and Adelaide over the past two years: Intensives and Professional development to the corporate and community sectors, and in condensed form to community groups, universities and schools.

We often hear such terms as 'social justice' and 'human rights' bandied about. But what do they mean? Freeman unpacks these terms, suggesting that social justice is an umbrella term that folds together what he identifies as 35 core, underpinning insights. These insights combine lived human experience, analyses of suffering and indignity, attempts at their alleviation, and the underpinning values that enable the entire social justice project.

So come along, share your experience and ideas about these insights. In the end, ideas matter: they powerfully support you to become wise, inspired and skilful. You will experience just how 'big' these values and insights are, and how they connect you with both your own search for meaning and with hundreds of years of the noblest human aspirations and efforts.

The Intensive commences at 10am and concludes at 5 pm at ERISJ, 24 High St, Fremantle.

More information in the [attached flyer](#)

To register, visit www.erisj.org.au, or ring 9432 2400, or email admin@erisj.org.au

Volunteer Training

Our next free volunteer training session is Saturday, 6 November, 9.30 am to 12.30 pm. (Note date change from the earlier advertised date of 20 November.) You can register for the event at admin@erisj.org.au

We're delighted that some of the volunteers from our August training day have started working with us. Ms Dimity Torpy is Acting Volunteer Coordinator. If you have attended ERISJ Volunteer Training and would now like to commence as a volunteer, email Dimity at

ERISJ Aboriginal Australia activist group: Launching March 2011

Half a dozen ERISJ supporters have already indicated their intention to join our Aboriginal Australia Activist group. This is an opportunity for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people alike to support important initiatives and campaigns of benefit to Aboriginal Australia. ERISJ staff will provide the group's coordination for its first six months, then hand over to an elected leadership, with the ERISJ continuing to provide its premises for group use.

With so many ERISJ initiatives 'taking off' in 2010, ERISJ staff have been (happily) overwhelmed by it all. So we are delaying this group's start date from October 2010 until March 2011. Read the attached flyer, and email us at justiceaction@erisj.org.au to indicate your interest in being invited to the first meeting.



Your chance to shape the 2011 ERISJ Intensives Program

We are proud of our Intensives program; ever-increasing participant numbers, and staggeringly high participant evaluations confirm that we are addressing a real need.

For these reasons, we are inclined to repeat what we offered in 2010. But we wish to know:

Are there social justice education needs that the 2010 ERISJ Intensive program (see at www.erisj.org.au) does not address?

1. Do you have a specific request for an Intensive that we do not currently offer?
2. Would you actually attend if we developed a program around your request and offered this Intensive? And
3. Do you have reasons to believe that other individuals or organizations would also attend?

Please email your thoughts by 30 October to admin@erisj.org.au.

The most thoughtful response will receive two free tickets to the 2011 ERISJ Intensive of their choice.

ERISJ Testimonials and Participant Evaluations

The 'Testimonials and Participant Evaluations' section of our website contains ever-more commendations of ERISJ work as we find time to upload them www.erisj.org.au/testimonials.

A summary of Miriam Brooker and Ishara de Garis's 2nd *Independent Analysis of Participant Evaluations of ERISJ events* will be uploaded next week; we commend this to you as an independent way that you can have confidence if considering partaking in ERISJ events as an individual or organisation.

It isn't the great big pleasures that count the most; it's making a great deal out of the little ones.

Jean Webster



EDMUND RICE NETWORK WA

CHRISTMAS DRINKS

MONDAY DECEMBER 6TH 2010 5.30 PM
WESTCOURT SUPPORT OFFICE



RSVP: NOVEMBER 26TH 2010 TO JCPARKER@EDMUNDRICE.ORG

EDMUND RICE NETWORK - WA WISDOM GATHERING

You are invited...

To share your wisdom, your passion, & your ideas

Have your say about the future of the Edmund Rice Network in Western Australia.

(Discussions like this are happening all over Oceania)

A delegation represented Western Australia at the “**Now is the Time**”, Oceania-wide gathering, of the Edmund Rice Network held in Brisbane last July. *Key aspects of the process used* will be repeated here in November. This will be part of preparation for a larger province wide gathering in Adelaide July 10-14th 2011.

To participate in this discussion please join us

at CBC Fremantle

Saturday November 27th 2010 10 am to 4 pm.

This is an **open invitation** for anyone who identifies as part of the Edmund Rice Network to join in this conversation. If you know of others who you think would be interested in participating, please forward this invite to them. There will be no cost for the event.

Contact: Jill parker: jcparker@edmundrice.org mob: 04144629218



Thanks to everyone who sent information in for this issue. Please keep the news coming. Blessings , Jill

Online link: Christianbrothers.com.au/ernwa With thanks to Br Berkeley Fitzhardinge

The position of Edmund Rice Network (ERN) Co-ordinator is to aid the Oceania Networking and Development team in maintaining contact with individuals associated with the Christian Brothers and the Edmund Rice Network in Western Australia; to keep them informed and to encourage participation in future endeavours of the Christian Brothers Oceania and associated entities. I can be contacted on mobile phone **0414 629 218** or as below.

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