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PEARL OF THE ISLANDS FOUNDATION Inc.

Newsletter Issue Number : 04

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



PIF Ramadan Iftar Dinners

In this winter/spring edition of the Pearl of Wisdom newsletter, the foremost event(s) organized by Pearl of the Islands Foundation were the Iftar Dinners. In the holy month of Ramadan, Muslims fast from sunrise to sunset to understand how it feels like to experience hunger and thirst, leading to an appreciation of what we are blessed with. The fast is 'broken' at Iftar. Each one of our Platforms had the pleasure of hosting a number of Iftars, and these will be presented in the newsletter.

Other activities that PIF undertook in the past few months include our Turkish stall at Silo Park, Eid celebrations after the holy month of Ramadan, the July Pearl Holiday School Programme, and much more inside.

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PIF Iftar at NZ Parliament

The Pearl of the Islands Foundation has been organizing Ramadan Iftars (Dinner) every year since 2008. The Turkish based body continued their tradition this year at the New Zealand Parliament with Katrina Shanks and William Sio as co-hosts. The Iftar attracted over a hundred high status guests including MP's, ambassadors, high commissioners and religious leaders. The guests who were present came from contrasting ethnic backgrounds and belonged to different faiths.



The program initiated with co-host Katrina Shanks presenting her opening speech. Shanks, who is also co-chair of the Turkey – New Zealand Parliament Friendship Group, appreciated the effort PIF put in to allow such a wonderful event to take place.



The program continued with Turkish Ambassador, Damla Yesim Say delivering her speech. Say stressed the importance of maintaining interpersonal relations during the Holy Month of Ramadan. Yesim Say claimed they were aiming to improve relations between the two countries which were once enemies in WWI. In these efforts to enhance relations, Say said the greatest project is the Gallipoli 100th year anniversary to be celebrated in many countries particularly Turkey and New Zealand.



Advisory board chairman Dr. Ashraf Choudhary announced during his speech, that in the aftermath of the Australian trip with other advisory board members, he admired the activities of PIF. He expressed, "As time passes, I believe we are going to be more successful" and concluded by celebrating all the Muslims' month of Ramadan.



Dialogue Platform Coordinator Kerem Caliskan, explained the importance of Ramazan and dialogue in his keynote speech. He also read out Fethullah Gulen's article in last month's Fountain magazine "What it means to be human"

The night proceeded with this year's Dialogue Award being presented to Don McIver. This year for the first time Don McIver initiated and participated in a jointly organized by the Journalists and Writers Foundation ANZAC - Turkish friendship panel and was entitled to receive this award.



PIF CEO Hasan Demirbas was the final speaker on the impressive night as the program came to an end with individual appreciations to each guest for their attendance.



PIF's Annual Auckland Iftar

The Auckland Iftar at the Sudimo Hotel on the 28th of July followed the Ramadan Dinner that took place in Parliament, which PIF also hosted. We extended a warm welcome and invited the general public who were interested in taking part in this pleasant event. The dinner program, coordinated by the Intercultural Dialogue branch of PIF drew in many high profile invitees along with our other guests and friends from different faiths and cultures.



After everyone was seated, the night kicked off with Education Platform Director Taner Basar's opening speech. Mr Basar expressed his gratitude to all the guests for attending the dinner, "Thank you for your continued support that has encouraged us to organize such an evening for the fourth time." He mentioned the role of Ramadan in Islam and how it gives reason for friends and families to come together and enjoy each other's company, which is also PIF's essence.



Su'a William Sio MP, who was unable to attend the Wellington Dinner, appreciated the effort PIF put in to allow such a wonderful event to take place. Sio emphasizing on how important maintaining relations is pointed that the Turkish community is doing precisely that.



Dialogue Platform Director Kerem Caliskan, explained the importance of Ramazan and dialogue in his keynote speech. He also read out Fethullah Gulen's article in last month's Fountain magazine "What it means to be human".



Other key speakers also presented their speeches throughout the program and floor reflections gave the opportunity for guests to share their thoughts and opinions.

The evening came to an end as CEO of the Pearl of the Islands Foundation Hasan Demirbas appreciated everyone for their attendance.





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PHSP July 2012

The Pearl Holiday School Programme was held during the July school holidays at the Pearl Center. Students varied in ages from 4-16 all from different backgrounds in the two week long PIF organization.



PWS Shared Dinner at Pearl Centre

Pearl of the Islands Education Platform hosted an Iftar Dinner for the parents and guardians from Pearl Weekend School. The Education Platform organizes shared Lunches every term since it commenced early this year. Iftar could be considered as a Shared Dinner. The aim of this program is to inform parents about the foundation's activities and how it operates. But, the main purpose is to reinforce the existing bonds between students, teachers, PIF volunteers and parents.





PJF at SILO Park

The Pearl of the Islands Foundation was invited to participate in the 'SILO "Weird" Festival' on the 1st of July following the success of the Auckland Intercultural Festival. The Women's Platform members were responsible for setting up the Turkish Stall and to lay out all the delicious Turkish food and sweets they prepared prior to the event.



WP Hosts Iftar Dinners

Members of the Women's Platform hosted a number of Iftar Dinners during the month of Ramadan to share the celebrations with friends and family.



Breast Cancer Awareness Seminar at Pearl Centre



Pink Ribbon to support Breast Cancer Awareness week was held at the Pearl Centre hosted by Women's Platform. Helen Wong and Miriam Gabriel from Breast Screen Aotearoa presented the informative seminar.



**YOUTH
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Students explore Rotorua

The Youth Group members headed down south to Rotorua to explore its natural wonders during the term 3 break. The trip that was coordinated by Abdullah Torun, involved riding the luge, sightseeing such as natural hot spring waters and eating Turkish kebab. PIF Director Taner Basar supervised the students and made sure they had a great time to return back to school with a motivated attitude.



PIF Iftar for the Turkish Community

The Pearl of the Islands Foundation hosted yet another Iftar in Auckland. A large number of the Turkish community living in New Zealand attended the Iftar Dinner prepared by male volunteers, held in the Pearl Centre.



Eid-ul-Fitr Celebrations

Fasting is over and Ramadan has come to an end. The Pearl of the Islands Foundation celebrated Ramadan Eid with the Turkish and Muslim community at the Pearl Centre.





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PIF Advisory Board travels to Australia

Members of the Pearl of the Islands Foundation Advisory Board Dr Ashraf Choudary, Ms Pauline Cornwell, Mr Murat Basturkmen and PIF's executive representatives CEO H. Cihan Demirbas, Directors Taner Basar and Kerem Caliskan travelled to Melbourne. They met academics Dr Salih Yucel from Monash University and Dr Ismail Albayrak from National Australian Catholic University. They exchanged intercultural and interfaith information during their visit. The group also had the opportunity to visit Isik College campuses which were initially established by the Turkish community in Melbourne and facilitated its growth from its inaugural enrolment of 28 students in 1997 to over 2,000 students today. Honorary president of Selimiye Foundation Ibrahim Dellal and Principals from these schools welcomed PIF representatives and briefed their visions and missions of the Victorian multicultural schools.



Avondale Anzac Tour Reflection Dinner

Avondale Intermediate School hosted a reflection dinner following the 'Spirit of Anzac Tour' organized by the Pearl of the Islands Foundation. Approximately half a dozen Avondale Intermediate students were able to experience Turkey and witness for themselves the spiritual grounds of Canakkale (Gallipoli) during the Easter school holidays.





Welcome Ambassador

Pearl of the Islands Foundation visited the newly arrived Turkish ambassador Damla Yesim Say in Wellington.

The courtesy visit by PIF CEO Hasan Cihan Demirbas and Dialogue Coordinator Kerem Caliskan could also be viewed as a welcome greeting to the newly appointed ambassador who only recently came to New Zealand.

Little Pearls coming soon!

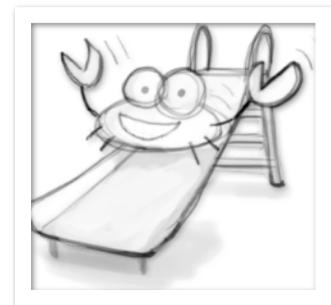
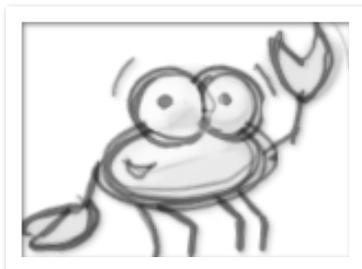
The resource consent is granted to Pearl Educare LTD to establish PIF's first community based childcare centre at 2A Lorraine Avenue, Owairaka/Mt Albert. The centre will be owned and managed by the Foundation as a non-profit charitable trust to provide better services & facilities for community purposes. Little Pearls Educare centre is planned to open in mid-2013 and will serve 33 children up to 5 years old. Renovations are scheduled to begin this summer, with opening set for the second half of 2013.

Pearls Educare LTD aims to create economically self-sustaining, high-quality, affordable early childhood service in a safe friendly environment to meet the needs of the local community and the Turkish Community.



Contact us contact@littlepearls.org.nz to find out more and to register your interest.

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