



SPARK Program Officer

Position Description

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Position Title SPARK Program Officer (PO)

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Responsible Council SVDP Support Services

Reports To SPARK Program Coordinator
Managerial responsibility

Base Location Liverpool NSW; and Community & School Locations in Western Sydney.

Primary position objective To coordinate the development, implementation, and evaluation of SPARK early intervention activities for primary aged children and their families from refugee, asylum seeker and migrant backgrounds.

To build and maintain effective working relationships with partner schools, volunteers, program partners and participants in the SPARK program.

To ensure that training, program delivery and evaluation is undertaken in a respectful, culturally appropriate manner, and delivered in a manner which empowers families and builds community participation.

St Vincent de Paul Society NSW

The St Vincent de Paul Society NSW is a member and volunteer based organisation that has been assisting people experiencing disadvantage in NSW for more than 130 years.

The Society was founded by a 20 year old man named Frederic Ozanam in 1833, who with a group of friends, wanted to make a difference to the poverty and disadvantage that he saw around him in post-Revolution France. Leading by example and with boundless energy, Frederic started what is now a world-wide movement in just 20 short years. The St Vincent de Paul Society NSW has around 16,000 members and volunteers and 1,400 staff. Our local member networks, referred to as Conferences, are present in over 420 communities across NSW.

Our members and volunteers provide assistance to people experiencing disadvantage including food parcels and vouchers, financial assistance, assistance with energy bills and other debt, budget counselling and the provision of other material items such as furniture, clothing and bedding and any other household items. Importantly, our members also provide vital emotional support and referral services as needed.

The St Vincent de Paul Society is a leading provider of community support services and has over 100 Special Works across NSW in the areas of homelessness, mental health, disability, financial counselling, supported accommodation, food provision, refugees and migrants and addiction counselling.

Our work is funded by all levels of government, the generous support we receive from the community and our 250 Retail Centres across NSW.

Program Overview

SPARK was established in 2006 to support children and families from refugee, asylum seeker and migrant backgrounds to settle into Australia well and to thrive in their community. SPARK enables these families to become fully engaged and settled members of their community through connections with

schools, local volunteers, and organisational partners. SPARK inspires and builds the capacity of communities to work together for an inclusive, equitable and compassionate society.

SPARK facilitates:

1. Educational, social and activity programs in partnership with schools to promote children's development and independence.
2. Parental engagement with schools and community living through English development, social groups, excursions and capacity-building programs.
3. Advocacy and awareness-raising of refugee and settlement issues.

SPARK activities run within schools across Western Sydney during school terms on a weekly basis. SPARK responds to individual and school needs to provide a stimulating, safe and welcoming environment for children and their families.

Duties and Responsibilities

Program Implementation

- Coordinate the implementation, delivery and evaluation of SPARK program activities for primary aged children and their families, and actively engage them in all aspects of the Program
- Develop and maintain productive relationships with partner schools and school staff, including Executives, Teachers, Refugee Support Leaders, and Community and Student Liaison Officers
- Develop and maintain positive relationships with Local Council, local community groups, community organisations and other key stakeholders, including attendance at regular inter-agency meetings and community project working groups
- Coordinate regular partnership meetings, including program planning, problem solving, and opportunities for feedback and continuous improvement
- Coordinate the implementation and monitoring of the WHS Management systems for SPARK including incident reporting and work environment safety and security, and ensure all volunteers and school staff are aware of these processes
- Establish and maintain a child safe environment for all SPARK program activities. Ensure that all child protection suspicions and concerns are reported by volunteers and staff diligently and appropriately in line with Society policies and legislation

Community Engagement & Development

- Identify and implement opportunities for collaboration with new and existing partners, in order to develop new program activities or enhance existing program activities and outcomes
- Lead the engagement of SPARK and its participant groups, in partner and community events such as Refugee Week and Family Fun Days
- Promote SPARK at schools in order to build awareness of the program, through presentations to school staff and participation in wider school activities such as Parent Café and Parents and Citizens Association Meetings (P&C)
- Facilitate consultation sessions with children and families, and key community stakeholders in order to identify the community's aspirations for the future, and to develop solutions that can be incorporated into program design, implementation and evaluation

Volunteer Coordination

- Support Volunteer Officers with planning the volunteer recruitment pipeline, volunteer training, and ongoing volunteer recognition and development activities
- Coordinate and facilitate volunteer orientation sessions, term planning and review meetings in order to ensure volunteer participation in program design, implementation and evaluation

- Coordinate up to 10-12 volunteers at each SPARK program activity, through briefing, assigning tasks, facilitating reflection sessions, monitoring attendance and providing implementation support and guidance where necessary
- Develop and maintain open and positive relationship with all volunteer teams and actively promote volunteer team building
- Encourage volunteer feedback and proactively address volunteer concerns, safety issues and attendance issues and elevate to the Program Coordinator as appropriate.
- Support the Volunteer Development Officer with the engagement and relationship management of High School Volunteer Partnerships, including training.

Administration and Reporting

- Maintain accurate and up to date records for all aspects of the program including internal school, student and volunteer databases, and external funding databases where required.
- Prepare project planning documents and evaluation reports as required. Collect and collate qualitative and quantitative data for evaluation purposes and to identify areas for quality and service improvement.
- Contribute content to the monthly SPARK email newsletter
- Ad hoc administration and program support, as required
- Share responsibility for coordinating, chairing and minute taking in SPARK team reflections and meetings and actively contribute to a culture of continuous improvement and peer learning

Essential Criteria

- Relevant tertiary qualification (minimum Certificate IV) in community development or community services; or an Education qualification with related community development experience.
- Demonstrated practical experience of program implementation and development in a school or community setting.
- Demonstrated skills in coordinating projects using volunteer support.
- Experience in working with migrant or refugee families in the context of settlement.
- Demonstrated ability to work cooperatively with internal and external stakeholders at various levels, establishing and maintaining strong strategic partnerships.
- Strong administrative skills including experience in using the MS Office suite of programs.
- NSW Drivers licence, and a willingness to travel around Western Sydney and fulfil occasional weekend work.
- Satisfactorily complete of Criminal History and Working with Children Checks.
- A willingness to adhere to and support the ethos of the St Vincent de Paul Society NSW.

Desired Skills

- Knowledge or qualifications in children's education and learning.
- A TESOL/CELATA qualification

The St Vincent de Paul Society is an Equal Employment Opportunity Employer