

...ERCS, spreading love everywhere...



A candid campfire chat at Mt. Atkinson Community Centre

What Next after NAIDOC Week 2021?

The Oceania Province acknowledges the first nations people as the traditional custodians of the lands where we are located and recognises that these lands continue to be sacred and were never seated!

The theme for NAIDOC Week in 2021 has been Healing our Country as a confrontation to the many injustices impacting the lives of our indigenous people. But some of us are left wondering, what does this theme mean, and how can it be translated into our daily lives?

This theme confronts the cultural privileges that arise due to imposing a majority's cultural beliefs and doings upon a minority in this land. Therefore, it is a cry that calls for truth-seeking and truth-telling on this journey of restoring harmony with this land and its people. After 250 years, we can no longer continue to sweep aside or past. Instead, we must confront the systemic failures that dictate a future where some are included whilst others remain excluded.



One word comes to mind, *cultural reflexivity*. Simply said, cultural reflexivity is a promise to ourselves, our community and our country to embrace diversity. In our weekly reflection, Peter Hay shared a simple but challenging response that each of us may consider as an Act of Restoration in the remaining half of this year. We can all seek to say or do something that embraces our diversity as an 'act of Restoration'.

In the upcoming new school Term (three), we are presented with the opportunity to continue carrying forward cultural reflexivity as an act of restoration in our respective Edmund Rice Community ministries. Now, this is an action we are excited to carry forward with the families we support. Because our homework clubs are diverse, this opportunity allows us to actively have these critical conversations with our entire team including; parents, children, and volunteers.

Better yet, with our homework clubs supporting parents and children with a refugee background. This minority group is very familiar with the injustices that come with a broken nation seeking healing. Now, this year's NAIDOC theme, 'Healing Country', is a treaty in itself. But a treaty needs allies to come alive. Allies who talk the talk and walk the walk. And what better allies can join forces with a healing country than parents and children who call this country home and are committed to a path of healing themselves.

It is exciting that embracing cultural reflexivity as a path to healing our country starts in our homework club sessions. Where every passing week, presents yet another opportunity to let diversity BLOOM

Looking beyond NAIDOC week, let us move forward as a united people making room for all the unique diversities we share and embracing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage as our very own heritage.

Term 2 holidays in a snapshot



Archery: Ready, Aim, Fire off !!!..

A laser-focused lady aiming for that shot on our recent archery holiday activity at Mt. Atkinson Community Centre in Truganina. We are happy to have had over 20 students and a team of mentors join us in making this trip one filled with little treasures from mother nature. Also, can we take a minute to sigh at that clear blue sky before we can move on and go about our day!

Nothing beats a good hide and seek play date in a make-believe underground mystery cabin. The witty staff at 'The Venny Play Centre' let us have an energy-filled afternoon with their crew where we made three new friends; two chickens and a duck who thinks he is a chicken. Huh, guess we all love to indulge in a make-believe session once in a while.



Hide and Seek: A make-believe underground mystery cabin 😊



The Village: Parents, Mentors and Students at a lunch

Community Engagement is why we do what we do. Here's a snapshot of our parents, students and mentors enjoying some snacks in anticipation of a power-packed afternoon of play. It really does take a village to raise a child-wise proverb.

Collaboration and Program Updates

ERCS and ERMA staff are in talks of strengthening their community engagement in the 'Western corridor' as a united front. We see this as a learning process that may leverage our time, resources and sustainability for the future.

Our volunteers remain at the core of our ministry. We are dutiful in keeping and expanding our volunteer recruitment process. Our collaborations with Victoria University and high schools around us are even more potent.

**Thank you to all our partners and the entire ERCS community!
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