

# Camp Calendar

## APRIL

### Edmund Rice Camps Annual General Meeting

Tuesday 30th April  
Treacy Centre, Parkville .  
Drinks at 6pm. Meeting com-  
mences 7.30pm  
RSVP to Mark:  
eo@ercvic.com

## MAY

### disCONNECT2 reCONNECT

Friday 10th – Sunday 12th  
May  
ERC major fundraiser

### Queen's Birthday Camp

Registration Due  
Friday 10th May

### New Leader Training Day

Sunday 19th May  
St Joseph's College Geelong  
11am – 4pm  
RSVP to Mark: eo@ercvic.com

### Winter Camps Volunteer Registrations Due

Friday 31st May

## JUNE

### Queen's Birthday Pre- Camp Day

2nd June 1-5pm  
7 Amberley Way Lower Plenty

### Queen's Birthday Family Camp

7-10th June. Leaders arrive  
5pm  
7 Amberley Way Lower Plenty

## JULY

### Winter Kids Camp\*

1-5th July

### Winter Family Camp\*

7-12 July

### Run Melbourne Fund- raiser\*

21 July

\*Stay tuned for more details  
for these events

# www.ercvic.com



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Camps

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# Rice

# Grains



A publication for the ERC Victoria Network

No. 91, Autumn 2013



RICE GRAINS

Contributors

Lisa Grass, Alireza, Miranda Koroknai, Brenton Carey, Alice Cronin, Connor Burke, Candice Brittain, Mark Monahan.

Special thanks

Jordan Wren for letting us feature her ERI blog

Julia Parker for co-editing this issue

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All Eddie Ricers are encouraged to be involved in Rice Grains. Please send contributions, suggestions and fan mail to Anna Cerreto (Editor) at [anna.cerreto@hotmail.com](mailto:anna.cerreto@hotmail.com)

Photos from Labour Day and Indigenous Kids Camps were unable to be included for privacy reasons.

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## Feature

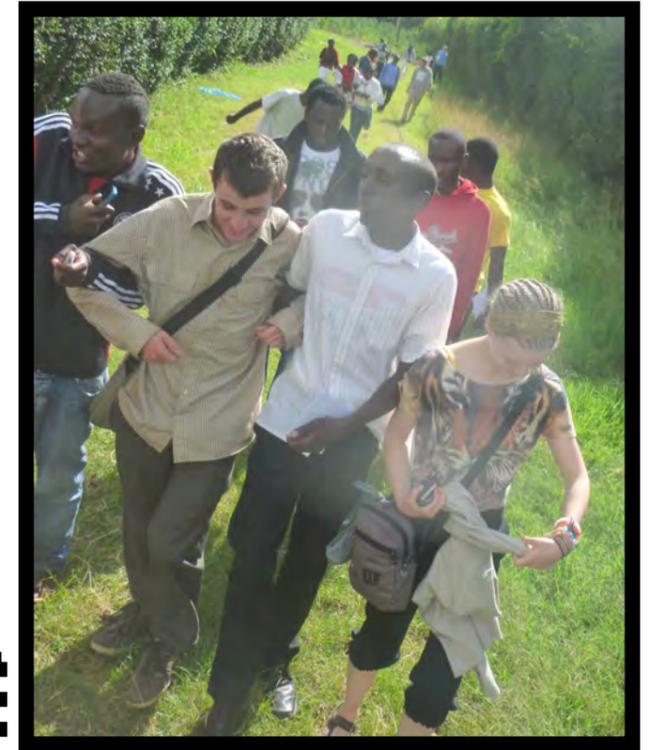
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Sam Beard and I had the joyous experience of teaching at St Juliet's school in Kibera slum as our Nairobi placement. The school has the most basic of facilities and didn't feel all too stable upstairs but that did not hinder the enthusiasm, the fun and the excitement for learning the kids showed. Our camp skills - songs and games - came in handy as we sang our lungs out with well over 100 smiling kids in the schoolyard at recess time. In the classroom we taught English, Maths and answered many questions about ourselves and Australia. We were impressed by the kids' eagerness to learn and their optimistic outlook considering their basic surroundings. The memories of the fun and smiling faces of St Juliet's certainly stick in my memory as a highlight of the Immersion.

- Connor Burke



# Tutembee Pamoja 2014

Tutembee Pamoja will be taking place in January 2014. We will be holding an information evening during May and details will be up on the ERC Facebook page in the coming weeks. For more information or to express an interest in being a part of Tutembee Pamoja in 2014, please contact Brenton

[brenton@amberley.org.au](mailto:brenton@amberley.org.au)



# Tutembe Pamoja: East African Immersion

Chances are, if you're reading this, you've got the Eddie Rice Camps bug. Somehow the idea of being outside your comfort zone, tired, perhaps a bit dirty and spending time with remarkable kids and families has gotten under your skin. The great thing about Tutembe Pamoja (meaning 'we walk together' in Swahili) is getting together with young Kenyans and Tanzanians that share our passion to volunteer in the community and run Eddie Rice Camps. Here are a couple of reflections that capture a snapshot of the laughter, learning and challenges that come with these experiences. If you're keen to hear more stories look out for our upcoming story sharing evening - details will be announced on the ERC Facebook page in the near future.

- **Brenton Carey**



I was at my happiest during our downtime with the Karibu youth group. We spent just over a week working with them and, every day, we'd spend a couple of hours sitting around drinking 'sodas'. Whether it was after a long morning in the Kibera slum or relaxing in the stunning 'Aboretum' park, there was nothing better than opening a glass bottle of strange-flavoured Fanta and chatting to the young Kenyan volunteers. It was during these times that I learnt so much of what I now know about East African culture, history and faith. It was also during these times that I made some deep and lasting friendships, ones that continue to this day. Often I'd check the time and find that hours had flown by. For those hours, I forgot that I was tired, hot, hungry, that my feet were sore and that I was in a foreign country. I felt so at home sitting on the grass, sharing stories and jokes with my new friends. It felt as though nothing was off-limits. There was an immediate openness with them. I felt welcomed, like I belonged, even though I clearly stood out. These times brought about special moments that will forever stay with me, whether it be Lucy braiding my hair, Leonard showing me he can open bottles with his teeth, or Freddy offering me the whole of Kibera for my hand in marriage. These people are so special to me and I am still in contact with them to this day. We still discuss the same things, share the same jokes and reflect on our mutual memories. Only now, we're not sitting side-by-side on a humid day in Nairobi, we're separated by countries and seas. The Immersion was an experience like no other and has changed my life. I long for the day I'm able to return to East Africa and continue to learn and make a difference, as well as visit the new friends I hold so close to my heart.

- **Alice Cronin**

I would like this to be the focus of my reflection on some recent experiences.

My family and I were lucky enough to attend the Labour Day Long Weekend Family Camp. This camp will remain as one of the most significant camps in my time with ERC as a volunteer and Executive Officer. The friendships I formed with the families and the joy I felt as I watched my daughter India tell Alireza about Captain Hook and sharks were indescribable.

*I just don't understand why the young men in this centre are being treated the way they are.*

Just after this camp I organised and facilitated a gathering for all Edmund Rice Camp staff around Oceania. The group to visit Melbourne Immigration Transit Accommodation (MITA) with Caterina and Alireza. The visitation was just like a camp: people spending quality time with other people – the game of cards was brilliant. On the drive home, one of the ERC staff asked me how I felt; I said I couldn't respond because if I did I would bawl my eyes out or scream and burst into a rage of anger. I just don't understand why the young men in this centre are being treated the way they are. Why...why....will someone give me a bloody good reason why?

## *from the EO*

*I find it inconceivable that people can show such little compassion.*

This week I listened to the radio coverage of the young men from MITA who are withholding from eating and drinking. The brutality of the emails and text messages sent in by the listeners disturbed me so much – I didn't think anyone could think or feel this way. I find it inconceivable that people can show such little compassion and lack of respect for one another.

As I write this I have Eva Cassidy's version of "Somewhere Over The Rainbow" playing in the background. My thoughts, emotions and memories bring me to tears as I still just don't understand why.

Writing this article hasn't enabled me to answer the question, "Why?", but it certainly has locked in my appreciation for what ERC does for all of us in the community. The impact of the camp experience is often immeasurable but can be perceived in different ways. I think you as the reader have seen how ERC brings out emotion, passion, belief and energy and provokes thought in me. I think, without that, I would be an extremely lost and shallow person, so I am thankful for this journey which has led me to wonder "Why?".

- **Mark Monahan**



Images: African Kids Camp

# Alireza's camp (Labour Day Long Weekend)

I don't know how to start because I don't usually do this kind of stuff. But even though I don't usually write, I will for ERC Vic for two reasons:

Firstly, this camp was the first camp I've done in my life and secondly, it is my first time in Australia and working with probably 50 people for four days was really good and I enjoyed it so much.

The families we worked with came from my country, Iran, and also Iraq, Afghanistan and Burma. They were really nice. But you know what? I want to tell you about Indiah, the 4 year old girl (Mark Monahan's daughter) who really impressed me by teaching me about safety at the beach on top of the light house. Actually it was the first time we met each other, on top of the lighthouse. Everyone was busy looking at the ocean and she was telling me where it is safe for swimming and where is not. That was one of the most amazing times I ever had.

And the next day, in the morning, at breakfast time, I sat next to her and she started telling me the story of Captain Hook and Peter Pan, and how they were eaten by a shark. What an incredible story! She is an awesome girl!

We played games together her brother Xavier was also there too. He was really good at playing games. That was my highlight of the camp! I know I went to the camp for the families, but for me, the most amazing experience came from spending time with Indiah, I will never forget her.

*It was a very special chance for me to connect with people and be able to give them a fun time...I know what it is like to come from that particular experience.*

The families were all very lovely. It was a very special chance for me to connect with people and be able to give them a fun time especially because I know what it is like to come from that particular experience, and it is really bad and horrible. But camp was amazing. Camp gave us the chance to have fun and forget about the bad stuff for a while.

Thank you to everyone who was at the camp, especially Indiah!

- Alireza

## Volunteer opportunities

### **Edmund Rice Asylum Seeker Project (ERASP):**

**What?** Come along to share a meal, a game of pool or a chat with people who've sought asylum now living in Melbourne

**When?** Sundays 12-3ish. Includes a delicious lunch and lots of fun and new faces!

**Where?** ERASP, meeting room behind St Ignatius Church, 326 Church St, Richmond

**How?** Keep up to date via ERASP's Facebook group, search 'Edmund Rice Asylum Seeker Project' and join! Or chat to Caterina on 0434 300 249

### **Edmund Rice St Kilda Food Van:**

**What?** Preparing food before heading off to the Gatwick Hotel; here volunteers aim to be part of developing community through talking and connecting with others, as well as giving out food.

**When?** 6-9pm Wednesdays and Fridays

**Where?** Meet at St Peter and Paul church, 377 Dorcas Street, South Melbourne

**How?** Keep up to date via the van's Facebook group, search 'Edmund Rice Food Van' and join!

And of course ERI will monitor the work, campaigns and concerns of these ambassadors. It is hoped that they will be able to draw from the expressions of the youth on issues, techniques and goals. One of these campaigns has been the 'Nine is Mine' campaign in India. Check out this link for more info: <http://nineismine.in/home>  
So if you are a Christian Brothers or Edmund Rice student, please ask your school to get involved!

My work in this has been to assist in the attraction and acceptance of teachers and their Youth Ambassador to the page, as well as to facilitate introductions, discussion and engagement of the students. The project is in the very early stages and there are many exciting things to come of it.

**April 24, 2013**

### **ERI Training session**

This week also marks ERI's annual Training in Human Rights and International Advocacy here in Geneva. So on Sunday, Cathal (another intern), Brian (director of ERI) and I ventured to the Geneva airport to pick up the 11 participants arriving

from all over the world, including the Philippines, Kenya, Papua New Guinea, Australia and India. The party is made up of teachers, social workers, and Brothers. The two-week long training will involve introductions and information sessions on the UN functions and mechanisms, sharing of each persons ministry contributions to their community, and advocacy skill-development including how to effectively collect data and compile UPR submissions. Later in the week, Cathal and myself will also be contributing to the events by providing some information on finding and using Human Rights education resources.

It is fantastic to interact with the grass-roots people who are fighting for and advocating for human rights and justice in their communities. Their presence and stories give fire and practical meaning to the talk of the UN. I hope that I will be able to post a small introduction of each participant in the days ahead. So please keep reading!

Keep reading Jordan's blog at

[jordane.wren.wordpress.com/](http://jordane.wren.wordpress.com/)

- Jordan Wren



ERI Human Rights Training participants

# Feature: Edmund Rice International

ERC Vic's very own Jordan Wren has spent the last six months as an intern with Edmund Rice International in Geneva, Switzerland.

Here's a few stories from her blog.

**March 11, 2013**

## Work

Interning with Edmund Rice International in Geneva is opening up so many doors for me both professionally and personally. The opportunity is merging the best of both worlds; a chance to interact and contribute to the advocacy work of Edmund Rice, to gain professional experience and skills, and to observe and learn from the UN processes. As well as the time to explore the beauty and mysteries of Switzerland's rugged lands!

Between attending UN sessions for the 22<sup>nd</sup> Human Rights Council, a major project for me in the office has been the launching of the Edmund Rice Youth Ambassador Facebook project.

For those of you who are not familiar with the work of Edmund Rice International, here is a very quick snapshot:



Jordan in Geneva

ERI are a non-governmental organization (NGO) jointly supported by the Christian Brothers and Presentation Brothers. These groups have an active presence in more than thirty countries and were formed from the inspirations of Blessed Edmund Rice who worked in Ireland in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century for the rights of disadvantaged children to have an education.

Today, ERI works with the global Edmund Rice Network in a rights-based approach to promote and protect children and young people, particularly in regard to education, and to work for environmental sustainability. ERI bring these issues to global attention through engagement with the United Nations in New York and Geneva where they hold Consultative Status.

The Youth Ambassador project is an arm of ERI, which intends to engage students in their advocacy work. Traditionally, issues of concern have been addressed with a 'charity' or material donation approach. While this is helpful it is often a bandaid solution that does not address the root causes. ERI would like to promote the use of advocacy approaches in the work of schools to achieve justice and equality in their communities. Advocacy can be a more effective tool to highlight the roots of issues and promote awareness of such.

There are nearly 250,000 students in hundreds of Edmund Rice schools around the world. The Youth Ambassador project aims to connect these individuals to mobilize a global effort to build a more just, sustainable and compassionate world, where all enjoy dignity, equality, freedom and full enjoyment of their human rights.

The page will be student-driven with the supervision of teachers and principals. It will be a space to interact with fellow Edmund Rice students from across the globe to share advocacy campaigns, tools, and creative ideas and for the discussion of issues that are of concern to them and their community.

# Lisa's camp (African Kids Camp)

Being a teacher, my career tends to take me on many unique journeys that remind me of how incredible kids can be. I consider myself lucky to be in a position where I can develop relationships with them, teach them what I know and watch how they grow and respond to life's experiences. However, I'm even luckier that the connections my career has provided me with led me to participating in Edmund Rice Camps.

The African Kids' camp was my first camp, and I took on the role of camp coach. Understandably, I was quite nervous about and wary of the challenges ahead of me. However, as soon as I walked into Amberley and was greeted by the Exec team I knew these feelings were unwarranted. They were supportive, enthusiastic and incredibly helpful. It was meeting the kids on day one and seeing their beaming smiles and eagerness to participate in games and activities, as well as to meet and bond with each other that showed me how much potential these camps have to make a positive impact on their lives.

An experience that really highlighted the wonderful impact camps have on the kids came when one of the boys was having a bad day. I approached another boy and asked him if he knew him, but he didn't. I suggested that he introduce himself and ask the other boy if he would like to join in with his games.



Before I could finish my sentence he had already run over to the other boy and started a conversation with him. Immediately they were both smiling and laughing. This act really illustrated how eager the kids were not only to enjoy the experiences camp had to offer, but also to help each other get the most out of the opportunities.

I caught up with this boy on the last day of camp and asked him to reflect on his experience. He responded, "I have had a really good time with you on camp. I have made lots of new friends and I have never smiled so much." This was the vibe amongst all of the kids on the last day. I walked away from this conversation feeling absolutely chuffed that I was part of a team that helped make so much of an impact on not only this little boy's life, but the lives of 27 other kids.

My camp experience could not have gone so smoothly and enjoyably if it wasn't for the amazing group of leaders that I had the opportunity to camp with. From day one I felt as though I was surrounded by friends and part of a close-knit and supportive team. I never once heard a leader complain or say no and there was never anywhere I could look without seeing a smile. Thank you to all involved for making my camp enjoyable and memorable.

I'm lucky to be a teacher, but I'm even luckier to be a teacher who has camped, and I can't wait to camp again.

- Lisa Grass

# Miranda's camp (Indigenous Kids Camp)

Hey there all you Eddie Ricers! As all of you probably know, camps take you on an amazing journey that is different each time you do it. I have only been camping for a year now and each camp I have done has come with its challenges, but they were definitely outweighed by the rewards.

Over the Easter break I was lucky enough to be a leader on my second Indigenous Kids' Camp. The Indigenous Kids' Camp is different from any other camp I have been because of the immediate bond all of the kids share knowing that all the other participants on camp are just like them.

*Everyone here, they are all my cousins, even you old people!*

All the kids have a certain pride for their Aboriginality. The cultural day brings out the best in the kids - the way they all come out of their shell to show everyone who they are is inspiring. Camp gives the kids a safe and judgement-free environment to show their pride by learning traditional dances, body painting and traditional games like *Marngrook* and basket weaving.

The highlights of the week for me were seeing kids excel: the tiniest girl having the courage to be pulled up on the giant swing; the incredible art that the kids were able to do; the talent everyone displayed at the talent show; the skills a boy showed at the formal dinner; doing 7 back flips in a row on the trampolines. Developing relationships with the kids over the week and seeing them do things they never thought they could is something that will make a leader feel amazing every time.

One of the boys on camp who wasn't in my group said something to me on the last day that really made me think. He said "Everyone here, they are all my cousins, even you old people". This comment made me think, as well as laugh about, how everyone on camp is like one big family. Camping with so many amazing volunteers has made me feel a part of something bigger and better than what I could ever imagine. Having had the opportunity to go on camps with some of the most amazing young adults and incredible kids, and to be able to say by the end of the week that we were like a family, is something that I will cherish forever.

- **Miranda Koroknai**

## Camp Kitchen: Choc Balls

Choc balls—tastes like camp!

Try this camp cooking favourite at home.

Preparation Time: 15 min

### You'll need:

1 packet of Marie biscuits, crushed

1/2 cup desiccated coconut

2 tbsp cocoa

1 tin condensed milk

Extra coconut for rolling

### Method:

Mix all the ingredients together, ensuring you eat most of the mixture!

Roll into balls and cover in coconut

Chill in the fridge

Enjoy!



# DisConnect to ReConnect



Imagine what would happen if Australia got a small taste of the power of camps by spending time with each other 1:1, face to face.

**DisCONNECT to reCONNECT** is a national event organised by Eddie Rice Camps from around Australia. We have big dreams, here they are:

- Raise awareness about the importance of offline, face to face CONNECTION
- Raise awareness of the amazing work of Eddie Rice Camps
- Raise funds for camps.

To reach these aims, ERC Vic needs:

- 150 people signed up and fundraising
- A total fundraising target of \$30,000
- Connecting with over 400 new people who want to find out more about camps.
- Achieving mainstream publicity for ERC VIC in television and major print media

I told you were being ambitious! Here's when this tidal wave of connection will occur:

**Start:** 7pm on Friday the 10<sup>th</sup> of May 2013

**Finish:** 7pm on Sunday the 12<sup>th</sup> of May 2013

**disCONNECT** and turn off your screens (Mobile, TV, Computer, Tablet, Gaming console)

**reCONNECT** with your family, friends and community, offline, 1:1, face to face.



There are two ways to get involved:

### The 48 hr Challenge

For 48 hours you will turn off all your screens and use your time to connect offline with family, friends and your community.

### Host a Time Out Event

Can't go offline for 48 hours? You can still be part of this amazing movement! Host a Time Out event. Ask your guests to disconnect for the duration of your event (minimum of 2 hours) while you reconnect the old school way – face to face, off line. Collect donations from your guests as a way of supporting the great work of ERCA.

### We need your help!

For us to reach our goals we will need every Eddie Rice camper to get behind this event. Here's what you can do:

- Get some more info and sign up at our website: [www.d2r.org.au](http://www.d2r.org.au)
- Share links to the website with friends, family, classmates, workmates and on social media along with your comments on why this is a great idea.
- Get your school or workplace involved! Contact me [Candice@ercvic.com](mailto:Candice@ercvic.com) for additional resources.

- *Candice Brittain, Fundraising and Marketing Coordinator*