

San Diego Refugee Forum

General Meeting Minutes – July 22, 2009

I. Call to order at 10:40 am

Hamse Warfa

Present: Ralph Achenbach, Zaki Nashi, Diane Petach, Gerald Monk, Sara Vaz, Barbara Tucker, Sheryl Ashley, Kelly Brainard, Mikaela Wallinder, Heather Bennett, Ramla Sahid, Deqa Sayid, Juana Duenas, Samantha Hurst, Mike McKay, Cynthia Estrada, Kacie Mutschelker, Jen Cordaro, Jamie Regallato, Awichu Akiwanya, Paige Newman, Paulino Paida, Julie Mitchell, Lejla Voloder, Ayaan Khalif, Morgan Congdon, Tricia Hilliard, Deana Gullo, Brent Freeman, Sean Riordan, Maacah Marah, Lisa Bright, Isaac Paida, Elizabeth Lou, Elias Qabille, Jibriel Blejani, Ester Herrera, Dung Le, Shahla Sepah, Bonnie Copland, Hamse Warfa, Diana Ross.

II. Introductions

- The following first-time meeting participants introduced themselves and the organizations they represent:
- Gerald Monk introduced SDSU's City Heights-based Marriage and Family Therapy clinic. SDSU is interested in recruiting students from the Somali, Burmese and Iraqi communities for their programs, and the clinic provides services on a sliding-scale basis.
- Ramla Sahid introduced the nutritional services offered by the American Red Cross WIC program.
- Awichu Akiwanya introduced himself and pointed to his experience as an interpreter in the health care sector.
- Tricia Hilliard and Deana Gullo of Survivors of Torture introduced themselves.

III. Minutes and Announcements

- Ralph Achenbach noted that on account of the social nature of the June meeting in honor of World Refugee Day, there were no minutes for that month.
- Motion to approve the May meeting minutes: Dr Hurst, Second: Barbara Tucker
- All in favor, no nays, no abstentions

- Elais Qabille, volunteer interpreter with Casa Cornelia, announced that additional volunteer interpreters are urgently needed, specifically in Somali.
- Paulino Paida reminded members that nominations for the year-end election can be submitted to the nomination committee until October. Contact 619-692-8636 or 619-287-9454.
- Cynthia Estrada announced that the Hunger Coalition offers language resources for food stamp applicants. For more information: 619-358-9270.
- Elizabeth Lou of Nile Sister Initiative shared that she has been selected as a community member for The California Endowment-funded City Heights program initiative and that there are opportunities to participate. For more information: 619-265-2959.
- Hamse Warfa announced that Alliance Healthcare Foundation will hold a workshop on their new grantmaking schedule on August 21.
- Sean Riordan reminded members that the Refugee Forum Advocacy Committee is offering free 'Know Your Rights' workshops on language access in health care.
- Ralph Achenbach provided a brief summary of the special strategic meeting which had preceded the general meeting, saying that participants explored ways for the Refugee Forum to become even more impactful and more effective in strengthening collaborative efforts to benefit the communities of those seeking refuge in San Diego. Follow-up meetings and discussions will be announced to the membership.

San Diego Refugee Forum

General Meeting Minutes – July 22, 2009

IV. Momentum Team Updates

- Diana Ross reported on the Mid-City CAN's implementation of the planning process for The California Endowment-funded City Heights program initiative, providing details on the various levels of direct community involvement and input.
- Ralph Achenbach provided members with an opportunity to sign up for free 'Know Your Rights' workshops on language access in health care.

V. Financial report

Lejla Voloder reported four new paid members and the ending account balance as \$9,871.15.

VI. Provider and State Advisory Reports

- Mike McKay reported that between October 2008 and July 15, 2009, San Diego County has received 3,765 newly arrived refugees, of whom 3,232 are Iraqi and 163 Burmese.
- Barbara Tucker noted that the case load for employment cases in East County has increased by 500 since February.
- Sheryl Ashley noted that Cuyamaca College intends to add additional ESL classes and is currently researching funding opportunities.

VII. County Reports

- Paulino Paida reported that the swine flu is still a concern in the County and that routine preventative measures are advised.
- Juana Duenas explained that funds from the federal stimulus package are still pending and that RFPs will hopefully be issued soon. Further, the CAP three-year refugee employment plan planning process will commence shortly with public hearings, to be completed by September. The plan is targeted to be finalized by April of next year.

IX. Adjournment at 11:50 noon

X. Next Meeting: August 18th, 10:30 am