



Media Release **venue correction**

Thursday, 8th October 2009

ITALIAN GENERATIONS SHARE GNOCCHI & CROCHET

Students of Sacred Heart Primary School will next week learn hands-on the art of gnocchi preparation with elderly of the Spectrum Migrant Resource Centre (SMRC)'s Italian Planned Activity Group (PAG), as part of an innovative project to foster the sharing and continuation of traditions between the older and the younger generations.

The project, which was recently funded by the Department of Health and Ageing (DOHA), will involve a group of primary students visiting the elderly at their Day Care Centre to exchange stories and culturally specific activities with the elderly members of the Italian PAG. The Italian PAG will visit Sacred Hearth Primary School at a later date.

"The kids will learn the art of gnocchi and traditional meatball making directly from the elders, in very small groups. The project is a great way for the young people to rediscover the wealth of knowledge of a different time and place. But it's also an important mutual opportunity to bring each other in touch with each other's wisdom, to bring their two worlds together and bridge the generation gap," said **Ms Joan Manley, Co-ordinator of the Italian PAG.**

"Many of the elderly at SMRC's Italian PAG have a wealth of knowledge and experiences that they wanted to pass onto the younger generations, but they have been unable to. Often settlement in a new country also leads to changes to the traditional family life dynamics, and the extended family is replaced by the nuclear family. Also the traditional method of passing on that knowledge has sometimes not been possible due to their parents migration to Australia. So, here we have the perfect match: two generations keen to share and learn from each other's experience," explained **Ms Manley.**

"The pressures of settling in a new country also add to the elderly not being involved actively with the younger generation. In the process of adopting the 'new culture', many young people seem to undervalue the role of grandparents. The project is a great pathway for the young people to bridge the generation gap", said **Ms Nirmala Abraham, SMRC Aged & Disability Services Manager.**

The successful pilot project, commenced 1 year ago with the Macedonian PAG and has been funded by DOHA to also include the Italian and Vietnamese groups who are well represented in the northern part of Melbourne. Another meeting has been organised for the end of the month between students of Vietnamese backgrounds and elderly from the Vietnamese PAG.

Activities (small groups of students participate in rotation):

- Preparing gnocchi;
- Learning how to crochet;
- Learning Italian card games;
- Lunch and conversation.

Photo Opportunity:

EVENT: Italian Inter-generational Program
DATE & TIME: Monday 19th October 2009 - 10am to 1.30pm
VENUE: Clifton Respite Cottage, 7 Clifton Grove, Preston

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