

# NORTHERN BEACHES REFUGEE SANCTUARY LTD

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## Welcome to the NBRs Summer 2019 Newsletter

We have had a busy and successful last six months. We will have helped another 364 refugees travel to Australia. We have now helped 6709 refugees with airfares for travel to Australia since we started. We are still seeing most of the families coming from Syria and Iraq.

The following is a story from one of our committee members Barb Webb.

In 2009 at a meeting of NBRs, David Addington mentioned there was to be a barbecue, at a community house in Manly, managed by the Jesuit's, where recent refugee arrivals were to be offered accommodation. He specifically mentioned that a Zimbabwean woman who had recently given birth to a baby girl would be there. It was there that I first met Chiratidzo and 3 week old, Amanda. Little did I know this would be the start of an enduring friendship, as I was privileged to follow Chiratidzo's amazing life journey.

Having been invited to hold her newborn baby daughter on our first meeting, I then met with Chiratidzo on various occasions, initially, for a coffee and "walk and talk" down the hill at Manly Beach. She gradually told me her story.

Chiratidzo had fled her homeland after receiving death threats, when she had refused to carry out a directive by the ruling party, the Zanu Patriotic Front, to identify women who had sons of an age to be trained as boy soldiers. She told me that her older children had been stopped on their way home from school by "Mugabe's thugs" who threatened, "We're going to get your mother." Her brother, who worked for the airlines, got her onto a flight to Australia where she sought asylum.

In 2009 Chiratidzo began a course at Brookvale TAFE and found suitable childcare for little Amanda. She did so well at TAFE, that she was then advised to apply to study Social Work at university. Initially, she was adamant she could leave little Amanda at childcare, get to lectures at the University on the other side of the city by public transport and be back in time to collect Amanda by closing time before heading down the hill to her flat! As her emergency phone contact person, I received several phone calls from worried staff about to close the centre for the day, with Amanda still to be collected. After a week or two of impossible time management, she came to our home to search the advertisements on my computer for "Flats for Let". After many knock backs, the ever-determined Chiratidzo, found a little flat closer to university, and with a few bits of furniture and lots of determination she moved in. She completed her degree in Social Work in 2014 and we sat nursing Amanda at her mother's graduation ceremony and celebrated with dinner afterwards. She was optimistic about soon having a "real job".

Despondent at initial knockbacks and lack of replies to unsuccessful job applications, I assured her with my fingers and toes crossed, that she would get the right job eventually. She soon bounced back and was offered a position at one of the major hospitals in Sydney, where she has remained working for 5 years now. She just loves her job.

NBRs lent Chiratidzo visa fees for her family. However, her husband refused to come, which resulted in the application being rejected as she had applied for a

spousal visa. She had to pay back the money she had borrowed. She eventually raised more funds by herself and brought her older daughter, Thelma, to Australia to join her baby sister.

Chiratzido then decided to get a drivers' license and discovered there was a long waiting list, so travelled to the other side of the city, where waiting lists were shorter! She got her license first go, acquired a small secondhand car which she now drives to work.

Her two sons, Malik and Michael, arrived in 2015 completing Chiratzido's family. Since finishing school, Thelma has worked in retail, met a wonderful man and "married customarily", which we watched in awe, as arrangements were agreed to by both families. We are told we will be invited to the traditional wedding in the future.

Chiratzido loves her job at the hospital and is looking forward to becoming a grandmother, while raising the three younger children, her daughter Amanda and her sons, Malik, and Michael, She says she didn't know that she would be capable of raising 4 children on her own and is very proud of what she has achieved. She says she has weathered a few storms but is now confident and enjoying life in Australia.

(For the purpose of this article, Chiratzido has chosen to change the names of all the family to ensure privacy as, although she says she can never go back, her children may wish to return to the country of their birth in the future).

We are looking for donations so that we can reduce the waiting list and assist more people in the next year. We helped approximately 10% of all those granted Special Humanitarian Visas in the last two years. The demand is constant, and we are struggling to help everyone in a reasonable time. We have lost some of our donors over the last few years when we weren't looking for donations. If you can help, we would be very grateful and so will those families who are waiting. If you can share this newsletter to friends and family that would be very helpful.

We are a practical and very efficient charity. We are all volunteers and our only expenses are transaction fees and bad debts. This amounts to about 2% of our loans since we started. The airfares are repaid and then the money is reused. A donation will help for many years.

All donations are tax deductible. You can donate into our bank account. Please email me to let me know your details so I can email you a tax receipt.

Our bank account details are  
Commonwealth Bank  
The Northern Beaches Refugee Sanctuary Ltd  
BSB 062197  
Account 10993154

We can also receive donations from credit cards or regular donations via Shout for good. Go to our website [www.nbrs.org.au](http://www.nbrs.org.au) and click on the donation page.

I would like to thank all those who have supported us so generously in the past, without your donations we couldn't have helped so many refugees.

David Addington  
20/11/19