



Promoting Healthy Outcomes for Refugees

PHOR Newsletter

Annual General Meeting

You are warmly invited to attend PHOR's second Annual General Meeting where you can hear more about PHOR's activities in the past year, and have the opportunity to contribute to its future plans.

Please join us:
Wednesday 16th November 11-12 pm
NSW Refugee Health Service, Meeting Room,
Level 3, 157-161 George St, Liverpool

Refreshments will be served immediately after.
For catering purposes please RSVP by 10th November
admin@phor.org.au. For further information and application forms are available on our website: www.phor.org.au/news.

What's New

PHOR has now extended its successful [Refugee Nutrition Project](#) to the Cumberland Local Government Area, thanks to the generous support of [DOOLEYS Lidcombe Catholic Club](#). PHOR is running a number of nutrition education programs for refugee parents as well as 'Kids in the Kitchen' for refugee children in the Auburn/Lidcombe area.

Last term PHOR ran three 8-week nutrition education programs including: an Arabic speaking group at MTC Fairfield; a parent group at Carramar Public School; and a mixed Afghan and Burmese group at Berala Public School. Last school holidays Kids in the Kitchen was held at Fairfield High School.

This term we will be running: a Dari-speaking group in Auburn with Harmony House; two Arabic-speaking groups at Fairfield Public School, and an Arabic women's group in partnership with Auburn Diversity Services.

New Project: PHOR is in the preliminary stages of developing a DVD on healthy eating in Australia, in partnership with Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District (LHD), Multicultural Health South West Sydney LHD, NSW Refugee Health Service, Illawarra TAFE, and Northern Sydney LHD. The DVD will target new and emerging refugee communities and will be available in a number of community languages.



Raffle tickets

Our friends at the Sydney Modern Quilt Guild have generously donated the proceeds of their annual quilt raffle to PHOR. The draw for their beautiful one-of-a-kind quilt (seen above) will be held on 27th November at Glebe Town Hall. Tickets are \$2 each or three for \$5. Contact PHOR for details: admin@phor.org.au.



Recipes: Now you try it

Try making your own tasty Iraqi or Afghan feast at home: the traditional recipes we use in nutrition groups are now online for everyone to enjoy. These recipes were adapted from traditional favorites with a little tweaking by the PHOR chef and dietitians to make them extra healthy, and just as tasty.

Try an Iraqi Biryani (shown above), Afghan Chicken Korma, or Borani Banjan (Afghan Eggplant Stew) tonight.

Recipes are available on the PHOR website: www.PHOR.org.au



Above: Children cooking at PHOR's regular holiday program, Kids in the Kitchen.

Staff Profile: Hylas Choct

Hylas is one of PHOR's two Community Dietitians who runs the Refugee Nutrition Project in Fairfield and Auburn. "My favourite part of the job is working with community groups and hearing real stories. I am learning so much from participants about their food and cooking. Facilitating the group program is particularly satisfying as you can see the rapport build over the eight week program. I can see relationships develop and people start to open up."

The course has produced some committed health-food converts. One woman has rung-in our recipes over community radio. Another regularly shares our information sheets with her temple - after improving her family's diet she is now on a mission to change her community's.



But there is resistance too, especially to reducing salt in traditional meals. Hylas says this is common before the group tries the recipe, but does not last long. "It is so satisfying to see their eyes light up in surprise and pleasure when they taste it," she says.

The relationship with her group is far from one-sided. Some have brought dishes in for her to try, and demonstrated ingenious equipment used to make traditional dishes (including a modified dolma rolling-machine which may have started life rolling cigarettes). Hylas is obviously well-respected. Her favourite compliment was from a group of women who insisted she must have Iraqi blood because she laughs like them and is so comfortable with them.

"This job constantly reminds me that you can't judge people by the colour of their skin, cultural background, or religion. Everyone loves the same thing – they love their food, they love sitting down with others, talking about their kids, telling a story, and sharing a joke."

The broader picture: Nutritional needs in Syria

Syria is now one of the major source countries of refugees in NSW. The impact of the Syrian conflict on nutrition has been well documented: in hard to reach and besieged areas there are chronic food shortages, including stories of people making meals of unsafe water and grass. Food prices have skyrocketed. Livestock have been decimated impacting on the availability of protein. Children and pregnant and breastfeeding women are particularly vulnerable. Micro-nutrient deficiencies are widespread and within serious to critical levels, with UNICEF reporting a high prevalence of anaemia among more than 30% of children and women of reproductive age.

In Sydney, PHOR is offering much needed nutrition interventions to this group through our Kids in the Kitchen holiday program, our eight-week nutrition groups, as well as regular one-off information sessions to Syrian and Iraqi arrivals through Settlement Services International. These sessions help refugees navigate the Australian food environment to assist with: healthy acculturation (maintaining the healthy aspects of a traditional diet whilst adopting healthy western dietary and lifestyle habits); ease food insecurity through increasing nutrition literacy and providing strategies for feeding a family on a budget; and nutrition related diseases/illnesses commonly found among refugees. We hope that timely interventions at this stage will assist families keep themselves healthy as they start the challenging process of settling into their new life in Australia.



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To remove your name from our mailing list
please email us at admin@phor.org.au
website: www.PHOR.org.au