

Buddhist Education in Victorian Schools Newsletter No. 6.

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The Program makes available Buddhist Religious Instruction to children in Victorian primary schools.

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Welcome Back to 2006.

A warm welcome back to our volunteer teachers, students and Education Committee members. Due to the Commonwealth Games Term 1 was unusually short in Victoria but all the same, several of the regular classes were up and running by the end of February. On the whole the new schools opted to wait until after Easter to start classes. We welcome our first country school- Daylesford Primary School into Buddhist RI classes. Plans for more schools are underway. Increasing the program has only been possible because of new volunteer teachers coming on board after training in October 2005. So we welcome Manthri Leukay, Kim Looi, Poh Lan Chan, Vipuli Goonasekara, Lilanka Panditha and the Daylesford team of Shamana, Wendy, Andrea & Angela. We hope you have a happy and rewarding experience with Buddhist RI classes.

Up-Coming Events- Some Dates for the Diary:

Wesak (celebration of Buddha's birth, enlightenment & passing away) is on or near the Full Moon day in May – the 21st. Teachers may like to make May a special month for celebrating the life of the Buddha, inviting monks & nuns to visit etc.

- * **Sat 20 & Sun 21 May:** **Buddha's Day: A Multicultural Festival.**
Federation Square, City.
- * **Tues. 9 & Sat. 13 May:** **Next teacher training round.**
(Please contact Judith for details)
- * **Sat 10 & Sun.11 June:** **4th Global Conference on Buddhism-Perth.**

Tips for Busy Volunteers

We hope to make this a regular newsletter item so do send in any good ideas you have. Here's one from Ray & Bernie who teach at Mt Waverley Primary School.

"Using Ajahn Brahm's book "Opening the Door of Your Heart", we took his 3 'trick' questions: When is the most important time, who is the most important person & what is the most important thing to do? We then told the students to go home, discuss them with their parents & bring the responses back the next week. Of course initially we got smart answers like the most important time is 3.30pm when school finishes but it encouraged a good class debate & plenty of Buddhist teaching! Also we've found that doing meditation at the end instead of the start of class is much more successful as by then the children are more settled & in a more receptive mind-frame."

(For answers go to Ajahn Brahm's book!!)

Who Are We? The BCV Education Committee.

As well as the teachers there is a small team of dedicated people who give their time & expertise to the management side of the program. We were sad to temporarily say goodbye to Dhammika Fernando who convened the Committee last year but we wish her well for her teaching in China & look forward to her return! Judith Macdonald has returned to fill the position with great support from Kathy Ching (Treasurer), Man Yau Leung, Eileen Sheridan & Brian Ashen. **The Committee is in need of more members, in particular a teacher rep.** Meetings are held monthly & are rotated around different temples. Please think about this & call Judith (9489 1127) if you are interested. We would love more Committee members. Our highly-skilled webmaster, **Cheong Koo**, has all sorts of new ideas for 2006 & we are already enjoying the fruits of his work in setting up our own BCV email account.

Volunteer Profile.....Bernie Herlihy.

Our teacher volunteers are the heartwood of the program. Without them there would be no Buddhist Education program – they are the unsung heroes, turning up every week & putting in. In recognition of their work, the Editor will eventually interview & write a profile of each volunteer. So watch this space! This edition we start with one of the longest-serving volunteers: **Bernie Herlihy**.

Bernie teaches every week at Mt Waverley PS & provides a calm, grandfatherly presence in a busy school program. He volunteered in 2004 after hearing about the Buddhist Education program at the “Engaging Buddhism in Australia” Conference. Whilst comfortable talking dhamma with adults Bernie initially had some reservations about teaching children, being cautious of the influence one can have on young minds. However, fortunately for the children, Bernie wisely considered that if he saw his work on a very long continuum then it was a matter of planting seeds & opening doors, with no compulsion or guilt. True to the Buddha’s teaching he sees his role as being a model of love, tolerance & compassion. Bernie first met the Dhamma in 1979 in the UK through his brother’s involvement in a Buddhist Right Livelihood community. On the plane back to Australia he started reading a book which set him on a path of discovering Buddhism in Melbourne. Teachings from the Dalai Lama followed & finally the setting up of the Ringwood Buddhist Meditation Group of which Bernie is a founding member. Like Bernie, this group focuses on the relevance of the Buddha’s teaching in the 21st Century. How lucky those children are.
Saddhu Bernie!

From the Fund-Raising Desk:

A very happy & successful fundraising event was held at the end of February when members of the Committee accompanied the pilgrims from Quang Minh Temple on their annual visit to 12 of Melbourne’s Buddhist temples. Much appreciation for your generosity and much merit to you! Don’t forget that gifts & donations made to the BCV Religious Instruction fund above \$2 are tax deductible. If you or your organization wish to make a donation, please

Make cheques/money orders payable to: **BCV RI Fund**
Mail to **BCV Buddhist Education in Primary Schools,**
PO Box 606, North Carlton.
Vic. 3054.

Our Website:

Please visit our website at www.bcvic.org.au for information about the Education Program, ideas for teaching Jataka Tales & much much more!

For More Information:

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