

# San Diego Refugee Forum

General Meeting Minutes – April 21, 2009

*I. Call to order at 10:30 am*

*Diana Ross*

**Present:** Ralph Achenbach, Sara Vaz, Samantha Hurst, Deqa Said, Diane Petach, Paulino Paidá, Maacah Marah, Justine Hollowell, Melissa Dennison, Bob Montgomery, Brent Freeman, Barbara Tucker, Sakara Tear, Sheryl Ashley, Sean Riordan, Diana Ross, Lejla VOloder, Sid Voorakkam, Barbara Hansen, Dan Breuninger, Paige Newman, Ahmed Said, Juan Estrada, Ruthy Argumedo, Julie Mitchell, Bonnie Copland, Zaki Nashi, Mike McKay, Besma Coda, Ayaan Khalif, Bryan Nazareth

*II. Introductions*

*III. Minutes and Announcements*

- Barbara Tucker moved to approve the minutes from the March meeting. Motion was seconded by Sean Riordan. All present approved, no nays, no abstentions.
- Sean Riordan enquired whether there are any known cases in San Diego of refugees who have not adjusted their status in a timely manner to be detained. Bob Montgomery referred to some known cases in Arizona but had no indication of this having occurred locally.
- Melissa Dennison reminded all in attendance of the Fix-it service for home improvements promoting safety is open to all individuals who entered the US as refugees and are currently 60 years or older. The service is free of charge, and all grant moneys need to be allocated by September. She is currently accepting referrals.
- Paige Newman announced that Somali Family Service is planning a Health Fair for June 20<sup>th</sup>, from 1 pm – 5 pm. Further details will be forthcoming.
- Diana Ross announced that request for support from The California Endowment for the language access advocacy project of the Refugee Forum has been successful and invited all those interested to express an interest in participating in a free advocacy training to be scheduled in the near future.
- Sean Riordan announced that as part of this project, he will develop 'Know Your Rights' presentations and materials and requested assistance from one other volunteer.

*IV. Presentation: The California Endowment*

- Sid Voorakkam provided an overview of the foundation's ten year strategic plan and its implications on public health programming in City Heights.

*V. Financial Report*

- Lejla Voloder reported the new account balance as \$2,128.

*VI. County Reports*

- Bryan Nazareth shared that the PRM visit is anticipated for early May to assess capacity with a focus on East County. Bob Montgomery explained that this may likely lead to a revision of placement policy.

*VII. Provider and State Advisory Reports*

- Bob Montgomery reported continued strong arrivals and ongoing growth in numbers, mostly due to resettled Iraqis. Other groups include Burmese and Butanese. He shared that the VOLAGs have requested 125,000 new arrivals for FY2010.
- Barbara Tucker reported that the case load in the East County welfare-to-work program has continues to grow, with 80 new cases in February, more than 100 in March, and more than that already for the month of April. This is causing capacity strains for ESL classes.

*VII. Adjournment at 11:50 am*

*IX. Next Meeting: May 19<sup>th</sup>, 10:30 am*