

# Pearl of the Islands Foundation

Newsletter Issue Number : 13

P E A R L S O F W I S D O M N E W S L E T T E R



One of our Ramadan Community Iftar dinners

One of the busiest periods of the year has passed by. Pearl of the Islands Foundation has organised and hosted multiple Ramadan Iftar dinners during July. Some were held at our community centre in Newmarket, and others at individual families' homes of our volunteers and staff who wished to share the love and gratitude to friends and family. A brief overview of the events with photos are outlined throughout the newsletter. The main programme being the Parliament Ramadan Iftar dinner which saw very important guests attend.

We are also continuing our Saturday school and have successfully completed a holiday school programme during the most recent holidays. Eid al-Fitr was celebrated among friends and family. Eid al-Adha is also fast approaching.

We thank the continued support of our valued members and volunteers for building bridges between groups.

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## Ramadan Academia Iftar dinner

A Friendship & Dialogue Ramadan Iftar dinner took place in our Auckland based office. Guests included a number of academic professionals including professors, and doctors among other distinguished guests that took the time to join us in a community spirited Iftar dinner. Following the call to prayer, guests were invited to break their fast as soup was served.

Our keynote speaker for the night, Prof Douglas Pratt was invited to share his views on fasting and the night. He began his words with the following, “The inception of a fast was a stroke of genius. How better to draw together diverse people than to offer the challenge and make it a part of the pillar of your faith.”

The Waikato University professor is an expert in the study of religion. Prof Pratt further expressed the togetherness the month of Ramadan encourages, “You feel the pains of hunger and you suffer together... And then you break the fast. This was the beginning of social cohesion. One of the elements that the prophet Muhammed (pbuh) brought into the religious context of Arabia of his day was the recovery of the belief of the one supreme God, Allah.”

We thank all the guests for attending and the volunteers for their efforts in making the dinner a memorable one. **A detailed report of the event can be found on our website at [www.pif.org.nz](http://www.pif.org.nz)**



## *Ramadan ANZAC Iftar dinner*

Participants from previous ANZAC Study Tours were invited to an Iftar dinner held in our office in Newmarket, to share the generosity and spirit of Ramadan to our wider friends and family.

The Adhan (Call to Prayer) was announced and the fasting session for the day came to an end. Soup was then served. Main meals were provided in a buffet style manner.

Our valued board member Pauline Cornwell shared her memories from when Taner first joined her school as a teacher aide. She detailed the positive impact he had on a particular student.

Marissa Ramlu and Mike Wade were the teachers that supervised the students on this year's trip. They took turns in speaking of their involvement in the tour. Marissa emphasized the relationship bonding with her pupils over the 2 week period was a special experience. Ms Ramlu further stated that the Turkish hospitality was second to none at the destinations visited.

Teacher Moreen Hedley took part in the 2014 tour. She claimed that the tour widened their worldview, encouraging her to visit Turkey again with her husband this year. The Manurewa Intermediate staff member expressed gratitude to the school and the foundation for making it all happen. She was quite distraught about the recent attacks and the impact it has had in Turkey.

We thank our guests, members, and volunteers for attending. We look forward to hosting you at future events! **A detailed report of the event can be found on our website at [www.pif.org.nz](http://www.pif.org.nz)**



## Ramadan Friendship & Dialogue Iftar Dinner

Pearl of the Islands Foundation (PIF) held its 8th annual Intercultural Ramadan Iftar Dinner at the Parliament House during the fasting month of Ramadan. Ministers, MPs, CEOs, race relations commissioner, mayor of Wellington, NGO representatives, high commissioners, ambassadors, consul generals, directors, doctors, religious leaders, teachers, musical performers, professionals, volunteers, refugees, and fellow members of PIF made a spiritual 'breaking of the fast' even more so meaningful.

A colourful and respected individual, former TV presenter George Donikian was our Master of Ceremony for the night. He initiated the programme and welcomed the guests. PIF director Taner Basar was the first to take the platform. He welcomed everyone and thanked co-host MP Kanwaljit Bakshi for the opportunity of organising this programme in the Parliament House.

Mr. Basar explained, "Ramadan is also about community building. Although NZ is a very multicultural community, we could be even more united by establishing bridges or peace islands, closing the gap on distances and differences by having more similar community gatherings to break the stereotypes and the barriers for future generations." He continued to strongly condemn the terrible acts of terrorism that has occurred in the past several days. **A detailed report of the event can be found on our website at [www.pif.org.nz](http://www.pif.org.nz)**



## *Ramadan Friendship & Dialogue Iftar Dinner*

A Friendship & Dialogue Ramadan Iftar dinner took place in our Auckland based office. MP's, advisory board members, academicians, professionals, community leaders, PIF members, and volunteers were present in our final Iftar dinner for 2016.

Advisory Board member and former MP Ashraf Choudhary stated, "PIF organisation has been active for the past 10 years, I've been privileged to be an associate of this organisation since then."

He continued his words with the following, "First as an MP, we started organising Ramadan Iftar dinners in Parliament in 2008. I'm delighted that this tradition is still carrying on. The whole idea is to engage with New Zealanders from all walks of life and interact with one another. The whole purpose here is to engage in intercultural dialogue with other communities, let them know of what PIF does."

Labour Member of Parliament Carmel Sepuloni thanked PIF for the invitation, "Thank you for the opportunity to say a few words and the invitation. It's a really welcoming space. It's important that we have an understanding of the different religious and ethnic groups. I've appreciated the explanation as to why you fast. It's a pleasure to be here." **A detailed report of the event can be found on our website at [www.pif.org.nz](http://www.pif.org.nz)**



## Ramadan Friendship & Dialogue Iftar Dinner

PIF shared the generosity and love of Ramadan with Iftars open to members, friends and family in our community. Among those that joined us included NGO representatives, teachers, researchers, directors, fellow members, families, and children. As the call to prayer was announced, soup was served. We also witnessed our friends perform a Maori and Fijian prayer.

A valued Little Pearls staff member spoke of her experiences when we visited the Mangere Refugee Resettlement Centre last week to distribute food aid parcels. Tessa Lokeni stated that her involvement in volunteering to distribute food parcels had a great positive impact on her. Akesa Beratabua was invited to the stage to also express her thoughts, "I thank the Little Pearls (educare centre) and the foundation here tonight for treating us like we are family and inviting us here."

IFLC 2016 participant Daetona Rawiri's family had the opportunity to visit Australia for a week. His father, Doug mentioned that the highlight was attending the International Festival of Language and Culture and the visit to an NGO's office.

"Colours of the World' was what it was all about. It was an amazing event that these people (had) put on. We watched these kids from all over the world perform and they were all wonderful. We done a few extras (activities) that the boys (my son) didn't do. One of those was visiting ARO (Australian Relief Organization). I was nudging my wife here going what amazing these people are. What you Turkish people have and what you brought to New Zealand is something we need to hold on to. All the humanitarian aid is all done by support by the community. It's wonderful to be part of such a loving caring family." **A detailed report of the event can be found on our website at [www.pif.org.nz](http://www.pif.org.nz)**



## *2016 Ramadan Home Iftar dinners*

The diverse heritage of all our guests that have joined us in our home Iftars made us appreciate how well New Zealand has embraced diversity and accepted people from all walks of life. This was a key feature of all our discussions during the month of Ramadan.

All our dinners were a fantastic offering to truly manifest Turkish culture and Muslim behaviour of accepting others. PIF hosts treated guests like royalty with great food in all the Iftar dinners. Stories and intercultural dialogue warmed up the halls and living rooms during a relatively chilly Auckland winter season.

During these troubling times sustained dialogue is truly the only way forward. It should be embraced by us all in a positive manner. We thank all our guests and hosts for making Ramadan particularly eventful and for producing experiences we could all appreciate and remember.



## *July Holiday School Programme*

Our termly school holiday programme continued through the 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.

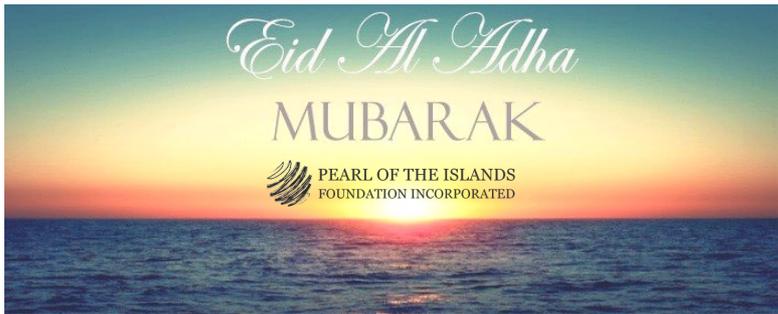
Activities included stardome, bowling, cinemas, laser tag, and going to the park. Students that attended our school holiday events spent their time in a fun and interesting manner, while also enhancing their knowledge.

We thank all those who attended and would also like to pass our gratitude to volunteers at the event.

## *Eid al-Fitr (Ramazan Bayrami)*

Following numerous Iftar dinners held during Ramadan including home Iftars, Eid al-Fitr marked the end of the holy month. Close friends and family were invited to celebrate the occasion in our office based in Newmarket. Our talented members and volunteers brought along many delicious treats to share.

In such events we are able to meet new people and form long-lasting relationships. We hope that Eid al-Fitr provides the opportunity to bring peace and unity all around the world.



*Eid Al Adha*  
**MUBARAK**

 PEARL OF THE ISLANDS  
FOUNDATION INCORPORATED

**FEAST OF SHARING**

Join us at for a reception in our community centre!

**Date:** 17 September 2016  
**Time:** 13.30-15.30  
**Address:** Pearl Centre, Level 1, 404 Khyber Pass Road  
Newmarket, Auckland  
**RSVP:** Confirm attendance to [info@pif.org.nz](mailto:info@pif.org.nz)



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