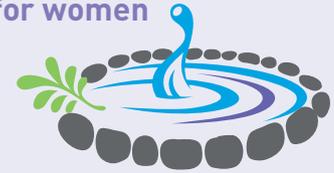


# NEWS

August 2019

Wellsprings  
for women



## Celebrating Rose Room



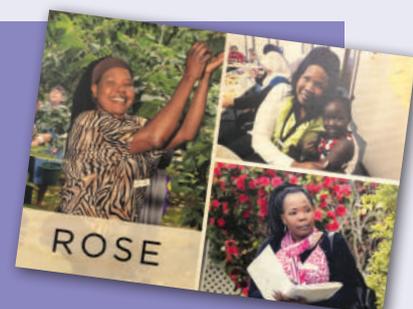
On June 26, the Rose Room was officially opened by our Federal MP Julian Hill and Chairperson Janet Cribbes.

As many know, the extension of the Wellsprings Centre to accommodate new activities has been a long and arduous task with many obstacles! We did not give up and finally, we had the pleasure of celebrating this exciting new space.

The event was a great success with over 80 people attending to enjoy food and a host of activities. We had interactive virtual reality and computer games to draw in new users to this space. We also launched our senior digital literacy program Be Connected which will provide digital literacy to over 30 senior women, enabling them to stay digitally connected at their own pace and in

ways that are meaningful to them. We look forward to seeing the host of new programs we can now accommodate thanks to this wonderful new space and would like to thank the funding bodies who supported us to achieve this milestone; **Australian Government, Victorian Government, Gandel Philanthropy, CCI Giving, and Jack Brockhoff Foundation.**

The Rose Room was named after our late Community Development Coordinator, Rose Elias. Tragically, Rose passed away in 2019 and left her three children, the Wellsprings, South Sudanese and wider community mourning the great loss, and celebrating her large contribution to women and children both here, and in South Sudan. It seemed only fitting to dedicate this new learning space to our wonderful Rose. Rose's daughter, Immaya, attended the opening event and was welcomed with opened arms. She was thrilled to see the montage of her mother permanently fixed to the wall in Rose Room.



## Sole Sistas

The City of Greater Dandenong Youth Services partnered with Wellsprings to run a physical activity program targeting young women from migrant and refugee backgrounds. The program involved going on structured walks to key places in Dandenong to encourage women to be more physically active. Following the completion of this program, Wellsprings is seeking funding to dedicate more resources to encourage young women to engage in sports and physical activities. This program was held in April/May.



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## April Fundraiser



Due to last years' success, we held another April fundraiser on the eve of ANZAC day at Rahimi Afghan Restaurant. The evening was attended by 100 people and was thoroughly enjoyed by everyone. The food was excellent, and we included an entertainment segment by Bollywood dancer Amal James who engaged us in a Bollywood dance workshop. Our Mayor Cr Roz Blades spoke on behalf of Greater Dandenong Council and our Federal MP Julian Hill also attended and praised Wellsprings work. We were pleased to welcomed Cr Sophie Tan who is newly elected to Council. At the event we paid tribute to Helen Halpin who passed away the day before, Helen was sister in law to our founder Ann Halpin.



## Iftars 2019

The CEO attended two external Iftars this year, one hosted by Deakin University also attended by our Board member Minh Nguyen and one hosted by Victorian parliament and was attended by CEO and staff member Rida Khan.

Wellsprings also hosted its own inaugural Iftar on the 15th of May which was well attended by over 50 women. We hope to be able to host an Iftar on annual basis. Iftar is the breaking of the fast at sunset during the holy month of Ramadan.



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## Grandma's Group

The Wellsprings Grandma's group has continued to meet each Monday, providing an opportunity for Grandmas (and those who identify with the grand-parenting stage of life) to meet to share their joys and struggles.

On several occasions the women have been pampered with specialist hand and foot massages from Shirley

and Chithrika, greatly appreciating their voluntary services.

The women have learnt, discussed and explored ideas around health issues, understanding and dealing with difficult behaviour in children, and valuing, respecting and appreciating themselves. A special bonding was felt when each of the women described their memories of

times with their own grandmother, displaying the diversity of backgrounds amongst the group but, with the vast majority, a commonality in the special place a grandmother has in a child's life, and that remains forever. The favourite activity is simple and another that bridges cultures and age – playing some music and getting up to dance together.



## Women's Cooking Program

Participants have been actively involved with the program. We cooked for the volunteers' lunch in term 1 and also for the Multicultural Dinner on the 19th of June at St John's regional college in term 2.

5 participants prepared food from their culture at the event and they were Afghan, Indian, Sudanese, Pakistani and Vietnamese.

9 participants attended the food handling certificate training and successfully completed it.

In term 2 women learned about Lebanese culture and did practice cooking and sharing ideas together.

The Women's Cooking Group is now seeking further funding to continue on its journey of creating learning and employment pathways for migrant and refugee women.



## Mentoring Program

Wellsprings for Women Mentorship group continues to provide a welcoming and safe space for the participants to come together, make new friends, exchange ideas, learn new things and make social connections. The participants discuss different topics that they choose and engage in different fun activities followed by a light exercise.

### Quote from participant:

*"I like coming to the mentorship sessions, I feel very happy and relaxed when I meet with my friends here"*



## Stitch Her Story

The City of Greater Dandenong Youth Services partnered with Wellsprings to run an intergenerational program between young women and senior women to share stories and experiences as well as to work together on creating a quilt. The final piece will be exhibited at Heritage Hill in August. The program was run for five weeks at Wellsprings in May and June.



## Morning Tea Farewell to Helen Kapalos

On 31st of May the Lord Mayor Sally Capp hosted a round table of key women friends of former Victorian Multicultural Commission Chairperson Helen Kapalos. The group expressed gratitude and recognition for Helen's contribution to advancing the status of multiculturalism in Victoria and praised her courage in shining a spotlight on minorities within culturally and linguistically diverse communities. Helen has supported Wellsprings throughout her tenure and was a guest speaker at our 2017 fundraising dinner. Our CEO was amongst the group of women invited.



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## Bike Riding Group

In January Wellsprings teamed up with the not-for-profit organisation Good Cycles for the second time to deliver a program teaching 11 women of migrant and refugee background to maintain a bike and learn to ride. Participants in the program successfully learnt skills to completely dismantle and then put a bicycle back together. These women will now be able to maintain their own and their children's bikes ensuring that they can continue to ride. For many participants, this was the first time they had used tools. After two or three sessions, a few of the women shared that they had been able to use tools they had never touched or known the name of before to repair something around the house, recognising they had abilities to do tasks they previously thought as only for their husbands to do.



Women also learnt basic bike riding skills. All enhanced their skills despite the great variation in prior riding skills. At the end of the program each participant received

a bike, helmet, lights and bike lock and some went on to participate in Wellsprings Saturday morning riding group.

## Creative Enterprising Women

It has been a busy year of making and learning for the Creative Enterprising Women (CEW) program as women get stuck into the business end of the course. CEW is a pre-accredited entry point for culturally and linguistically diverse women to explore the option of starting their own micro-enterprise business and to help them build employability skills.

By term 2, two women had started a fully registered and insured business, seven women had completed an accredited course

to support their business development (such as food handling), and 3 more women had completed some paid work to test their business ideas. The program and one of its participants have been selected as finalists for a 2019 Learn Local Award and has been philanthropically funded to continue.

To see more about this program, keep an eye on our Facebook page and check out the CEW short film.



**“If not for this program, I would have still been hidden. It let me show my skills, it built my confidence to play around with many business ideas. When I came to this country, I didn’t know where to go. This program made me a totally different person.”** – Chithrika (CEW participant)

## Volunteers at Wellsprings

Volunteers at Wellsprings come from a diversity of backgrounds but all have a passion to ‘give back’ and support other women in our community. Some may be retired but want to continue to use their skills, some may have training and are in need of experience to enter the workforce, some may have come through difficult times and are ready to help others going through similar experiences, whilst others may need to complete voluntary hours to be eligible for Centrelink payments. But whatever their initial motivation for coming, over and over they will tell you that they feel Wellsprings is where they belong.

As a Women’s organisation, welcoming children to our Centre is part of what we do. In April, seven members of our child minding team spent 2 days singing songs, learning actions and telling stories (and laughing) as

they completed Parent Child Mother Goose training. Some of these volunteers are now using these skills to facilitate Wellsprings playgroups at both Dandenong and Springvale libraries. Others are introducing the Mother Goose activities into the childminding sessions at Wellsprings, making the sessions more structured and engaging for the kids whilst providing them with valuable skills to prepare them for kinder and school.

In May 17, Wellsprings volunteers celebrated International Volunteers Week with an excursion to Melbourne’s Botanical Gardens enjoying a guided bus tour, sharing morning tea and volunteering tales and strolling around the lake. At the end of term 1 and term 2 we held a Volunteers’ lunch catered for by our wonderful Women’s Cooking Group.





## Dandenong Playgroups

Wellsprings for Women is running in partnership with Dandenong Libraries two playgroups:

One at Dandenong Library and one in Springvale. The playgroups are based on Mother Goose format. Wellsprings trained 9 of our child minding volunteers in running Mother Goose playgroups. This has been made possible through philanthropic funding.



## Making a Difference

The Making a Difference (MAD) program ran from Wellsprings for Women both in Dandenong and as an outreach program from Bunjil Place in the City of Casey. MAD is a dynamic new program which builds women's skills in communication, negotiation and advocacy. Together the women in the course choose a social issue to take on and identify where they can make a difference. Through the program, they build soft skills such as communication, conflict resolution and negotiation skills. They also delved into digital and community research and preparing and participating in media coverage.

Participants in both terms were thrilled to meet with the honourable MP, Pauline Richardson, and to hear her words of motivation. They also met Dandenong Mayor Cr Roz Blades, and Australian writer and comedian and our Patron Jo Stanley.

The participants also learned skills in advocacy and leadership (including E-advocacy) and strategies for coping and dealing with resistance or backlash when standing up for an issue.

One MAD participant was invited to join the council's Advisory Committee to advise on issues affecting multicultural women.



## International Womens Day

On 8th of March, Wellsprings for Women celebrated International Women's day with the theme: "What My Mother Taught Me".

Participants in all Wellsprings classes were engaged in activities to reflect on the influences their mother had on their upbringing.



This also gave them the opportunity to examine how they are raising their own daughters. Women at Wellsprings come from many diverse backgrounds and the discussions created opportunities for intercultural dialogue and engagement that generated an atmosphere of excitement and wonderment.



## Presentation and Public Speaking

Participants of the Presentation and Public Speaking course have been busily learning and practicing skills which build their confidence to have their voices heard. There is much to learn about the art of public speaking but above all, practice is the key! The women developed their presentations and presented to their peers, offering each other valuable peer support and feedback. The program ran at Wellsprings for Women in term 2 and will run again in term 4.

## Vale Rose Elias

In March this year our dear colleague Rose Elias passed away following many months of serious illness. We gathered at the end of term one and paid tribute to her long term contribution to women who have attended Wellsprings in the last 15 years. Rose started working at Wellsprings in 2005 and was instrumental in building Wellsprings' programs and supporting hundreds of women who benefited from her guidance, wisdom, care and generous spirit.  
*May Her Soul Rest In Peace.*



## Josephine's Shoes Helping Out



Josephine Hewitt is the owner of a very slick shoe shop in Hampton called Josephine Shoes.

Josephine donates annually boxes and boxes of winter and summer shoes to Wellsprings community.

Josephine was a student at St Mary's Primary School when Sister Ann Halpin was the Principal.

She never forgot Sr Ann's impact on her life and how she was inspired by her example to make the world a better place.

When you meet Josephine, you notice straight away her warm and bubbly personality, her welcoming smile, openness and empathy.

We are thrilled that Ann Halpin's memory and legacy continues not only at Wellsprings but through the hundreds of lives she touched and nurtured throughout her life time.

*Drop in to Josephine's Shoes one day and see for yourself.*

**412 Hampton Street Hampton**

## Wellsprings Recognised for its work on Gender Equality

Wellsprings for Women has been selected as a finalist for Neighbourhood Houses Victoria's inaugural gender equality award.

Our Dandenong-based women's health and safety program providing education, awareness raising and dialogue on gender equity, respectful relationships and preventing violence against women. More than 380 women from migrant and refugee backgrounds had taken part in the past 18 months. Many of them had limited English and little prior education.

'It was quite challenging for us to develop and run sessions as there were no resources or tools to use that were tailored to women from culturally diverse backgrounds.

'We found ways to get the message across and relied heavily on dialogue and using images, we could find on the internet to illustrate some complex concepts.

We found that the existing gender-equity resources did not resonate with many migrant and refugee women as the issue is viewed with a western cultural lens that does not include culturally diverse women and their experiences. The award is

named after Fiona Richardson, the late Minister for Women and Prevention of Family Violence who was instrumental in initiating the Royal Commission Inquiry into Family Violence.



## After-School Art and Craft

Walking into Wellsprings you are always met with a hive of activity, and it is easy to forget the many programs that we are running in the wider community. The laughter, learning, creativity and connections continue into local primary schools with our after school art and craft classes. Our art therapist, Deborah Langmaid, has been busy facilitating creative activities once a week in Springvale Rise Primary School. We hear great feedback about this program from parents, children and the wider school community. We look forward to running it at more local school in Dandenong in both terms 3 and 4.



### Art for Life

After the retirement of our beloved volunteer, June O'Doherty, it was hard to fill her creative shoes and keep a Wellsprings painting class going. However, we drew back Ruth Pinto, a volunteer who contributed many creative projects for us in the past. It is great to have Ruth back on board and see her build an art

program of her own – Art for Life. The participants are enjoying extending their creative skills in painting and other art mediums. It is early days for this program, but we feel an art exhibition coming on – so watch this space!

## Making Australia Home

A new exciting program commenced in term two at Wellsprings for Women called Making Australia Home. The main purpose of the program is to support migrant and refugee women to integrate into social, economic and civil society in Australia by developing their skills and cultural competencies. The program also builds the participant's knowledge about services and how to access them.

In term two, the participants learned about the work and services provided by different agencies including Monash Health, foundation house and centre for multicultural youth. Moreover, the participants learned about Australian history and culture as well as about diverse cultures that the participants identified with.

At the end of the terms participants went on an excursion to Lady Lavender tea room. The event provided a learning and networking opportunity for the participants of the program and they indulged in trying their first Devonshire Tea experience.



## Kellister College Donations

On 27 May, students from Kellister College arrived to Wellsprings bringing gift packs to distribute to our participants. Beautifully packaged bundles of toiletries and cosmetic products were well received and appreciated by the women. Thank you Kellister College for your ongoing generosity.



### Save The Dates

- Wellsprings Annual Fundraising Dinner  
Friday 25 October 2019  
6.30pm - 11.30pm  
St Mary's Community Hall  
Dandenong  
This year the events promises to be fun-filled, with music, dancing, raffle and prizes and Bollywood dancing workshop.  
Looking forward to seeing you there.
- Wellsprings Annual General Meeting  
8 November 2019  
11am - 12.30pm

### Thank you to our supporters, donors, partners and funding bodies:

City of Greater Dandenong	R.E.Ross Trust
City of Casey	Gandel Philanthropy
Department of Social Services	Jack Brockhoff Foundation
Department of Industry, Innovation and Sciences	CCI Giving
Department of Education and Training	Mercy Foundation
Department of Health and Human Services	Flora and Frank Leith Charitable Trust
Department of Premier and Cabinet	Victorian Women's Trust
Department of Home Affairs	The Andrews Foundation
ACFE Board	Presentation Sisters Victoria
	Kildare Ministries
	Scanlon Foundation
	St John's Regional College

79 Langhorne Street Dandenong Victoria 3175

Ph: ( 03 ) 9701 3740

Email: [administration@wellspringsforwomen.com](mailto:administration@wellspringsforwomen.com)

Like us on facebook ABN: 18 282 739 596

[www.wellspringsforwomen.com](http://www.wellspringsforwomen.com)