



## Edmund Rice Volunteers and Immersions Victoria and Tasmania



# HADITHI ZETU

(our stories)



First Edition

August 2011

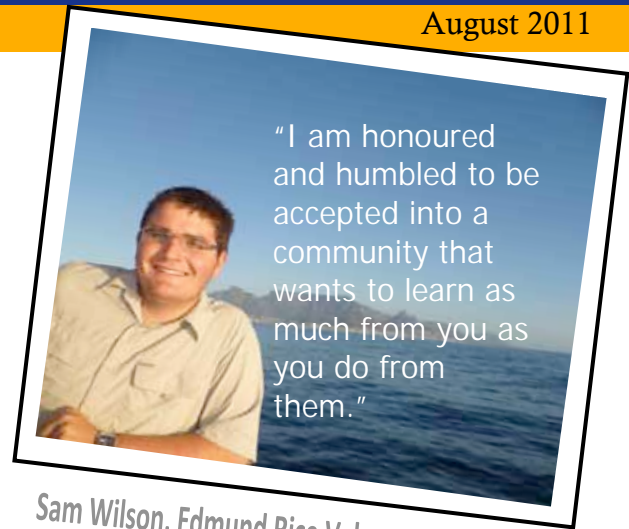
### “Where there is hope there is a way”

*Sam Wilson, Arusha, Tanzania*

Upon arriving in a country that is different in many ways to Australia, I was exposed to many different customs a third world country has to offer. I decided to have an immersion in another country and a foreign culture. This meant that on the 30 degree days in the middle of winter, I was not wearing shorts and a T-shirt but pants and long sleeves. One of the first cultural items I was exposed to was the final profession of a Christian Brother. I believe it is something that rarely happens in Australia and I felt privileged and honored to be a guest at the celebration. To me this was a once in a lifetime opportunity for an Australian. I was also privileged to experience a traditional Tanzanian cake, which was a whole goat still standing! I believe that the culture is something special here in Tanzania. My first impression was that it is a welcoming and accepting community.

After the brothers profession, the sense of welcoming was still present when I was invited to Joachim's house the first Sunday I was living at Millennium House. This was a shock as I had only met Joachim once on a local dela dela on the way to town. Oscar and I were at Joachim's where we enjoyed a meal of rice, beef and cow's liver. It was an interesting experience, one I would gladly partake in once more. In order to gain the best experience possible, one needs to seize all available opportunities presented. I continue to strive to be opportunistic in my immersion in Tanzania. Through my efforts I have been able to become fully immersed in the culture and am beginning to understand the national language of Swahili. With my Swahili improving pole pole (slowly slowly) I find it easier to converse with many students, teachers and friends. As the Tanzian's say, "haraka haraka hyena baraka", which means slow and steady wins the race.

I have been placed in the special program, which is an intensive English program designed to give them the basic



"I am honoured and humbled to be accepted into a community that wants to learn as much from you as you do from them."

*Sam Wilson, Edmund Rice Volunteer, Arusha*

English skills that they require to successfully complete their schooling. It has been fantastic to observe the students applying themselves in their schooling.

Being in Africa I feel passionate about the dedication I have to teaching and being part of the lives of the marginalised. By being part of this journey I dream that the students will be able to reach and achieve their goals. I am honored and humbled to be accepted into a community that wants to learn as much from you as you do from them.

It is the dedication of the students and the locals have that answer the question of why go to Africa, it is more the question of why not go to Africa, experience a life were you can not take running water for granted, that is safe to drink straight away, where electricity is unreliable and goes on and off more often then not. Students cry out for support so why deny them that support that is not difficult to give.

"Penye ni pana njia"

"Where there is hope there is a way"

Sam Wilson Edmund Rice Volunteer 2011



# Tutembee Pamoja Immersion 2012

Preparation Weekend

As Mark and I were flying over from the Apple Isle on the Friday we were discussing with enthusiasm what was going to happen this weekend and honestly we did not have much idea. As we entered Amberley on the Saturday we were blown away with the picturesque grounds and building it was a little piece of serenity in not far from the city. Being the only two immersion participants from Tasmania we were a little bit nervous to meet the eight Victorian immersion participants.

It was not long though till we were all sharing stories and experiences we have had on Edmund Rice Camps and having a good laugh.

We spent a lot of time getting to know each other over the weekend; lots of games; lots of laughs, lots of discussions about culture, reflections and learning about Kenya and Tanzania. That evening we participated in an East African feast which included eating goat. There were 40 or so people from all walks of life in attendance. It was a great and eye opening experience to talk to former immersion participants, the brothers and members of the East African culture now residing in Australia. I know for me it has made me even more excited to get there and immerse myself in the culture and to learn and grow as much as I can.

A big asante sana goes out to Rish for our reflection journals, Jane and Evans for their expertise in the kitchen, and all those who attended and shared their wonderful stories.

*Reflection by Tim Birthisel*



Loretta Osborn, East Timor

As I write this I am in my last two weeks of an amazing experience as a Volunteer Teacher with the Comunidade Edmund Rice Network in Timor Leste. I arrived here in June on Long Service Leave from St Cuthbert's Catholic School in Tasmania and although it has been difficult being away from my family, school and friends, I have had an incredible journey and feel privileged to have been able to spend time with the CER community and the people of Timor Leste. I have particularly enjoyed getting to know and work with the people in the Railaco Kraik/Samalete area and being given the opportunity to listen to their stories and learn about their daily living.

I was amazed with all the projects that are happening with the CER Community and I am in awe of Br Bill Tynan who co-ordinates/manages these projects. He has been living in East Timor for many years and his commitment and belief in justice and outreach is inspiring. This is also to be said of others who have, and continue to work as a part of the CER network in Timor Leste. As an Early Years Teacher my position here has involved training teachers in areas of classroom management, planning and curriculum and I have spent considerable time in various Preschool classrooms observing, interacting and providing feedback to teachers.

I have had many highlights during my stay in East Timor. Stand outs have been the smiles, bondias and botardis by the local people, their acceptance and interest in me, the enthusiasm of the teachers and children I have worked with, the joy and devotion and participation in Masses and the time to share and reflect in community prayer. It took me a while to become used to the rough roads heading up to the mountains, the rats on the roof, the noisy roosters and pigs etc but I have fond memories now about these and many funny stories to tell! I have also loved being able to spend weekend times occasionally with some children from one of the local orphanages. It has been a wonderful spiritual journey for me and I have learnt more about myself, my strengths, limitations, the importance of family and the importance of educating people about the needs of others and how and why we should reach out to those who require assistance in whatever ways we can. I plan to return to Timor Leste in the future and to continue to assist in whatever ways, particularly through my connection with Edmund Rice.

Preschool Training in Timor

*Reflection by current ER Volunteer, Loretta Osborn*

## 2012 Lake Mungo Immersion

An opportunity to walk the land with Mutthi-Mutthi woman, Vicki Walker-Clark...

Share story  
Connect  
to the land  
Experience deeper  
issues  
confronting Aboriginal  
Australians

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