

Pearl of the Islands Foundation

Newsletter Issue Number : 12

PEARLS OF WISDOM NEWSLETTER



Welcome to another edition of our Pearls of Wisdom newsletter! The path to mutual understanding, respect, and togetherness is achieved through events PIF organises. In this issue we highlight what we have accomplished in the first half of this year.

To educate youth, and bring like-minded individuals together a holiday school programme was organised before the school year began. We were present at the biggest cultural festival in Auckland with several offerings including sweets, kebab, and the well-known Turkish coffee. Families, teachers and students attending the 2016 ANZAC Tour were invited to a pre-tour gathering. The tour itself was very successful which included 8 students, 3 teachers and a couple representatives from the organisation. The trip included time in Australia, Viet Nam and Thailand. IFLC was held in Sydney and NZ representative Daetona took the stage to sing. Several PIF fellow members and board members also went to Australia for the weekend. MP visits and a Pacifica Cultural Night are also among other activities outlined in this issue. Thank you for supporting us, do contact us if you have any feedback!

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2016 pre-ANZAC Tour Gathering

Students and teachers attending this year's 2016 ANZAC Tour were invited to a pre-tour gathering at Pearl of the Islands Foundation. The families of students, PIF representatives, board members and other special guests also attended.

Australian T.V. personality George Donikian will host this year's International Festival of Language and Culture (IFLC) to be held in the Sydney Opera House. He expressed that it was a great opportunity for students to attend the event, which could lead them to be participants in the future. Australian Intercultural Society director Mr. Keskin also encouraged them to make the most of the chance they have been presented with.

PIF director Taner Basar, who had been leading the annual ANZAC tour since 2012, stated that he would be missing out this year as the group travels to Australia, Vietnam and Thailand.

2014 ANZAC Tour participant Daetona Rawiri had been learning Turkish ever since he went 2 years ago. The Auckland Grammar School student was invited on stage to introduce himself and also perform a snippet of his actual performance in Sydney. For the first time this year, a student from New Zealand will be taking part in the IFLC.

As the speeches came to an end, all our guests were invited to enjoy the foods prepared by PIF volunteers. We thank all our students, teachers, board members and special guests for attending. We believe the ANZAC tour will be very enjoyable and a fantastic experience for all participants.



MP Visits

Following the International Festival of Language and Culture (IFLC) held in Sydney last month, a visit was made to Mr. Bakshi MP in his Wellington based office. The Manukau based MP attended the event with the PIF team in Sydney. He also toured schools run and founded by our sister organisations.

CEO Yalcin Solak and Director Taner Basar met with the MP to get his views and reflections on the recent trip. Mr. Bakshi provided positive feedback and also wished that a similar event could be organised here in New Zealand, which was welcomed by PIF.

As part of PIF's intercultural dialogue and relation building activities, an Iftar dinner is also planned at the Parliament house. Details of this night were also discussed.

Dr. Parmjeet Parmar MP joined the Little Pearls 'Family Whanau Day' and had a conversation with staff, parents, and community members.

Dr. Parmar praised the work PIF undertakes and the staff's efforts at the childcare centre to strengthen bonds between multi-cultural and diverse communities. She provided a short speech to all attendees and emphasized the importance of education at an early age.



January Holiday School Programme

Our termly school holiday programme continued through the summer school holidays. The week long programme included many activities and children from primary through to intermediate aged children. Pearl of the Islands Foundation organises such events in an attempt to improve communication and interaction among young kids. Confidence building is also a main goal, achieved through participation.

Activities included rock-climbing, bowling, movies, laser tag and going to the park. Students that attended our school holiday events spent their time in a fun and interesting manner, while also enhancing their knowledge. We thank all those who attended and would also like to pass our gratitude to volunteers at the event.



2016 Auckland International Cultural Festival

The Auckland Festival in its 17th year drew thousands of participants, where over 50 cultures and nations displayed their stalls.

The Pearl of the Islands Foundation, representing Turkey, put up a number of different stalls. On one side there was kebab available and Turkish coffee available on the other side of a series of tents. Savoury and other sweet foods were also put up for sale for the public eager to try foods from the Turkish kitchen.

There was an Ottoman space for people to sit down and enjoy their coffee. While the delicious sweets and savories attracted many people to PIF's stalls, the authentic Turkish couches, kilim mats and space proved successful with many people enjoying their traditional coffee in that corner.

We thank everyone for the high turnout to our stalls and for supporting us.



2016 IFLC (International Festival of Language & Culture)

The 2nd International Festival of Language & Culture (IFLC) was held at the Sydney Opera House. Pearl of the Islands Foundation contributed to the event by preparing and sending a student from Auckland Grammar School to represent Aotearoa New Zealand. Daetona Rawiri, who participated in the 2014 ANZAC Study Tour, had been preparing for the festival since past year. On top of the continuing Turkish lessons, singing classes were also added to his timetable.



Daetona and his mentor enjoyed several days touring Sydney and its surroundings before rehearsals began for the festival. The IFLC group visited a number of attractions including wildlife parks, aquariums, Sydney Tower, Darling Harbour, Blue Mountains National Park. Daetona and the IFLC students visited the Parliament house and were greeted by officials. The singer students were also hosted by NSW Police and SBS studios.

There are also eight students and three teachers from Papatoetoe intermediate school selected to attend IFLC programme in Sydney, Australia. Australia visit is the first leg of their 2016 ANZAC Study Tour. Daetona's family also made way to Sydney to support and watch him. PIF Advisory Board Members, staff and VIP guests were also present to experience the magic at the Sydney Opera House.

PIF would like to be one of the co-host organiser for future IFLC events in Aotearoa New Zealand. We believe that organising such a cultural and important event here in New Zealand would provide an example to showcase New Zealand that respects cultural diversity and values every individual's contribution in making the world a better place.



2016 ANZAC Asia Pacific Tour

Australia - Breakfast at and tour of Amity College kicked off the first day of our tour followed by a visit to Auburn Gallipoli mosque, eating Maras ice-cream, and a delightful harbour cruise dinner.

The second day we had breakfast with a lovely Turkish family, went up the Sydney tower, visited the Sydney Sea Life Aquarium and then we ended our night on a high note by attending the IFLC at the Sydney Opera House. We drove off to Canberra in the morning.

Upon arrival in Canberra, we visited the Australian War Memorial. The students and teachers had the opportunity to learn and experience the events which took place during WW1. The NZ High Commissioner Chris Seed welcomed our group at the office. We toured the Parliament House before treating the group to an authentic Turkish dinner. We left for Viet Nam the following morning.

Vietnam - We arrived in Ho Chi Minh City in the evening after leaving Sydney. At 36 degrees, most felt overwhelmed after leaving the airport. Thankfully the buses are all equipped with air conditioning. We dined in at a restaurant and then walked around the night market nearby. This was followed by a delicious smoothie.

The next day we visited the Horizon Bilingual International School to have breakfast. Our journey then took us to the Mekong Delta district for a full day tour. A couple hours later we went onboard a boat to visit a number of different islands. The first island contained an eco bee farm. Our participants tried a honey, bee pollen, lime and tea drink. The second island demonstrated the different uses of coconut in Viet Nam. After a short horse ride, we had the experience of tasting exotic fruit including dragonfruit, jackfruit and pineapple. Our final activity in the region was a short canoe trip. The coconut drinks were an added bonus. After a seafood themed lunch, we returned to Ho Chi Minh city.

On our 3rd day, the ANZAC group explored the Cu Chi tunnels. An experienced tour guide helped us understand how this area played a vital role in the outcome of the war. After returning the Ho Chi Minh, we had late lunch and then visited the famous Ben Thanh market. Our students bargained their way to make purchases. As the sun set, we walked around the bustling traffic to cool ourselves with another set of smoothies.

Our final day in Viet Nam saw our participants visit the school for the last time. We visited the War Remnants museum. The devastating effects of the war have been published heavily in this building with displays in and outside. After a cold drink, we walked to the post office. The historic building contains telephone booths and is now a market for exotic Vietnamese goods. We returned back to the school, that provided our accommodation, to say goodbye before our flight to Bangkok. We were heavily gifted by the school. Our students returned the favour with a unique bag of gifts from New Zealand.

Thailand - The first day we had breakfast at the school and left to explore the religious landmarks in Bangkok. With scorching heat, we made our way to Wat Pho, a major tourist attraction and important destination for Buddhists. The Reclining Buddha along with other structures in the vicinity provided plenty photo opportunities. From there we took off to MBK Center. With many stalls and shops, students and teachers had the chance to shop and grab lunch. From here, we headed to the train station for our 13-hour overnight trip to Chiang Mai.

The following day we arrived in Chiang Mai and took part in a very exciting tour. The world's number one rated animal sanctuary, Elephant Nature Park, hosts a number of elephants and hundreds of others to provide a safe place for them to recover from injuries. As a group, we decided to not take part in any animal activity entertainment such as circuses, parks, zoos or elephant riding as these generally involve abuse to animals. ENP brings in abused and injured animals to treat them until they are able to join their families. We fed the elephants, watched them bathe and had lunch at the premises. Once we returned from the Elephant park, the group visited Marmara school for drinks, snacks and, mangoes where a kilo costs less than \$1. After touring the school we left to visit the Temple of Golden Mountain, one of Chiang Mai's most beautiful temples. We stopped to take a photo on a lookout. The temple is thought to be established in the 14th century. We drove to eat dinner in a nearby local town. After our delicious dinner, we flew back to Bangkok. The next morning we took part in an ANZAC service held by an international school.

Our ANZAC group attended a dawn service on the 25th of April in NIST International School, in Bangkok. The short ceremony included a number of poems recited and our students from Papatoetoe singing a short tune. A wreath was laid from one of our own and the service came to an end. The school was very accommodating and provided breakfast to our group. After a quick tour around the school, NIST generously supplied busses for us to return to our accommodation for some well deserved rest. Deputy Head of Mission, Ms. Shannon Austin, greeted our ANZAC group at the NZ Embassy the same day. We had a conversation on how New Zealand is promoted in Thailand. The students had the opportunity to ask questions as well. Shopping soon followed. Dinner that night was held at our accommodation.

On our final day, after breakfast, we visited Art in Paradise. An interactive 3D gallery where images come to life. Lunch soon followed at the same shopping mall and we went back to accommodation to pick up our bags. We thanked the principal of the school for hosting us and made way to the airport. A very unique and excellent tour for the whole group and the PIF guides. We thank everyone for attending. Keep an eye out for photobooks that will soon be published! :)



Pacifica Cultural Night

As part of its efforts to build bridges between communities, our foundation organized a Pacifica cultural night. The Little Pearls Educare Centre made every effort to invite students, teachers, families and friends from the Pacifica to showcase their culture (and dance) to the audience. Ex-MP's Ross Robertson and Dr. Ashraf Choudhary also joined us for the evening.

Members from Tonga, Samoa, Fiji and, Niue communities were present at the cultural night which proved to be very successful. Little Pearls director Taner Basar began the night by welcoming everybody and calling on stage the performers. All four Pacific performances executed their dances wonderfully in turn, and were a delight to watch. Pacific representatives also used the stage to introduce some items such as mats and fans from their own culture.

Mr. Robertson spoke highly of the Pearl of the Islands Foundation in organizing these events. As a resident of South Auckland, he believes the work undertaken is truly respectable in achieving peace and support between communities.

Our organisation gifted those who performed and spoke on stage with a bag of gifts. Food made and brought by generous volunteers and the Women's Platform were then enjoyed. We thank everyone for attending and hope to see a great crowd once again at a future cultural night.



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