

San Diego Refugee Forum

General Meeting Minutes – August 18, 2009

I. Welcome/Introductions at 10:35 am

Hamse Warfa

Present: Ralph Achenbach, Hamse Warfa, Lejla Voloder, Paulino Paidá, Sara Vaz, Paige Newman, Awichu Akwanya, Jen Cordaro, Jamie Regalbuto, Justine Hollowell, Taromeh Sarebanha, Diane Petach, Donna Peterson, Bushra Jonna, Rami Hanna, Sean Riordan, Shawna Siebold, Jibril Blejani, Ahmed Sahid, Bob Montgomery, Dung Le, Elteva Bejko, Besma Coda, Bryan Nazareth, Kathi Anderson, Barbara Tucker, Tondra Lolin, Mike McKay, Cara Kiggins, Elias Qabille, Juan Estrada, Taide Villa, Jill cCougan, Ruthy Argumedo, Sheryl Ashley

II. Minutes and Announcements

- Jen Cordaro moved to approve the minutes from the July meeting. Motion was seconded by Awichu Akwanya. All present approved, no nays, no abstentions.
- Paige Newman of Somali Family Service announced that the organization is hosting a free financial literacy workshop on August 22.
- Jen Cordaro of Alliance for African Assistance announced that the organization is offering free public transit workshops to the Burmese community on August 25 & 27.
- Ruthy Argumedo of Molina Healthcare announced that the organization is seeking nominations for its community champions awards.
- Sheryl Ashley of Cuyamaca College noted her concern regarding access to food for the Iraqi community in East County and wondered about the existence or feasibility of joint efforts to create a food bank. A discussion ensued with contributions from Besma Coda and Barbara Tucker with a view to exploring a collaboration to this end.

IV. Presentation: Chaldean Middle Eastern Social Services

- Bushra Jonna of CMSS provided an overview of the organization's CVD prevention and education program with an emphasis on its nutrition curriculum component.

V. Committee Updates

- Paulino Paidá reported on behalf of the nominations committee that no nominations have been submitted to date and that everyone is encouraged to submit their nominations by October for the end-of-year election of officers.
- Mike McKay reported on behalf of the membership & outreach committee that no recent meetings have taken place in light of the encouraging and continuing trend of increased attendance at the general meetings and that, also in light of this, a bigger meeting room may need to be sought out in the near future.
- Ralph Achenbach reported on behalf of the advocacy committee that the language access project is gaining further momentum with several scheduled presentations at various stakeholder meetings, including the Community Health Improvement Partners/Hospital Association and the Healthy San Diego Work Group. A tentative date for the Forum's language access round table has been set for March 16th, 2010. Sean Riordan added that the committee seeks to develop a one-page 'fact sheet' highlighting key points regarding the issue of language access for refugees in health care settings.

VI. Financial Report

- Lejla Voloder reported the current account balance as \$10,081.

VII. Provider, County and State Advisory Reports

- Bob Montgomery reported that the State Advisory Committee has not met since the last Refugee Forum meeting. The next meeting will take place on September 24 and an update will be provided at the October Refugee Forum general meeting.

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- Dung Le reported the number of new clients in the Wilson-Fish Program for last month as 246, of whom 174 are from Iraq. He further provided copies of a new resource to newly arrived refugees “17 Things You Need to Know About Resettling in the United States.”
- Kathi Anderson reported that numbers of asylum seekers continue to increase and that a detailed update will be provided at the October Refugee Forum meeting for the end of the Fiscal Year.
- Paulino Paida reported that no details regarding a vaccine for swine flu are available at the moment.
- Bryan Nazareth announced that the County is slated to receive approx. \$5.3 million for procurement of services as part of the American Recovery & Relief Act. The majority of these funds are expected to be allocated to existing contracts such as the Family Self-Sufficiency Services, in all six service regions of the County. In addition, there will be competitive procurement of new services with two requests for proposals to be issued within two weeks, one focusing on employment for hard-to-place persons (ex-felons/released prisoners), and a second ‘bundled RFP’ including refugee employment, microenterprise and career development for youth. An industry day/community hearing will be scheduled prior to the release of the RFPs. Any organization will be able to apply to as many areas of the RFP with individual proposals as they desire. Smaller organizations without strong track records in service provision are strongly encouraged to seek out partnerships with more established service providers. Detailed information will be available on the County’s website under ‘Buynet’ within the ‘purchasing & contracting’ section.

VII. *Adjournment at 11:50 am*

IX. *Next Meeting: September 15th, 10:30 am*