

"They treat us with respect."

"You feel good when they help you."

"She helps me with everything.
I like her so much and she is
very good and kind."

"I want him to keep coming
so I can understand more."

"She is like my sister. We get
along very well. She jokes and
I joke. She talks and I talk"

PROJECT OUTCOMES

- Students receive targeted classroom assistance during periods of transition through the education system
- Students form an effective relationship with an adult mentor to build self esteem and social skills
- Students receive literacy and assignment support
- Students become more confident learners
- Schools receive additional targeted educational support
- Volunteers receive training and ongoing assistance to build their understanding of the needs of asylum seeker, refugee and humanitarian visa students.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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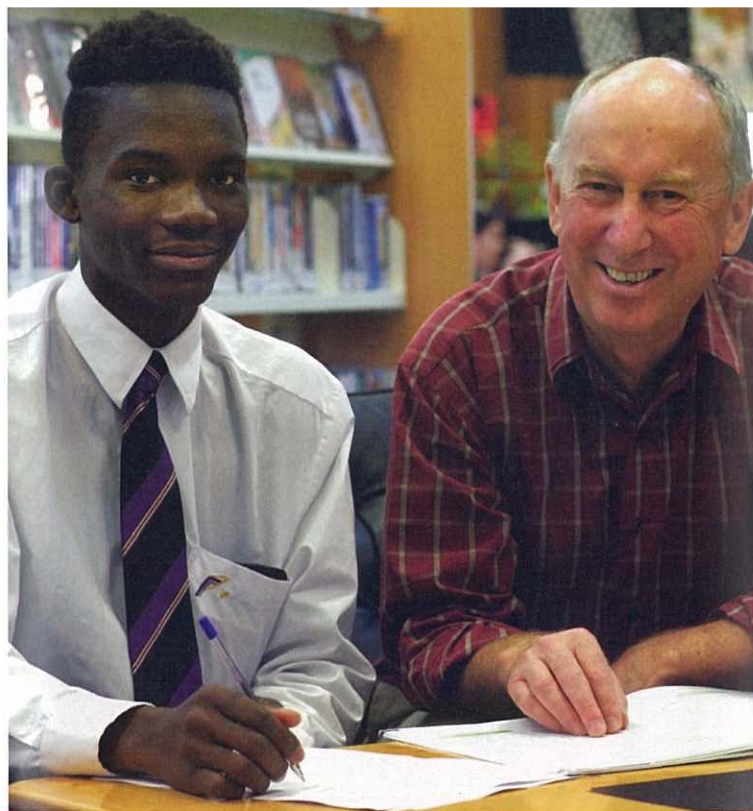
SISTERS OF MERCY
IN AUSTRALIA & PAPUA NEW GUINEA

WHAT IS MERCY CONNECT?

Mercy Connect engages trained volunteers, with an educational background, to provide additional support and mentoring to asylum seeker, refugee, humanitarian visa students at a critical time in their settlement in Australia. Families from asylum seeker, refugee and/or humanitarian backgrounds are supported through improving their children's capacity to negotiate the challenges of mainstream schooling and integrate into the wider Australian community.

WHY DO REFUGEE AND HUMANITARIAN VISA STUDENTS NEED SUPPORT?

Students from these backgrounds can often feel isolated and anxious and subsequently withdraw from classroom participation. They have to quickly adapt to academic learning as well as the expectations, rules and procedures of schools and classrooms. These challenges occur at the same time as students and their families are learning a new language and adapting to different socio-cultural expectations and living environments.



WHAT IS REQUIRED OF VOLUNTEERS?

All volunteers are required to have experience working in an educational setting, have a flexible personality and lodge a formal application. They:

- are interviewed and are subject to referee checks
- sign a contract of employment and a code of practice/ethics
- attend an initial two day Mercy Works training program covering topics such as the refugee journey, settlement process and barriers to learning for asylum seeker, refugee and humanitarian visa students
- teach literacy and numeracy
- receive follow-up training and are provided with additional information on external research and projects related to the educational needs of these students.

Currently, the project takes place in Catholic and Department of Education Primary and Secondary schools in Sydney, Melbourne, Ballarat and Perth.

*"You can ask any question you want.
She can answer it. I like her,
I feel comfortable around her.
You don't have to be shy"*

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF VOLUNTEERS?

Volunteers work with asylum seeker, refugee and humanitarian visa students for a minimum of three hours per week for one school year, focusing on assisting the educational transition of students. The key responsibilities of the volunteer are to assist newly arrived asylum seeker, refugee and humanitarian visa students in their learning by providing support that nurtures student wellbeing and self-esteem. Volunteers provide literacy and numeracy support and assist students in understanding classroom instructions, assessment tasks and in organising their school work.

