



PICAC CONNECTIONS

The quarterly newsletter of the Queensland *Partners in Culturally Appropriate Care (PICAC) Team*

WINTER 2016

Aims:

- To equip aged care services to deliver culturally appropriate care to older people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities.
- To ensure the special needs of older people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities are identified and addressed.

PICAC Services include:

- ◆ Training for aged care service providers
- ◆ Information on aged care services for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities
- ◆ Cultural resources and support for service providers and communities.

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CELEBRATING SENIORS! WE CAN COME TO YOU!

Amanda Bowden, PICAC Project Officer

PICAC Presentation for Residents – Yes, we can come to your facility or respite centre!

As you are probably well aware, Queensland celebrated Seniors Week from 13-21 August. To commemorate this occasion, PICAC was kindly asked by RSL Care at Murrumba Downs to bring an interactive presentation to its Residents. The Residents wanted to learn about the ways Seniors in other cultures are respected and honoured.

A group of about 30 keenly interested Residents and a few staff members turned up to hear about the high status of Seniors in 'traditional' societies across parts of Asia, Africa and the Americas. In most of the small-scale societies that were described, Seniors live with their extended family and continue to have strong influence as they age. In contrast with many Seniors in Western countries such as Australia and the US, responsibilities increase as they grow older, as elders are valued as being repositories of vast knowledge and life experience. They are the experts in human relationships, politics, medicine, religion and culture. As such, Seniors in these societies tend to be revered, deferred to, and given special privileges. If their character merits, elders are elected to the status of chief or community leader.

Globalisation is rapidly changing the cultures and economies of most of these societies, and therefore the position of Seniors in them. However, at this time, elders in such societies continue to be active and influential in their communities and to be treated with veneration. Seniors mind young children and impart their knowledge to them, and they often continue to produce food and other goods well into old age. Significantly, Seniors in these traditional communities not only remain surrounded by family but also by friends from their youth.

The experience of Seniors in Australia, whose grandchildren and adult children may be inaccessible because they necessarily work far from home, seems like a stark contrast with those in small-scale traditional societies. It is understandable that many elderly Australians, especially those from CALD backgrounds who expect to remain living with or near their families, feel isolated and fearful of becoming a Resident at an aged care facility where they may not know anybody. In some aged care residences it could be easy to feel unknown and undervalued.

Because of the understandable tendency to feel devalued in old age, the PICAC presentation includes an activity for the Residents to foster a sense of value: by expressing what other Residents mean to them, and how each can daily contribute in a positive way, however small, to another's life. The Residents and Staff at RSL Care Murrumba Downs had already created strong bonds with each other so they resemble a large family. While most of the Residents had suffered a great deal of loss, especially with recent passing of spouses and lack of family visits, they participated in many activities and cultivated optimism and a sense of togetherness to support themselves and each other. These Residents have succeeded in creating a fulfilling and meaningful old age, despite experiencing potentially lonely conditions, and are an inspiration to those who have the privilege of meeting them. PICAC is proud to celebrate these resourceful and valuable members of our society.

Although this was part of RSL Murrumba Downs Seniors week celebration, PICAC is available to deliver this presentation at anytime throughout the year all over Queensland. We can come to residential facilities, respite centres and community groups. Please contact us for further information—see page 4 for contact details.

KRYSZYNA'S STORY: 'THE BEST CHRISTMAS PRESENT EVER'

Amanda Bowden, PICAC Project Officer

Hearing migration stories often gives us insight into the resilience and strength of character of the individuals who have relocated to Australia. Krystyna Koropatwa, who has been one of Diversicare's community volunteers for 13 years, shares with us a particularly fascinating account of how she came to live in Brisbane.

Krystyna was born to Polish parents in Germany towards the end of the Second World War. Her parents had been deported from Poland to provide labour under the Nazi regime. Maltreatment of the people in the forced-labour camp where Krystyna was born was rife; and one of the worst aspects of this regime was that children were separated from their parents. At nine months old, Krystyna's godmother was able to save her life by taking her to France, where she and her French husband began to raise Krystyna as their step-daughter. After the war, Krystyna's aunt (her mother's sister) found her and brought her back to Poland. Krystyna, now four, was told she no longer had a mother or father.

When living conditions with her relatives worsened, Krystyna was sent to the Lublin Orphanage which was run by nuns. She was 10 years old. Life was more peaceful there and she was able to devote her time to study, and eventually completed her Diploma of Nursing.

At twenty years old, Krystyna was living in Czestochowa in southern Poland and working as a Registered Nurse. One day, out of the blue, she received a letter from the Red Cross. The letter informed Krystyna that her father lived in Australia and was trying to find her. "It's impossible!" Krystyna thought. She assumed that her father had died along with millions of other forced labourers during the war. "There must be some mistake," she convinced herself, until she received a letter from Australia, written by her father personally. He wrote that he would very much like to bring her to Australia to see her. He also mentioned that he had searched for Krystyna's mother many years ago but had been told that she had died in an air raid.

Once Krystyna had recovered from the shock of discovering her father had survived the war, she made plans to visit him in Brisbane as soon as she possibly could. But just as she was about to depart for Australia she learned that her mother was also alive! Again, Krystyna was astounded, and made her way to the town of Swiebodzin where her mother was staying. During the war, Krystyna's mother had become a casualty of shelling and suffered permanent memory loss. She now lived in a psychiatric hospital. This reunion threw

Krystyna into emotional turmoil. She was overjoyed to meet her mother, but devastated that time had seemed to stop for her, and that her mother daily relived the horrors of the labour camp. Yet as Krystyna listened she was puzzled that her mother kept referring to her "two daughters". "Did she really mean two?" Krystyna listened in disbelief. "After 20 years of living as an orphan, have I not only found both my parents, but do I have a sister as well?" Krystyna was reeling with amazement. What had become of her sister if, indeed, there had been a younger sister?

Krystyna embarked with great excitement on her journey to Australia by ship to see her long lost father. She arrived in Brisbane in December 1965. She was greeted by her father's beaming face. Krystyna said, "He was so happy. He said it was the best Christmas present ever!" Her father had remarried as he had not known what had become of his first family during the Nazi occupation of Europe. Krystyna was warmly welcomed by her stepmother and half-sister. On Christmas Eve Krystyna received her best Christmas ever. Her father introduced her to her younger sister, Irena. Irena had come to Australia with their father, not knowing the fate of the other family members. The sisters immediately threw their arms around each other and from that moment did not want to part. "Until now, I had no one close to me" Krystyna had thought. "But in those last few months I found my mother, my father and my sister! My happiness could not have been greater."

After 7 months with her father's family, Krystyna returned to Poland, taking her sister with her. Krystyna married a lovely man, a chef, and after their three children were born, the family, along with Irena, travelled to Australia in 1971 as part of the post-war family reunion settlement program. They settled in the south western suburbs to be near her father. Krystyna's family flourished in Brisbane. She said she found Australians to be very friendly and they relished the freedom after living in Communist Poland. Krystyna continued to work for 26 years as a Registered Nurse, and was often called on to use her skills as an interpreter not only in Polish, but also Russian, Ukrainian and Czechoslovakian. Her children, now young adults, are university educated and pursuing diverse occupations, from economist to make-up artist. No longer working in hospitals, Krystyna continues to be a gift to our society by contributing her time to support the elderly who often long to simply have a chat with someone who speaks their own language. She has earned both Gold and Silver certificates for her service to the Diversicare Community Visitor

Scheme. Wesley Mission has also acknowledged Krystyna's kindness and generosity for her voluntary assistance to the victims of the 2011 floods. Many people in Australia have had their lives enriched by Krystyna's father's persistence in tracking down his lost daughter from Poland. It is important to recognise the many kinds of gifts migrants bring to our country to share with us.



Krystyna and sister, Irena



Krystyna and her father

HAPPY FATHER'S DAY

Father's Day is celebrated in Australia on the first Sunday of September. This year, Father's Day will fall on September 4th. Although Father's Day is celebrated in many countries, the dates and the origin of this celebration vary across cultures.

Early history suggests Father's Day has its origin in Catholicism, which explains why some countries with a large Catholic population, such as Italy, Spain and Portugal, celebrate the date on 19 March, the day of St Joseph, the father of Jesus. Nevertheless, other predominantly Catholic countries celebrate it on a different date. In Ireland it is celebrated on the third Sunday of June. In Brazil it is celebrated on the second Sunday of August. The date was chosen to honour St Joachim, the father of Mary and patron of fathers and grandfathers.

In other countries Father's Day is linked with local history and traditions. In Thailand, the birthday of the King is Father's Day. December 5 is the birthday of the current king, Bhumibol Adulyadej (Rama IX). Unlike other countries, in Thailand it is a public holiday. In Germany, Father's Day is linked with Ascension Day, which originally commemorates the Ascension of Jesus into Heaven. It is traditionally celebrated on a Thursday, the fortieth day of Easter and it is a public holiday.

A common date for many countries is the third Sunday of June. This date is related to some pagan tradition of worshipping the Sun as the father of the Universe. Some

claim that the June tradition is linked with the solstice. This date is observed in United Kingdom, Ireland, USA, Canada, Argentina, France, Greece, Mexico, Japan, South Africa, Singapore and Venezuela.

In some countries, such as India and Pakistan, Father's Day is a relatively new concept, possibly influenced by Western traditions. The idea of a special day to honour fathers and celebrate fatherhood was introduced from the United States in 1910 by a woman who was inspired by the recent advent of American Mother's Day celebrations. Australia and New Zealand share the Father's Day date on the first Sunday of September each year.

From PICAC team, we wish all fathers a Happy Father's Day!

F.A.T.H.E.R.S.

"F" aithful.
"A" lways there.
"T" rustworthy.
"H" onoring.
"E" ver-loving.
"R" ighteous.
"S" upportive

Author unknown

UPCOMING EVENTS

Contact PICAC Team, details below, for more information

MONTH	EVENT	DETAILS
7 September	In house training	CROSS CULTURAL AWARENESS & COMMUNICATION Ipswich
13 September 10:00am— 11:30am	Vietnamese Information Session	FALLS PREVENTION AND OSTEOPOROSIS Inala
15 September	In house training	WORKING EFFECTIVELY IN DIVERSE TEAMS Browns Plains
30 September	In house training	CULTURAL AWARENESS Sunnybank Hills
20 October	In house training	WORKING EFFECTIVELY IN DIVERSE TEAMS Browns Plains
20 October 10:00am— 12 noon	Vietnamese Information Session	AGED CARE OPTIONS Inala
8 November	In house training	CULTURAL AWARENESS Mt Gravatt
15 November 10:00am— 11:30am	Vietnamese Information Session	DEPRESSION AND DEMENTIA Inala
24 November 9.30—11.30am	Multicultural Health Network Meeting	Venue to be confirmed
8 December 10:00am— 12noon	Vietnamese Information Session	CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION Inala

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