24 ΠΑΡΟΙΚΙΑ FRIDAY 2 JULY 2021 0 ΚΟΣΜΟΣ

Το Γυμνάσιο Θηλέων του Γουάλι Παρκ τιμάει την «Εβδομάδα Προσφύγων 2021» Wiley Park Girls High School honours "Refugee Week 2021"

Επιμέλεια: Δημήτρης Καμετόπουλος Edited by Dimitrios Kametopoulos

iley Park Girls High School, a NSW government girls high school in the southwest of Sydney between the suburbs of Punchbowl and Lakemba, celebrated "Refugee Week 2021" during the last school week of Term 2 acknowledging the positive contributions that refugees and their families make to our wider communities. The theme "Unity - The Way Forward" was echoed throughout that week's celebrations. At the school's formal assembly, NSW state MP for Lakemba, Mr Jihad Dib, was a special guest speaker. Mr Dib reiterated that Australia was a country with many opportunities for all and where people of different cultural backgrounds live together in harmony. Ex-student Wiley Park Girls High School student Kumba Aruna spoke about her journey and the challenges she faced as a refugee student while the audience marvelled at her successes. Students expressed that "United We Are Better" in over 30 of their different languages. The new school principal Ms Kim Osborne motivated students and staff throughout the week with her presence and with a clear message that "United We Are Stronger, Safer, Healthier and Happier". Other guest speakers conducted workshops where the school's refugee students were able to gain information about career

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options and university life. A Zoom session with Trangie Central School and Wiley Park Girls High School was an opportunity for the female students to share their background stories, cultures, recipes, hobbies and lifestyles. Finally, an excursion to the Australian Museum and picnic at Hyde Park in the centre of Sydney city finished off the week. For the record, many of the staff at Wiley Park High School are of Greek background. These staff members as well as all others play a major role in the overall welcoming of the refugee students through the school's EAL/D (English as an Additional Language/Dialect) program or better known in the past

as ESL (English as a Second Language) alongside other wellbeing programs in order to support the refugee students academically, mentally, psychologically, and intellectually in their overall settlement in Australia. One of those staff members is Ms Panayiota (Patricia) Stefanidis, a long time Greek language and EAL/D teacher whose deep passion and support for refugee students is recognised at the school for many years. It is hoped that the international borders open in Australia soon after this global pandemic is over so that refugee students and other migrants can commence their new life with aspirations, hope and optimism!



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