

Buddies meeting minutes

Location: 24 King St Buderim
Date: 28 April 2019
Time: 11am -1pm
Chair Paul McKinlay

Agenda items

1. Welcome and apologies

Apologies from Lesley Willcoxon, Penny Rivlin, Tricia Reade, Angela Mercuri

2. LEH

Kayla Szumer reported a very successful LEH and thanked the numerous volunteers for their participation that made the week possible. These included the Homestay families, numerous driver volunteers and the education team. There were 26 participants from 5 different cultural/national backgrounds and they were hosted by 13 families on the coast.

Robyn Dobson spoke about the rewarding experience that being a homestay host gave her, saying she gains as much from the experience as it gives the refugee staying with her.

Kayla said the next LEH will be held in September and more volunteers are always welcome.

3. Volunteering opportunities

- Montville markets offering a stall as an opportunity for Buddies to promote awareness. This could be a one off or once every few months. If a member would like to volunteer to run this stall please contact Paul McKinlay (paul.mckinlay67@outlook.com) for further details. Kayla Szumer suggested there may be an opportunity for refugees to sell handmade items at the stall; this can be explored if a volunteer is found.
- The Sunshine Coast Refugee Action Network is coordinating a Film Festival for Refugee Week 15-22 June. There will be multiple venues from Noosa to possibly Caboolture running the films holding the films over different days throughout the week. Volunteers are needed to help out at individual events, selling raffle tickets etc. If you are interested email SCRAN for more information.
- Eumundi car parking, (1st Saturday and Wednesday of the month) volunteers always welcome. Contact Penny Rivlin (penny_rivlin@hotmail.com)

4. Up and coming events (more details of the events are available in the 26/4/19 Bulletin)

- 12th annual LUMINOUS Lantern Parade

Friday 7 June, 5pm-9pm at Southbank Parklands, Brisbane. The event celebrates Queensland Week by highlighting the strength of our cultural diversity, our heritage, our people, places

and history, giving all Queenslanders the opportunity to say “Welcome!” to our newest Australians and celebrate our diversity.

It was suggested Buddies members may like to share drive to the event. If anyone is interested email Paul McKinlay.

- Refugee week

Buddies will be holding a film night Monday 17th June at St Marks Anglican Church 6-9pm. The film will be Constance on the Edge followed by a chat with Elijah Buol who was the recipient of the 2019 Qld local hero award. Elijah is a Criminologist, former refugee, father of four and Director of Ethnic Communities Council of Queensland, he has been a tireless advocate for the young and disadvantaged. His advocacy work was instrumental in removing children under 18 from adult prisons in Queensland.

5. Change of meeting venue from June

Buddies monthly meeting will be held at SCU E Block from June 2019 Locations maps were provided to the meeting attendees and will be published in the Bulletin.

6. Refugee Welcome Zone.

Following the last submission to Council, discussions with individual Councillors, discussions with other members of the community & meetings with Sterling Hinchliffe, the current members of the RWZ group believe some of the Sunshine Coast Councillors are still not receptive to RWZ.

Sterling Hinchliffe tabled the idea of reconsidering seeking RWZ & to consider focusing our efforts on getting SCC to accept the status of Welcoming Cities. He suggested that Welcoming Cities which is an international initiative, is more inclusive and may be seen as less provocative and a better fit with Council’s current thinking & planning.

Buddies is still a strong advocate of RWZ but will further explore this suggestion.

7. Finance report

The final March figures showed a 13.4% increase in funds at bank over the month thanks to generous donations, Eumundi car parking fund raising and avocado sales.

The April figures are holding up well with income from Eumundi Car parking, a Bunnings Sausage sizzle and Avocado sales. This seasonal revenue stream from Avocados has been excellent, thanks to Scott Grimmett’s generosity in allowing Buddies to sell his avocados and retain the proceeds. \$1,250 has already been raised.

Major outgoing in April was for L.E.H. (Learning English Holiday), conducted in early April. Costs came in below budget thanks to a large donation towards costs from one of our members.

Increased funding of an additional \$100 per month each to Asylum Seeker Families, Romero and M.D.A. has been approved by the directors. There is an increasingly heavy demand on the services of all refugee assistance organisations resulting from last June’s cuts to income support

for community- based refugees. Buddies increased support has been factored into forward projections and is sustainable for at least the next six months at which time it will be reviewed.

Buddies is in good shape financially to meet its liabilities and obligations over the coming months.

8. Guest Speaker: Ghenwa Asaad

Ghenwa has now lived in Brisbane for nearly 12 months and was a participant in a recent Learn English Holiday program (September 2018). She spoke about living through the Syrian civil war and the difficulties of daily life in Syria both through the war and now. Ghenwa identified how most families have lost family members, their homes and are struggling financially.

She left Syria in 2017 and initially went to Iraq but found it difficult to find work. Able to obtain a refugee visa she came to Brisbane 12 months ago joining her sister who has lived in Australia for 8 years. Although she has bachelor degree in Health and Nutrition she found it difficult to get work because of her limited English. To overcome this problem she undertook an Adult English Program and now does volunteer work as a nutritionist for World Wellness, the Lady Cilento Hospital and has applied to volunteer with the Red Cross. She talked about her love for Australia and gratitude for the opportunity to live here and the reward she personally gets from her volunteering work.

9. Next meeting 11am Sunday May 26 2019. 24 King St Buderim.