

VOLUNTEERING IN THE ACT

LIST OF ORGANISATIONS

See 'Young Lawyers Volunteering in Canberra' Article in *Obiter Dictum* Vol 19 Autumn 2007

The Young Lawyers Committee is working on putting together a list of volunteer organisations in the ACT. If you volunteer for an organisation that needs more help, tell us about it! Below are some of the great organisations you can volunteer with in the ACT.

Women's Legal Centre

The Women's Legal Centre is a community legal centre for women in Canberra and the surrounding area. The Centre is run by women and aims to improve women's access to justice by:

- Providing legal information and advice;
- Referring to sympathetic lawyers and other support services;
- Running community legal education sessions;
- Producing information for women about their rights, the legal system and the law;
- Doing research, law reform and lobbying activities that help to remove barriers to women's access to justice.

The Centre advises on a wide range of legal problems such as:

- Divorce and separation;
- Disputes over children;
- Property settlement;
- Domestic violence;
- Child support;
- Going to court;
- Discrimination;
- Unfair dismissal;
- Other employment rights;
- Compensation for criminal injuries.

The Centre offers free, confidential telephone advice by staff solicitors Monday to Friday 9.30am to 12.00 noon. In most cases initial advice can be given by telephone. If necessary an appointment to see a lawyer is then made.

Appointments are available with staff solicitors Monday to Friday between 9am and 5pm. Appointments are also available with volunteer family law solicitors every second Tuesday evening between 5.30pm and 7pm.

Solicitors can volunteer for the Tuesday evening family law advice appointments or assist with law reform research projects. Interested solicitors should contact the co-ordinator, Rosemary Budavari on 6257 4377 or co-ordinator@womenslegalact.org.

Migrant Resource Centre

The Migrant Resource Centre (MRC) provides settlement and related advice and services to migrants, refugees and humanitarian entrants in the ACT. The MRC has been operating in Canberra for over 25 years and has a broad based membership of 56 member groups.

The MRC has a diverse range of programs:

- The Settlement Grants Program – provides settlement assistance and casework;
- The Community Development Program – provides diverse activities that assist participants to adapt to their new life in Australia;
- The Program for After School Studies (PASS) assists migrants and refugees aged 12-21 with school work and in adjusting to a new educational system.

MRC clients range in age from 12 to 87 years, come from over 60 different countries and have been in Australia from 2 days to over 50 years.

Volunteer opportunities include:

- English program - conversation group facilitators - contact Sally
- Home Tutor Program (adults) – assisting migrants to improve their English language skills (usually in the migrant's home or public library)- contact Annie
- JobPrep/Computer training - tutors help a small group of adults to learn basic computer skills, write resumes or address selection criteria, at the MRC – contact Katrina
- PASS program - assisting high school students with their school work in subject areas or with English skills, at the MRC – contact Robert

Call 6248 8577 or email mrc@mrccanberra.org.au for more info. You could also drop into our office and get more information/brochures on the programs.

Zonta Club of Canberra

The Zonta Club of Canberra follows the objects of Zonta International which are:

- To provide service at the global and local level;
- To improve the legal, political, economic, educational, health and professional status of women;
- To work for the advancement of understanding, goodwill and peace through a world fellowship of executives in business and the professions; and
- To be united internationally to foster high ethical standards, to implement service programs and to provide mutual support and fellowship for members who serve their communities and their nations.

Each year the Zonta Club of Canberra gives an award to the CIT and Canberra University, to a female student, chosen by the lecturers. The money raised for these awards comes from a street stall held at the Fyshwick markets, selling second hand books, bric-a brac, or any saleable goods, donated by members and friends.

The Zonta Club of Canberra also raises money for a local charity, which in 2006 was the ACT Hospice. The money raised came from a theatre night and a wine tasting. The charity each year is put forward by members, and if more than one charity is suggested, we take a vote.

The Club also makes and supplies breast cushions, for the cancer clinic at Calvary Hospital. A few members sew the cushions, after which, we have a fellowship evening to do the stuffing in a members home. We also donate toiletries to half way homes for women and children.

The club meets the first Wednesday of each month, bookings are essential, due to catering needs, cost is \$47. If you would like to attend our meetings, you are most welcome, we need to know by the Monday of each month.

The contact person for the Zonta Club of Canberra is Beverley Thomas Larson ((phone) 02 6241 3024, (email) bt designs@bigpond.com, (website): <http://www.zonta.org/>

The Oaktree Foundation

The Oaktree Foundation is one of the world's first entirely youth run and driven international aid and development organisations. It's a movement of passionate young people seeking to empower and equip youth in the developing world. Oaktree's mission is to empower developing communities through education in a way that is sustainable. Our vision is of young people learning through partnership. That is, young people in the developed world working alongside young people in the developing world to enable them to access educational opportunities. In doing so, we help young people in the developed world to expand their knowledge and understanding of issues of poverty and their skills in addressing these issues. The Oaktree Foundation is based around three key pillars of Young People, Education and Sustainability.

Founded in 2003 by Hugh Evans, the Young Australian of the Year for 2004, The Oaktree Foundation now has several thousand volunteers worldwide. In Australia, Oaktree's work is centered around volunteer mobilisation, advocacy, and fundraising to support the Foundation's community-based educational projects in the developing world.

Oaktree's international projects include:

- **The World Changers Academy - Durban, South Africa**
Runs Leadership & Life Skills courses in communities in and around Durban
- **Heartbeat Centre for Community Development - Mpumalanga province, South Africa**
Supports orphaned & vulnerable children in child-headed or grandparent-headed households by providing key needs such as food security, psychosocial support, community networks & educational opportunities
- **Sethani Resource Centre - The Valley of 1000 Hills, South Africa**
Provides educational facilities and opportunities for the disadvantaged youth and children of the local community
- **The East Timor Appeal**
Aims to build primary schools, run teacher training programs and fund equity-based scholarships for East Timorese youth
- **Schools for Schools**
Aims to link schools in the developing world with schools in Australia through an interactive online program that allows Australian students to communicate directly with students in the developing world

For more information please visit Oaktree's website at www.theoaktree.org

For details of volunteering opportunities please email act@theoaktree.org.

United Nations Association of Australia

The United Nations Association of Australia (UNAA) offers you the opportunity to be involved in the wide range of issues that confront the United Nations and Australia: from human rights to peace-keeping, from greenhouse gases to clean water. Not only is Australia an active member of the United Nations, but this country's Federal, State and Territory laws are, in many cases, part of Australia's international obligations. UNAA gives you a chance to be heard.

UNAA is a voluntary organisation with a wide range of opportunities for volunteers. If you have skills in IT, media and communications, events management or are simply looking for a project which interests you, UNAA is worth contacting.

If you want to have an influence on Australia's foreign policy through direct lobbying and informed meetings, [join](#) UNAA. More information is available at www.unaa.org.au or please contact Julie McKay, (email) unaaact@cyberone.com.au and (phone) 6247 4499.

Vision Australia

Vision Australia works in positive partnership with Australians who are blind, sighted, or have low vision to pursue the opportunities they choose in life.

Our mission is to create a community partnership of knowledge, skills and expertise to enrich the participation in life for people who are blind or have low vision and their families. We will ensure that the community recognises their capabilities and contributions.

Why volunteer?

By volunteering you can gain new skills and confidence, make friends and have fun while you enjoy the sense of reward that comes from really making a difference. We can help people find a position that best fulfils their interests.

How you can help

Opportunities vary according to where volunteers live, but can include:

- Supporting clients at home and in our centres
- Assisting with administrative tasks
- Working as part of the talking newspaper network
- Helping to run Vision Australia Radio
- Speaking at schools and in the community
- Narrating talking books and newspapers
- Offering library support
- Assisting with special event organisation
- Helping with recreational programs.

All Vision Australia volunteers are asked to complete a short training session before they start. This helps them to understand the needs of people who are blind or have low vision and provides an opportunity to learn new skills.

Contact us

Briony Young
Community Development Coordinator, Vision Australia
PO Box 1499 Canberra ACT 2601
(telephone) 02 6247 1000 (fax) 02 6230 5007
www.visionaustralia.org.au

St Vincent de Paul Society

The St Vincent de Paul Society objective is to deepen the Catholic faith of its members, and for them to go out to heighten their awareness of Jesus Christ by sharing themselves with the poor and co-operating in shaping a more just and compassionate community.

Membership is generally for persons of the Catholic faith, with most members working in parish based conferences visiting people in need to provide material assistance and referrals. Some conferences work in specialized areas providing assistance to refugees and youth services. If sufficient lawyers registered as migration agents were interested, there would be scope for setting up a pro bono refugee advisory service; another alternative might be to set up a homework/study help service for young people struggling on account of their limited previous schooling experience. Other established work areas are in:

- Budget Counselling;
- Drop In Centre;
- Family Care and Support; and
- Local efforts for Overseas Partnerships and Development.

Non-member volunteer opportunities exist in staffing the Society's shops, the call centre and manning the Night Patrol buses and for collectors in the annual fund raising campaigns.