

Australian Refugee Volunteers  
**Annual Report**  
**2013-2014**



**A R V**

## Contents

Committee members for the Australian Refugee Volunteers.....	1
Principal activities during the year.....	1
Presidents' Report.....	2
Kids Program Report.....	3
Teens Program Report .....	4
Charity Program Report .....	5
Financial Statement.....	6

## **Committee members for the Australian Refugee Volunteers**

The Committee members for the Australian Refugee Volunteers (ARV) at any time since the end of the preceding financial year are:

Mohita Zaheed

Kate Riley

Tessa Mathews

Shreya Kumar

Lauren Frost

Cassandra Braslin

Milena Arsenijevic

Jenny Tang

John Dinamarca

Kieran Brown

Kitty-Jean Laginha

Nandita Kataria

## **Principal activities during the year**

The principal activities of the Association during the course of the financial year were centered in providing social services to those kids and families from asylum seeker backgrounds who need support integrating into the Australian community. There were no other significant changes in the nature of the activities of the Association during the year.



ARV volunteers and committee members at a volunteer engagement social event

## Presidents' Report

It has been a very productive year for ARV and we have seen an increase in both the number of children and families in our programs, as well as the number and dedication of our volunteers.

Our Behavioural Development program commenced in 2013, and was born from a need to work with certain, specific children demonstrating strong anti-social behaviour such as violence and anger. This program was so successful that the need for the program was negated, as all clients have been able to re-integrate into our regular programs.

Our Charity program has continued to grow its reputation for excellence and tradition of thoughtful community contributions. Both our Kids and Teens programs were run with great dedication and effort by our administrative teams. 'Kids' now caters for an even wider age range and now involves clients as young as five. 'Teens' was able to move more clients into the more challenging Charity program than ever before. The Kids and Teens programs deal with a broad spectrum of children and their efforts should be applauded.

We have also run a number of amazing camps this year, with many children experiencing ARV's new camp formation. This smaller and more focused camp structure has allowed our volunteers work to more closely with our clients, and further their development at a much faster rate. Camps continue to be the highlight for children and volunteers in our programs, and the commencement of goal-centric camps, such as the 'Girls Empowerment' camp, has been an achievement we are incredibly proud of.

Finally, this year we have focused on areas such as grants and policy development, which strengthen our strong foundation, on which we hope to build many more successful programs in the future. We have also expanded to include a Social Media team, who spearheaded our amazing Christmas donations drive; this initiative, amongst many others this year, truly emphasized the resourcefulness and dedication of our volunteers, as well as the strong support base which our organization is privileged to possess.

With such a strong team behind ARV, we have even higher hopes for 2015, and know that we will continue to strive for increased engagement with both our families and our volunteers.

Tessa Matthews and Kieran Brown

ARV Presidents

## Kids Program Report

2014 was a fantastic year for the Kids Program. We have had a steady program intake of children, and have striven to truly get to know our clients, in order to allow us to work solidly on their needs and development.

The Kids program is structured such that the children spend the morning on small group activities, to allow social development and active engagement in a manner which focuses on building teamwork and problem solving. The afternoon portions of our programs generally involves participating in a whole group activity such as ice skating, bowling or a workshop. While the overt focus of the program to the clients is a 'fun day out', varied activities also allow us to build solid relationships with the children, and work on relationship and communication skills. And the results are evident to us. For instance, several of our children started this year with very poor spoken English skills, however we now find these same children volunteering to explain game instructions in front of a group. We are so proud of the continuous achievements all of these children are making.

One of our aims for this year has been to expand the horizons of the children within a safe environment. By doing this we hope to spark their curiosity, build their empathy skills and expand their knowledge of the world around them. We have accomplished this goal this year by adding a greater aspect of cultural exposure to our programs, through several museum visits and art gallery tours.

The Kids program relies on a strong volunteer base to both support their development, and also to provide an energy level appropriate for the boundless enthusiasm our children consistently exhibit. Our volunteers have gone above and beyond the call of duty this year, and the amazing progress our children have exhibited are a testament to their hard work.

We have developed a strong administrative team, that has spent the past 12 months ensuring that special attention is paid to our children most in need. This has shown excellent results, most notable in one of our little boys, who was initially scared of attending programs due to loneliness, and now eagerly bounds in each month, in search of his three best friends.

We are incredibly proud of the hard work that everyone has put in to ensuring the success of this financial year, and are endeavouring to ensure that 2015 is even better!

Sylvia Qiu and Jamie Lee

2014 Leaders for the Kids Program

## Teens Program Report

The year of 2014 marked many milestones and successes for the Teens program. We were joined by two new families with five new teenagers who were brand new to ARV, as well as welcoming several children who graduated up to the Teens program from the Kids program.

A particular highlight was an increased focus on the educational aspects of our programs as we aimed to make our programs not just fun for the teens, but also developmental. Programs such as a visit to the Ku-Ring-Gai National Park Wildflower Gardens allowed the children to get in touch with the great outdoors and learn about native flora and fauna, while a visit to the National Maritime Museum taught the teens about Australia's history in a hands-on manner, as they explored the submarines and square rigger sailboats.

Our Masterchef day also allowed the children and volunteers to share elements of their culture through teaching each other recipes and cooking dishes from many different countries. This activity was a favourite for many, really embracing the multicultural aspect that makes our group so special.

Our teens also attended a Sydney City Youth Week sporting event, competing against youth groups and teams from several different clubs and areas. We were incredibly proud to see our teens place in the top three in both the basketball and soccer competitions, against teams that trained together weekly, showing how strong their teamwork skills and determination are!

Another fantastic and memorable program was a trip to Maroubra beach where the Surf Life Savers showed our teens how they conduct various rescues and beach patrols, and also taught them many valuable lessons about beach and surf safety. For many of our children, something as simple as a visit to the beach is considered a luxury, as work restrictions on their families mean that even the public transport costs to get out to the beach are too much. One of our teens told our administrative team that the last time his family had been to the beach his father had been so badly racially verbally abused that they had been too afraid to go back for several years. This program really proved the value of ARV's excursions to us, as it allowed the teens to experience such a quintessential element of Australian culture that they otherwise would not have access to. The life guards' welcoming nature meant the children not only felt a sense of inclusion in Australian society, but also gave them the opportunity to learn important information about surf safety that they would not have had the opportunity to experience without ARV.

We are thrilled to see such continued growth in our teens and as always commend our volunteers for their hard work and dedication. We look forward to another fantastic year for 2015 and many more life changing programs and excursions for the future.

Lauren Frost and Ellis Cowan

2014 Leaders for the Teens Program

## Charity Program Report

2014 was a fantastic year for the ARV Charity program. We increased our client base from nine to 15 young adults. The six additional young adults moved up from the Teens program, as a way to further engage them with the community, and give them a sense of responsibility. This has proved a positive move for both the young adults we work with, and the program as a whole. We have consistently had a strong volunteer base, with enough volunteers attending each program to ensure one on one mentoring relationships can be maintained.

In 2014 we had a great spectrum of different programs. We held workshops for communication, balloon tying, face painting, pizza making, Brazilian jiu jitsu and spray art. We also had some great fun days out, at the pool, beach, park, movies and trampolining, giving our clients and volunteers much needed relaxing time to get to know each other.

Of course the primary focus of the Charity program is getting our clients involved with charity work, through which we hope to increase their skill set, confidence and engagement within the community. In 2014 we raised money for the Royal Institute for Deaf & Blind Children by face painting and balloon tying at the North Rocks Markets, had our own face painting and balloon tying stand at the Mothers' Day Classic fun run, raising money for breast cancer research, entertained sick children at The Starlight Foundation, and residents at the Cerebral Palsy Respite Centre, and partnered with 'Scones for Good', baking scones and taking them to an aged care home to visit with the residents.

We always strive to think 'out of the box' for our programs, as we work with teenagers, who need to be challenged and stimulated. With this in mind, some of the less orthodox programs we worked hard to put together were partnering with Desert Pea Media, who put a hip hop songwriting workshop together for our young adults, allowing them to write and record their own song. We also had a tour of the Merrylands Fire Station, and took part in the 'Playing for Change' sports festival, organised by the Amnesty International NSW Refugee Network.

In 2015 we look forward to expanding our program even further, with a focus on furthering the development of the wonderful young adults we are lucky enough to work with.

Cass Braslin

2014 Leader for the Charity Program

## Financial Statement

Program	Total
Grant	-
Donation	-
Membership	4,060.00
Fundraising	-
Returned Cheque	-
Other Deposit	7,371.40
Interest	243.35
Tax Returned	-
Transfers In	48,669.04
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>60,343.79</b>
	-
	-
<b>Transfers Out</b>	<b>48,564.35</b>
<b>Kids / Parents (Topic 1)</b>	<b>25,933.03</b>
<b>Volunteer (Topic 2)</b>	<b>3,801.67</b>
<b>Equipment (Topic 3)</b>	<b>714.18</b>
<b>Administration (Topic 4)</b>	<b>7,561.38</b>
<b>Transport (Topic 5)</b>	<b>82.56</b>
<b>Food (Topic 6)</b>	<b>1,880.97</b>
<b>Capital Purchases</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Phone</b>	<b>6,015.76</b>
<b>Bank Fees</b>	<b>274.02</b>
<b>Bounced Cheque</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Other</b>	<b>12,236.82</b>
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>107,090.86</b>