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| **Speak Up - Kōrerotia** **Race Relations – 18 March 2015** |
| Male[Plains FM] | This programme was first broadcast on Canterbury’s community access radio station Plains FM 96.9 and was made with the assistance of New Zealand On Air. |
| Sally [Intro] | E ngā mana, E ngā reo, E ngā hau e whāTēnā koutou katoaNau mai ki tēnei hōtaka: “Speak Up” – “Kōrerotia”. Join the New Zealand Human Rights Commission as it engages in conversations around race and diversity in our country. Tune in as our guests “Speak Up”, sharing their unique and powerful experiences and opinions... May you also be inspired to “Speak Up” when the moment is right.Hello and welcome to the first show of Speak Up Korerotia where we will be talking about race relations in New Zealand. Our first guest today will be Dame Susan Devoy, Race Relations Commissioner with the Human Rights Commission. Susan, it’s a pleasure to have you as the inaugural guest of “Speak Up”. |
| Susan | Kia Ora Sally and it’s a great pleasure to be with you tonight. |
| Sally | Thank you very much. To start with could you please give our listeners a bit of information about the Human Rights Commission and what is its role. |
| Susan | The Human Rights Commission is a national human rights institute. There are a number of course around the world and we are mandated by the Bill of Rights Act in New Zealand to promote and protect the realisation of human rights for all New Zealanders and to, more importantly for race relations I suppose, to foster harmonious relations amongst the diverse communities that call New Zealand home. The Commission has a number of functions: we have an inquiries and complaints operation which I often describe as the engine room of the Commission. So that’s a vehicle for which people can complain to the Human Rights Commission if they think that their human rights have been breached and that covers a number of areas: disability, sexual discrimination, a whole myriad of things, and as I said I describe it as the engine room because when the Office, the Race Relations Office was set up in 1971, good old New Zealanders said, oh we won’t need a Race Relations Office, we don’t have racism in New Zealand and there will be no work to do. Well I think the reality was back then people suffered in silence with no means of address for their complaints and in that first year I think there were around 76 complaints and today, 30 or so years later, we continue to receive complaints and around a third of those are based on discrimination of race, ethnicity, religion or appearance. So there’s certainly a role and that’s what the Commission does. We have a number of responsibilities. We are a Crown entity funded by the Government, but we must exercise our independence of the Government, so in some ways I suppose we are a little bit like a watch dog. We monitor and hold the Government in account to ensure that they are fulfilling their obligations to all the international treaties and conventions that New Zealand has signed up to the United Nations. So it’s an important role, the Human Rights Commission, and I’m very privileged to have a part in that. |
| Sally | Great, thank you Susan. You mentioned the Race Relations Office and you are now Race Relations Commissioner. What does race relations mean to you? |
| Susan | Well interestingly enough, Sally, I’ve given that a lot of thought given that Race Relations Day is fast approaching. It’s quite a complex thing to actually define but if we go back to our Act and what we’re mandated to do, it’s about fostered harmonious relations. So I think it’s really about what do we need to do as everyday New Zealanders, not just in terms of Government agencies but what do we all need to do to ensure that everybody that now calls New Zealand home understands what it means to be a New Zealander regardless of where your country of origin is. |
| Sally | And how do you recommend that people go about implementing those suggestions? |
| Susan | Another good question Sally. Well you know, we’ve got lots of laws and legislations that guide us in this world about how we should and shouldn’t behave and sometimes just because something is lawful doesn’t necessarily make it right. For example, if we look at freedom of expression, basically living in a democratic society means we can basically say whatever we like no matter how much offence is caused because it’s very seldom that it will breach the Section 61 of the Human Rights Act. But then it comes back to the overarching principle of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is really about treating people with respect and dignity regardless of anything really. And at the end of the day, that’s what I keep reminding myself. It’s really not important, well it is important but it doesn’t matter what the issue is; the overarching thing is how we would treat other people and that goes back to the way I was brought up and my mother always said….reminded me to treat people with how I would like to be treated myself. |
| Sally | Yes exactly. Now we’ve got Race Relations Day coming up on the 21st of March, which is also the international day for the elimination of racial discrimination. So what is racial discrimination? |
| Susan | Racial discrimination, well I mean there’s a number of different definitions and depending on who you talk to on any given day people can take it a different way. But really, I mean, I think it comes down to as I said treating people with respect and dignity and the fact that we are unable to discriminate people on any grounds, of race, religion, ethnicity and all of the definitions, that’s really what discrimination is. |
| Sally | And have we got some clear examples of racial discrimination that have occurred in New Zealand? |
| Susan | Well where shall we start, Sally? |
| Sally | Yes exactly. |
| Susan | I think I like thinking about human rights overall is just….instead of just terms of racial discrimination and I think they’re really what reason requires and conscious demands and I think that if we can go back and look at the number of complaints that come to the Commission and we get very substantive examples of where racial discrimination occurs, I think if we just take….You know a current example in the news today and I’ve been approached to make comment about the Sikhs that were refused entry to watch the cricket because they were in possession of kirpans. You know, people will first ask me: Is that a breach of someone’s human rights? It’s not as simple as that; once someone makes a complaint to the Commission then we can investigate that more thoroughly and come up with a judgment, but we can look at that and say, well the ICC have made a ruling on what people can and can’t bring in, what items they can and can’t bring in to the grounds. But if we look at the London Olympic Committee, they took a more multi-faith approach to that and allowed Sikhs to enter all of their premises with that important piece of their culture, of their religion with them so it’s really….it’s a grey area, it’s not what’s right or what’s wrong. I mean there’s lots of examples. There was a case, a ruling in the Tribunal last week again between two Sikhs, interestingly enough, where one was prosecuted for racial harassment of another Sikh. So we need to understand that discrimination happens between different cultures within cultures within different religions and unfortunately it’s happening all around us. |
| Sally | And what’s the Human Rights Commission’s role in responding to racial discrimination? What kind of steps might the Human Rights Commission take? |
| Susan | Well most importantly I think that race relations is really about exactly that, relationships and as I said I think being able to mediate and resolve issues. We get people around the table talking about things before they escalate, it’s really important and I think one of the things the Commission does extremely well is that mediation process. So if you look at the number of complaints and you realise that nine out of ten of those are resolved amicably for an outcome that’s good for both parties. So the victim feels they’ve been heard, the concerns have been addressed, sometimes the perpetrator might, well does, does learn sometimes because sometimes some of these happen not intentionally, out of fear or ignorance and basically out of lack of education and awareness. And that’s another role that the Commission has the right to play, is the education and awareness. Because you asked me to how to define and I think it’s extraordinarily difficult because what you might see as racism may be portrayed quite differently from someone else. So it is really about education and awareness and you know, New Zealand has changed, the demographics have changed extraordinarily quickly in a short period of time so we are right in having these discussions because we need to actually be prepared and start planning for what our future will look like.  |
| Sally | Thanks and actually the next show we’re going to be talking a lot about these changing demographics. Susan, you’ve spoken about what the Human Rights Commission might do, what’s your role as Race Relations Commissioner? What kind of engagements do you take part in? |
| Susan | Well firstly people need to understand that I work for an organisation, I work for a Government department so we’re bound by our meeting expectations to the Minister, we’re also responsible to follow our Statement of Intent and business plans and all those sorts of things. So we have an overarching strategic framework that we must follow as Commissioners. So Commissioners also have a role of being, it’s quite complex, not like most Crown entities. I sit on the Board of the Commission, I have a strategic role and I have a “doing” role. So therefore we identify what the priorities are for the forthcoming year: Is it around migrant exploitation? Is it around refugees and those seeking asylum? Is it around the public awareness around reducing discrimination? Because at the end of the day, that’s the role of a Race Commissioner, isn’t it, really, to try and identify how racism manifests itself and what we can do to actually reduce the discrimination. But the other thing that’s really quite – I suppose not time-consuming but overarching – it is the responsive nature of my work. So you know, nearly every given day you’ll have to respond to something like an article in the paper today about the Sikhs, an article about a racial profiling episode in a supermarket. So there’s certainly no dull moments and that responsive nature of the work takes quite a lot of time and thought and preparation into making sure that the responses are appropriate for the occasion. And sometimes, you know, you’re asked to comment and you should, and sometimes you are asked to comment and you shouldn’t, there’s a balancing act between choosing the right time to intervene and the appropriate comments to make because we never want to….it’s often the case you can either sometimes escalate these issues and make them worse because anything to do with racial abuse or anything like that is very sensitive and often very controversial. |
| Sally | Yes, it’s a fine line to walk, isn’t it? You have to be very careful. |
| Susan | Yes and sometimes you’re doing your best job is to keep things out of the media rather than highlighting them and putting them in. |
| Sally | Well thanks for your comments Susan, we’re going to take a quick break and listen to some music. You’ve chosen a song for us; could you please explain what you’ve chosen and why you chose it? |
| Susan | Well a number of years ago when I first moved to Tauranga I sadly to attend a funeral of a gentleman who was on a board of the organisation I worked for, Gerry Cowley was a Samoan and I went to his funeral, I think there were about 3000 people there and this song was played, wonderful ukulele version which I haven’t been able to find and it just really struck me. I think it’s a beautiful reflection of a person’s life but it was the way, you know the manner of the whole Samoan congregation there paying tribute to him so it’s always stuck in my mind. |
| Sally | Great thank you so here we are with ‘Somewhere Over the Rainbow’. |
|  | **MUSIC – OVER THE RAINBOW BY ISRAEL KAMAKAWIWO’OLE** |
| Sally | OK, welcome back to Speak Up Kōrerotia, the show of the Human Rights Commission, playing right here on 96.9 Plains FM. We’ve been speaking with Dame Susan Devoy about the Human Rights Commission and her role as Race Relations Commission.Susan, we’re going to continue now with some more questions around Race Relations Day specifically. Could you please tell us when is Race Relations Day and what it’s about. |
| Susan | Race Relations Day is Saturday March 21st, I think you mentioned earlier on the show that this is a day marked by the United Nations, the Convention of the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, but more importantly it’s also to commemorate the Sharpeville Massacre where 69 people including ten children were murdered by their own police whilst partaking in a peaceful protest. So it’s a day when we reflect on that terrible tragedy, the day that the United Nations have to mark that we’ve still continued around the world to reduce racial discrimination but here in New Zealand it is really seen as a form of a celebrating diversity. |
| Sally | Great, and what’s the benefit of having a particular day in the calendar that can be marked specifically to mark race relations? |
| Susan | I think it’s very difficult, I acknowledge that most New Zealanders wouldn’t know that Race Relations Day exists. I mean, certainly around the country the multi regional Councils, certain local governments, ethnic communities will be having events to celebrate and they don’t just happen on March 21st, they sort of start with Waitangi and go right through to the end of April. But still, there’s not widespread acknowledgement amongst all of New Zealand and I suppose there’s a bit of clutter, there’s a day for everything isn’t there really. We’re very fortunate this year that the Governor General is hosting a function at Auckland Government House for young migrant and refugee youth to acknowledge their part in this. So having a day, having an international day gives us….it’s a foundation to actually spread our message further but if we were being honest then every day should be Race Relations Day; every day we should be making an attempt to build these harmonious relations and things, to work towards better social cohesion.  |
| Sally | Wouldn’t that be nice. |
| Susan | Wouldn’t it. Aspirational.  |
| Sally | Exactly. You mentioned the Governor General is hosting an event, what other events are taking place on or around this coming Race Relations Day? |
| Susan | Well if I looked in my calendar, I am going to the Auckland Multi-Cultural event the following day on the Sunday, there’s numerous: the Hutt Multi-Cultural Workshop is the following Saturday; there’s already been some events that have taken place; I think you’ll find that the Tauranga Multi-Cultural Festival is also this Saturday. So there’s lots, particularly well patronised by different multi-cultural societies about New Zealand. I think that’s one of the issues is how do we spread these events and get more people to attend rather than just ethnic communities that are necessarily involved in organising them. |
| Sally | Have you got any ideas on how that might be possible? |
| Susan | Ah well, I thought that was your job Sally! |
| Sally | Yes I know! It’s always one of the big questions though isn’t it, how do you get the word out beyond the sort of immediate cohort that’s really engaged in it.  |
| Susan | I think we’ve got some sort of, you know we’re probably at a bit of a crossroads so for a number of years now we’ve gone…I mean I remember growing up, there was no such thing as the Chinese Lantern Festival, no such thing as Diwali, I wouldn’t even have known what Eid was, you know those sorts of things. So now most of these festivals are commonplace in New Zealand, particularly in the large cities. So Chinese New Year is celebrated all throughout New Zealand and in the big cities and goes on for quite a while, the same with Diwali. And you see more and more New Zealanders of all different cultures and ethnicities attending these events to become part of our sort of entertainment landscape you might say. So these race relations just developing organically, that’s just what is happening. What we need to do now is to move away from diversity just being about festivals and events; actually diversity is about inclusivity. So how can we understand someone else’s culture if we’ve never had the opportunity to meet and talk or share a meal with someone from a different culture? And that’s what these events provide: the opportunity to do so. We need champions, you know we don’t just need strong leadership from the very top, from the government and other organisations. We actually need champions within the community, champions of people who actually….you know who can actually talk about getting to know a different family from a different culture and what’s that meant to them and what that meant to the person from the other family so we don’t want to make it just….you know, a thing that we attend to taste food from a different country or to see someone else dance or just a form of entertainment, it has to be more than that and I really think that starts in our communities. So what connection every one of us do as an everyday New Zealander to ensure that we know who are neighbours are, that we try to engage with them regardless of what country they come from, so that we invite a new family that comes to our school around to our house or we encourage….you know and we’re very fortunate I think because of our multi-cultural society now our children, I think in generations to come we will have got this sorted because for our children it’s very normalised. They’re mixing with so many different cultures at school and they’re not colour-blind. You know, you go to many, many schools around New Zealand and you see multi-cultural diversity at its best and children getting along and just being friends because they like each other and that’s really where I think it’s….well I hope that’s where New Zealand is heading. |
| Sally | Speaking about schools, one thing that the Human Rights Commission supports is the Race Unity Speech Awards, could you speak a little bit about those please? |
| Susan | Well they’re one of the jewels in the crown I think and again a bit like Race Relations Day not enough people know about them and how magnificent they are. And if you get the opportunity to not only ever attend one but if you can’t, to read the speeches that will come online then I think it reiterates the comments I just made, that our young people are getting this right. But it is really sobering I think sometimes to hear the experiences of young people who have come to New Zealand in their teenage years and what they’ve experienced in terms of discrimination. The story of their journeys to come to New Zealand their journeys once they get here and I think that’s you know, why the theme this year is “Big Change Starts Small” from the winner last year that said whilst we rely on governments to legislate and people to speak out it’s really as you said, you know up to us to. As Ghandi said, start being the change we want the world to be. So I think it’s….we can learn a lot from these young people, you know they’ve seen it through their own eyes and they tell their stories and they’ve got really good practical examples themselves because they’ve had lived experience of it. So I mean it’s a magnificent event. It’s been set up for a number of years by the Bahá’i community, the New Zealand Police and Office of Ethnic Communities. A great partnership and a wonderful way to demonstrate both the challenges and opportunities that diversity presents. |
| Sally | And it’s for Years 11, 12 and 13 students at high school, is that correct? |
| Susan | It is, I’m not sure if there can be younger but certainly last year I think the boy was only from Year 11. And I’ve only been involved a couple of years but I’ve noticed in the first year I was there, there were no Pākehā New Zealanders and last year there were quite a few. Everyone takes a different slant on it so for some, for Māori there’s lots of kōrero and lots of quotes and quite a different, a waiata and things so everyone takes…everyone speaks about being a Kiwi but everyone brings their own culture to the address and it’s really overwhelming. |
| Sally | Fantastic, I’m actually going to be attending the North Canterbury one on the 26th March which I’m really looking forward to. |
| Susan | You’ll love it, you’ll love it. It’ll be hard to judge. |
| Sally | I bet. One other thing that the Human Rights Commission is doing for this Race Relations Day is promoting the idea of workplace lunches where colleagues can bring in a dish from their home culture. What is it about food and bringing people together? |
| Susan | Well everyone loves to eat generally. I think that’s the one thing that’s been a real positive in this job; you can imagine I’ve got to taste a lot of different food. |
| Sally | I bet. |
| Susan | And it’s all been pretty amazing and I could never ever imagine myself being a vegetarian before I got this job, but now if someone cooked for me like that it’d be quite easy. I think sharing food is such a large part of so many people’s different cultures and not necessarily such a large part of Pākehā New Zealanders, for some families it is but I think we all scratch our head when we’re asked to provide a dish that reflects our culture. Whereas from many other different ethnicities it’s the easiest thing to do and it’s very much a family thing, it’s a community thing, it’s a real sharing of aroha and it’s just such an important part and it’s such an ice breaker. You know, such a good conversation starter, having food, having a shared lunch, asking where you got those flavours from, how do you cook it, how do you source the ingredients here in New Zealand? I’d never know how to cook that, can you show me? And those sorts of things. And let’s face it, our mix of restaurants has become much more diverse now and I think if I hadn’t had the opportunity to taste some of these dishes in my role I’d never have ordered them in a restaurant. Now I go in there and at least I know what they are but I think food is just a vehicle in which we can share experiences with each other and I think it’s just a really great way to do it. |
| Sally | Great, thanks. And just one final question: the Human Rights Commission has set up a Facebook page, Food Culture NZ, and you’ve actually shared a recipe on there. Could you just tell us briefly about that recipe? |
| Susan | That was an interesting one. My father immigrated to New Zealand with his grandparents from Ireland in 1922 I think it was and I have these vague memories of going to stay at my grandmother’s in Island Bay in Wellington in the school holidays and other occasions while my parents were working. And my brothers and I used to have suffer in silence and eat lots of salty corned beef and white onion sauce and cabbage. But the thing we did like was she made the most amazing soda bread. So you know, as I said I can’t really think of anything from my own cultural family that I would say is typically Kiwi and that I’d share with others, but that was something that I always, always can remember and in fact you know how you can sometimes with food remember the smell. |
| Sally | Yes exactly. Well we look forward to hopefully seeing lots more recipes being posted up to Facebook. |
| Susan | I haven’t seen yours yet Sally. |
| Sally | Yes I must do one. Again I’d have a bit of a problem thinking of one I think, maybe stir fry. |
| Susan | Well I think that’s what it says, we’re not so good on the food stuff us Kiwis, some of us Kiwis not all but you know, I’ve got four kids and so for me it’s finding something fills them up, that they’ll all eat and I probably don’t put the same love and care into the thought and preparation that goes into providing a family meal. |
| Sally | OK well thanks Susan for sharing with us about your work and the work of the Human Rights Commission and we’ll look forward to hearing all about your activities this Race Relations Day. |
| Susan | That’ll be great and thanks to Plains FM for getting us the opportunity to talk about race relations in New Zealand. |
| Sally | Thanks. |
| Susan | OK thank you. |
| Sally | OK so we’re just going to take another break and we’re going to listen to Pharrell Williams’ ‘Happy’ because the day before Race Relations Day, the 20th of March is also the International Day of Happiness so I thought this might be quite appropriate and also just to note that the 21st of March is World Down Syndrome Day. |
|  | **MUSIC – HAPPY BY PHARRELL WILLIAMS** |
| Sally | Kia ora everyone and welcome back to Speak Up - Kōrerotia. In the previous part of the show we were speaking with Dame Susan Devoy about her work as Race Relations Commissioner; now we’re moving to the Plains FM studio in Christchurch where I have with me three guests who represent just three of the hundreds of organisations which work to foster and improve race relations in the city. Over the coming shows we’ll be speaking with more of these representatives, but for today I am pleased to welcome Shirley Wright of Christchurch Resettlement Services, Jane Song of the Christchurch Migrant Centre and Nicki Reece from Plains FM whose facilities we are currently using. Welcome to the show.  |
| All | Thank you. |
| Sally | To start with, perhaps you could each introduce each other and your organisations? |
| Shirley | Would you like me to start? |
| Sally | Yes please, Shirley, that would be great. |
| Shirley | Kia ora I’m Shirley Wright, I’m the manager of Christchurch Resettlement Services and we provide a range of services for people from refugee migrant background including interpreters, bilingual community works, social work, family violence, mental health, youth services, health promotion, health education, health support workers, earthquake support coordinators, childcare for an English programme and counsellors who provide counselling in the language of the client. |
| Sally | That’s a very wide range of services that you offer there, thank you Shirley. |
| Jane | My name is Jane, I work for Christchurch Migrant Centre as the manager. So my daily work is to help to integrate the migrants to settle in Christchurch. So the centre also provides some social English class and also a woman’s programme. |
| Nicki | And I’m Nicki Reece and I’m the Station Manager here at Plains FM. The station is all about the community and it’s a facility that the community as individuals or in their groups or organisations can come in and learn broadcasting skills and then broadcast the content of their choice in their own language. If it’s other than English that’s absolutely fine and very, very welcome. And we’ve been going for 25 years now since 1988 and it’s a great place to be a worker in. |
| Sally | You’ve spoken a little bit about the services that you have on offer. How do you see these services as really furthering race relations in Christchurch? |
| Shirley | I think for a country that has quite an active immigration policy and resettles refugee background people as well under our partnership with the United Nations, it’s very important to support those people in their resettlement so they can really….inclusion is very important and if people have access and information and knowledge then they are included. So starting from the point of view of the people resettling – that is good race relations – to provide specifically for people around their cultural and language needs. I think for the community it’s wonderful for them to see role model the types of things that our sector does to support a successful resettlement outcomes. |
| Nicki | As far as I’m concerned, I think it’s so important for migrants and refugees to hear their own voices loudly and proudly on the airwaves and that’s something that I just am very passionate about. And I love to see it when a person comes in maybe from quite a small migrant community potentially like for example, the Somalian community – we don’t have a programme in Somali at the moment, but we have had in the past – but it’s a small community who is under some pressure at times, that community isn’t always thinking in the same way just like in Palangi or Pakeha communities. You know, we have different attitudes and different ways of operating and different ways to express ourselves but this is…I think it’s really important to further that idea that any community can talk about the things that they are passionate about or concerned about that they have issues with. And we can’t expect... I think it’s important to remember that we can’t expect one community to be thinking the same way just like in any other community or ethnic group, we have a range of ideas and a range of attitudes. So one person does not represent necessarily that community, and I think it’s important to remember that so we give anybody from any organisation an opportunity to actually broadcast and put their message out there. |
| Sally | And as well as providing an opportunity for these different communities to put forward their voices, I suppose it’s also an opportunity for different communities to hear what those smaller perhaps communities are thinking about. Do you have any evidence that different communities do listen to programmes? I mean obviously perhaps not with the different languages but the ones perhaps in English? |
| Nicki | Certainly, I mean there are programmes that have happened over the last 25 years that I am sure that people who have English or who feel confident in listening and understanding what is being said to a reasonable degree even if they don’t understand all of it can benefit from listening. And we’ve had feedback, you know, I heard that conversation that you had with so and so, I really enjoyed hearing what you had to say. So we get anecdotal feedback from people who heard particular programmes that was in English but they might have come from China or Samoa or somewhere else, definitely. |
| Sally | Great thanks and Jane, how about the Migrant Centre? |
| Jane | I agree there sure is inclusive, so because in Christchurch everyone knows become very diversity village, we won’t say the world but it’s like a small population. So people just need to realise the world becomes smaller. So we have to accept each other, to acknowledge the different culture and to build up relationships between the different ethnicity groups so that’s probably the communities, the key word, to build up the bridge, to connect the people together just…and know what’s their colour, what’s their…you know, the country, what’s their ethnicity, you know make them….welcome them get together to know each other better. |
| Shirley | And I’d also like to add that I think we all work very hard to ensure that people that we support understand their rights in New Zealand and they understand that we have legislation and we have services available to ensure that people can understand their rights and get support if their rights are violated. So I think that’s a very important part of what all of us do. |
| Nicki | Would you agree too perhaps that it’s part of our role is to encourage people to build up their confidence to speak out? |
| Shirley | Yes absolutely. |
| Sally | And you’ve all spoken about employing or engaging people from these different countries with different languages to speak and to communicate with cultures on behalf of those people who might not otherwise perhaps be able to communicate in English, for example. Shirley, you’ve spoken about engaging refugee or migrant background people to act as liaison staff for example. |
| Shirley | I think having a workforce that reflects the communities that you’re serving is very important. I think we all do that, it’s providing employment opportunities but it’s also about us learning, us learning what we need to understand about the different cultures we support. |
| Nicki | And being open to the challenges of that too, because it can be confrontational sometimes when you’re working in particular jobs, you have to be open to changing your own attitudes and ideas and willing to discuss and to move and be flexible. And I suppose for me over the years I’ve learnt that that’s quite an integral part of who I’ve become luckily but it’s not always easy. |
| Jane | I think the one thing we need to show we care, we care of them, you know for the community you have to have a big heart because you deal with the people from different backgrounds so they are quite new to this country and also they don’t have any confidence. I always think of those people they have an adult body but because the language barrier, because of the different culture they just acting sometimes like a baby. So that’s why we have to say, they need some orientation class, they need to assess all the information from different channel. |
| Nicki | I agree, Jane, something as easy as just slowing down your conversation can make all the difference. And it’s a simple thing but it’s very important, I think, to help build that confidence and know that if somebody is coming into your office and they want to get some information that they’re not going to feel as if they’re, that they’re going to leave only having half the information that they need because they struggle to say look I didn’t actually understand that. |
| Sally | So we started off the first part of show speaking with Dame Susan Devoy about Race Relations Day, is there anything that your organisations are doing towards this particular event? |
| Nicki | I think that Plains FM we sort of do that every day, we’ve got so many different communities broadcasting in different languages and for me it’s to let all of those different community broadcasters know that it’s happening is a big thing, send out the information to them about Race Relations Day or Culture Galore or anything else that’s happening within the city that they might benefit from knowing and then share with their community. So for me it’s just sort of a natural rhythm that we get into regardless of the day. |
| Sally | Every day is Race Relations Day. |
| Shirley | And we promote it with our staff and with our clients and also with our colleagues in mainstream services to make them aware so that there’s a specific day that celebrates race relations. So sharing that knowledge and making sure that people mark the day in some way. |
| Sally | Ok well we might have our first break now; we’re going to listen to some music that Shirley, you’ve selected for us: ‘Imagine’ by John Lennon. Could you tell us please why you chose that one? |
| Shirley | I think it’s a beautiful song that just conjures up images what I would like the world to be like and I think that we can do it in our imagination therefore it’s possible to make it a reality. So I’m a pacifist by nature and I think John Lennon was an incredible man and he was incredibly inspiring and I just feel very attached to the song because of the message it gives about everybody being equal and treating one another with respect and caring for one another and caring for the world.  |
|  | **MUSIC – IMAGINE BY JOHN LENNON** |
| Sally | OK kia ora, Nau mai ki tēnei hōtaka: “Speak Up” – “Kōrerotia. With us in the studio are representatives of three organisations which work to promote race relations in Christchurch: Shirley Wright of Christchurch Resettlement Services, Jang Song of the Christchurch Migrant Centre and Nicki Reece from Plains FM. We were speaking before about Race Relations Day, and Nicki you actually mentioned Culture Galore as something that you think is worth promoting amongst the broadcasters. Now this is a festival which was held two weeks ago. The Humans Rights Commission was there with an information stand and that was fantastic because I got to watch the performances and eat all the delicious food. But Nicki, I thought we might start with you: you acted as MC for the event, could you tell us a little bit….what’s it about and what it hopes to achieve? |
| Nicki | It’s been supported for 14 years by two community boards so the City Council have been very, very good with funding this event for that time and its Fendalton-Waimari and Riccarton-Wigram and it’s in order to showcase the cultural talent in our city essentially. So lots of music, lots of colour, lots of dance, just a chance for people just to show their talent and for us to be inspired and take a journey around the world in one of our lovely parks. |
| Sally | And as MC how did you feel standing up on the stage speaking to all of those people and introducing all of those fantastic acts? |
| Nicki | Oh I loved it, it’s such a great day. It’s got a beautiful vibe, that event, that’s the thing that we’re just so delighted to be involved with it and it’s such a lovely fit for the station too. So it’s really neat and backstage you see these beautiful children in particular and adults looking fabulous and they make such an effort to get dressed up in their costumes and makeup and jewellery and they’ve practiced and rehearsed and they’ve put their heart and souls into these performances and they’re very, very good, they’re very professional and I just love being involved and the fact that you can actually be the link in-between some of these acts who don’t, wouldn’t normally get a chance to be in front of a big audience like that is fantastic and it must be…and I know that they just get such a buzz as well as performers, being performers in that environment. |
| Sally | And Shirley and Jane, did you or your organisations attend? |
| Jane | Yes we do, we had a table there and I really enjoy the Culture Galore events, it’s just feel like one day you can travel so many countries and taste the different countries food. So it’s just amazing, you know I never try some Croatian foods on that and some I think, Asian, even some of the Asian country you try some for me is the first time to try some different….I was thinking oh, you know I am from Asia but still you are just amazed by the cooking skills. |
| Nicki | I had Polish; I had a lovely Polish pancake. |
| Shirley | We had an information table as well. I didn’t actually go because I had a family event on that day but some of our staff were there and they said it was wonderful as well, they always enjoy the event. |
| Sally | I noticed Jo was there with her table. And speaking of Culture Galore as an event that people can showcase their cultural identity, why is it important that there are these sorts of venues, these sorts of events in a city like Christchurch? |
| Nicki | We need to be exposed to this often, we need….I think it really does give people an understanding, a greater understanding of the wonderful diversity and diversity in its most positive form. |
| Shirley | I think it’s so important for us to celebrate diversity and for us to be in awe of what people bring into New Zealand with them, it’s not just about our economic growth but it’s certainly about our social and spiritual growth as well. I think that the whole ability of communities to celebrate their diversity and share that with us and celebrate who they are, what they do, what they eat, how they sing, how they dance is such a privilege for us to be sharing but it’s also about the identity. Identity is such an important part of who we are, whether we are a one year old or 95, so I think it’s such an important event or events like this are so important to ensure that people’s identity is maintained and their traditions are respected and valued by the host community and they become part of the host community as well.  |
| Nicki | I have to say that one of the nicest things for me of that day is not even as the MC but just being a part of it was when the Zumba class happened and the Zumba people were there on the stage and then this beautiful Chinese lady who was performing from the Chinese Society, she got up in her beautiful costume and did the Zumba at the back of the stage. I thought, “Yes, that’s what it’s all about”: she felt part of it. And that’s what I am really excited to see in the future from this point going forward and even more of it: the fusion, the fusion between cultures. Yes you’ve got your identity but also those cross-cultural conversations that are happening like at the Korean day a Māori person on stage with a Korean person, that’s fabulous. |
| Jane | It’s a good opportunity for the migrants to meet other migrants so like some new migrants come to Christchurch and probably never, ever have a chance to talk their own language because the Culture Galore, they can meet the people who come from same country as them because on that day as one guy come over to our table talked to one of the Multicultural Council staff, that lady also…they all from Romania so they start talking their own language, you know there’s not many Romanian people in Christchurch so that’s the opportunity for people to find some like home, something from their homeland. |
| Nicki | It’s also in a way having a bit of a rest from having to think constantly in English, being able to relax into your own language or into your own culture for a period of time.  |
| Sally | So we’ve spoken about it benefiting the performers, they get to showcase their identity; we’ve spoken about its benefiting the New Zealanders being exposed to these different cultures; we’ve talked about migrants interacting with other migrants of their own language or their own nationality but also presumably with migrants from other countries as well. In addition to festivals though – I mean Christchurch does it well, there are lots of festivals – but how do we then bring race relations from that sort of festival arena into the more everyday? Have you got any thoughts on that? |
| Shirley | I guess by carrying on doing the…providing the services that we’re providing but also being really in tune with what communities are wanting, so helping them find their own voice but also supporting them to do that, supporting them to set up and establish different things. So we get asked to support different community events and we will always do that because it’s about a partnership and working together to ensure people have the opportunity to celebrate who they are to be able to…you know we have a youth camp every year for example with young people, we take them out of Christchurch for three days and two nights and multi-cultural and those young people always say how wonderful it is to be able to meet other young people from different cultures to their own. So they’re out of that tight-knit group that often a cultural group may be quite insular at times. So I think it really is important that we are listening and we are supporting what people are wanting if that’s possible because they will often have the answers themselves and the benefits are huge. I can remember as a social worker working with people who were so homesick and so devastated when they realised what they’d left behind and life was so hard here in their resettlement but then you saw them, they would be in the office during the week crying and very, very sad and you’d see them at a wedding of their community at the weekend and they’re dancing and very happy. So it’s just such an important thing to support. So that’s what we like to do and also to promote it with other services so educating other people about cultural competence and things that we’ve learned. |
| Nicki | Providing resources maybe in the first language can be useful. |
| Shirley | Yes I can remember when I was studying, learning about the concept of tourist therapy where you can imagine yourself on a bus in a foreign land and you’re sitting on a bus and you’re looking at the scenery and the buildings going past but you don’t get off the bus so that’s kind of, if you think of that in terms of support services, we can do that and not engage with people or we can get off the bus and actually have conversations with people and learn from people. And I think for me, my, I have benefited hugely from my work, that I have learned so much about world but also about myself. I’ve grown as a person because of cultural diversity and race relations and thinking about what that means in New Zealand as well. |
| Nicki | I totally agree Shirley. |
| Shirley | It’s just a fantastic job, I’m so fortunate. |
| Nicki | I think we have to remember too that knowledge is power and that we need to remember that we owe it to our citizens, whoever they are, to give them as much help and information and resources as possible. And I think we could go a lot further in improving that through government funding or through specific programmes or services or whatever, but we do a damn fine job with what we’ve got. |
| Sally | There’s just one final festival I wanted to mention before we wind up which is the Global Football Festival which was co-organised by the Migrant Centre. Jane, if you could just give us a very brief overview of what that festival looks like. |
| Jane | Kevin Park was the co-organiser for this Global Soccer Festival, I think they are doing very…great job, bringing all the people together,. It’s a two day event, it’s quite a big event so all the organisation work like so hard to find volunteers and to provide food for the player and also they have quite a big open ceremony for all the players so the different countries playing can do some presentation on the stage. |
| Sally | And what is it about sport, we’ve been talking about ways of bringing people together, I really think sport is a good one. |
| Nicki | It’s a really good one, isn’t it? |
| Jane | Yes when people play sport it’s kind of a competition but there’s also friendship there, people know better…because they have same rules, I think there’s also fairness for each other because we all follow the same rules that’s why this make, it doesn’t need any language communication, it’s just the sport is a big channel to communicate to each other. |
| Sally | OK well we might wind it up there, Ngā mihi nui ki a Shirley, koutou ko Jane, ko Nicki. We’re going to finish up with a song that Jane has chosen for us which is ‘We Are The World’. We’ll just have time for the chorus, but Jane if you could explain why you chose this song please. |
| Jane | I think the way for the new migrants, they move to the different country, I think people need to realise we are all the human beings, we need to respect to each other’s culture, we need to learn from each other, we need to care about each other. That’s the song I like to choose and I’m quite, I always that songs words to myself say we can make this a better world if we work together |
|  | **MUSIC – WE ARE THE WORLD** |
| Sally | So just to finish up there’s a few notices to bring to your attention. Don’t forget Race Relations Day this 21st of March; encourage your colleagues to bring some food in from their cultures for a multi-cultural staff lunch or “Like” the Human Rights Commission Facebook page Food Culture NZ and share a recipe story or photo of your favourite food. Polyfest is coming up this Saturday the 21st of March, the same day as Race Relations Day 9.30 to 5pm at Westminster Park in Mairehau. It’s a gold coin donation and it’s a celebration of Pacific culture with performances by 19 secondary schools. Summer’s End is the following weekend; it’s all about connecting, belonging, providing a space in which young Cantabrians can find space to come together regardless of their background. There will be performances, activities and food, it’s an excellent day out for young people and their families and it’s 12pm to 6pm at Jelly Park in Burnside. That winds up the first show of the Human Rights Commission’s Speak Up - Kōrerotia. We hope you found it interesting and informative and tune in again on Wednesday the 15th of April for the next show. We’ll be speaking with James Liu of Massey University and Mike Grimshaw of the University of Canterbury as well as other guests. As the centenary of the landings at Gallipoli draws nearer, we’ll be reflecting on issues of national identity and what it means to be a New Zealander today. Ka kite ā tērā mārama. |