

San Diego Refugee Forum

General Meeting Minutes – April 15, 2008

I. *Call to order at 10:35 am*

Hamse Warfa

Present: Ahmed Said, Ralph Achenbach, Amina Mumin, Hassan Abdirahman, Barbara Hansen, Kushbindar Lally, Sid Voorakkara, Suzanne Coates, Tiana Reinhardt-Lee, Mike McKay, Juana Duenas, Janice Stucke, Jacob Gutknoth, Paula Lloyd, Besma Coden, Bonnie Copland, Dan Breuning, Benny Galcia, Bob Montgomery, Dung Le, Tan Rosynastan, Samantha Hurst, Sara Goepfert, Kathi Anderson, Tammy Lin, Ettera Bejle, Paulino Paida, Diana Ross, Lejla Voloder, Hamse Warfa

II. *Introductions*

III. *Minutes and Announcements*

- Motion to approve minutes: Tammy Lin, Second: Paulino Paida
- All in favor, no nays, no abstentions

- Tammy Lin of Jewish Family Services announced their new program providing free legal assistance to professionals who seek asylum. The program is privately funded.
- Benny Galcia of California Conservation Corps announced that they are hiring for 25 positions on a monthly basis, encouraging Forum members to refer eligible and employable individuals via telephone (619) 409-4382, asking to speak to a recruiter or with himself at extension 203. English knowledge is not a requirement.
- Barbara Hansen of Alliance for African Assistance announced that their annual refugee day breakfast will be held at La Jolla Presbyterian Church on June 19th.
- Mike McKay of Catholic Charities announced that San Diego City College is hosting a conference on International Relief on May 3rd.
- Ahmed Sahid of Somali Family Services announced their recent award with co-awardee Horn of Africa of a state grant targeting 11 – 15 year olds with gang prevention services. Somali Family Services are also currently conducting health assessments of seniors in the Somali community, and the results will be shared with the Forum.

IV. *Convening*

- Bylaws vote: It was established that quorum was reached with 16 paid members present at the meeting. Kathi Anderson suggested to amend the draft bylaws to include the following addition (*in italics*): " Article IV: Membership, A. New member agencies/organizations will be admitted to the Forum after application approval by the Executive Committee *and receipt of membership dues.*"
All were in favor of adopting the draft bylaws with this amendment, no nays, no abstentions
- Mike McKay reported on behalf of the Outreach Committee their recommendation to have current members invite new prospective members to a Forum meeting and to give them an opportunity to introduce themselves at that meeting in a brief 'spotlight' setting.
- Samantha Hurst reported on behalf of the Advocacy Committee that they identified language barriers and access to translation services as the major issue faced by refugees, particularly in accessing health-related services, and that the committee recommends to focus advocating for policies at the state level that would make funding available for mandatory translation services. A lively discussion ensued about translation issues in the health services sector. Sid Voorakkara suggested to consider the forthcoming findings of the Governor's Language Access

San Diego Refugee Forum

General Meeting Minutes – April 15, 2008

Task Force, and Bonnie Copland noted the video-conferencing system implemented successfully in Contra Costa County. Sid commented that California Endowment may be able to assist with arranging a speaker to present on this and similar models and their potential applicability in San Diego.

- Diana Ross reported on behalf of the Event Committee the two options currently under consideration for this year's annual Forum Event, a stand-alone event on or around World Refugee Day or an event tied-in with the upcoming new open air market in City Heights. The overarching goal of the event will be to raise awareness about refugee communities and issues in San Diego with the public at large, with a view to expanding educational activities in future years throughout an entire refugee awareness month. A lively discussion ensued with comments from the floor about the possibility of the International Houses in Balboa Park as a venue, a tie-in with a model refugee camp to be set up by Doctors without Borders in San Diego, and the potential to engage college students. The California Conservation Corps will be able to provide manpower for set-up and breakdown at no charge.

V. Focus: Cancer Detection Program: Every Woman Counts

- The scheduled speaker was not present.

VI. Financial Report

Lejla Voloder reported no changes from last month, with an ending account balance of \$1,450.09.

VII. County Reports

- Paulino Paidá reported that the County has scheduled the first of two presentations educating health care providers about refugees and County refugee health screenings for April 30th, 1 pm, at the County Health Services Complex. All are welcome to attend.

VIII. Provider and State Advisory Reports

- Bob Montgomery reported that the next state advisory meeting is scheduled for May. The state refugee summit is planned for the first week of September in the LA area, and Bob is welcoming nominations of keynote speakers.
- Lejla Voloder and Bob Montgomery reported on the temporary and indefinite suspension of the P3 program in East Africa and the resulting lack of arrivals from the region.

IX. Adjournment at 11:50 am

X. Next Meeting: May 21st, 10:30 am