

San Diego Refugee Forum

General Meeting Minutes – May 19, 2009

I. Call to order at 10:35 am

Hamse Warfa

Present: Ralph Achenbach, Sean Riordan, Diana Ross, Lejla Voloder, Bob Montgomery, Jean Fort, Mary Cutchin, Kelly Brainard, Morgan Congdon, Sara Vaz, Zaki Nashi, Jibriel Blejani, Paulino Paida, Bonnie Copland, Justine Hollowell, Hamse Warfa, Kerry Sheldon, Barbara Hansen, Ahmed Said, Paige Newman, Jennifer Tracy, Elizabeth Lou, Sakara Tear, Ayaan Khalif, Ines Barros, Kristina Aochi, Lisa Swid, Heide VanDenburgh, Lisa Julienne Bright, Barbara Jiminez, Mike McKay, Julie Mitchell, Steve Eldred, Dung Le, Ursula Pfau, Jamie Regalbuto, Jen Cordaro, Hassan Abdirahman, Besma Coda

II. Introductions

- Jean Fort of Women's Empowerment International (WE) introduced the organization and its microfinance work around the world, including with refugees in San Diego, as a new member.
- Ralph Achenbach extended a special welcome to Steve Eldred of The California Endowment.

III. Minutes and Announcements

- Jennifer Tracy moved to approve the minutes from the April meeting. Motion was seconded by Hamse Warfa. All present approved, no nays, no abstentions.
- Mike McKay of Catholic Charities announced that the organization has submitted an application to ORR for a Wilson Fish comprehensive resettlement collaborative with IRC and JFS.
- Paige Newman of Somali Family Service announced that the organization is hosting a Health Fair on June 20th at the City Heights Community Park.
- Barbara Hansen of Alliance for African Assistance announced the organization's eighth World Refugee Day breakfast to be held on June 20th.
- Zaki Nashi of Kurdish Human Rights Watch offered office space at their El Cajon location to other community-based organizations and VOLAGs.
- Hamse Warfa requested volunteers to form an ad hoc nomination and election committee for the Forum's upcoming election.

IV. Presentation: The Local Initiatives Support Corporation

- Kerry Sheldon provided an overview of the organizations 'Neighborhoods First' initiative and their activities in Colina Park.

V. Financial Report

- Lejla Voloder reported the new account balance as \$2,267.82, reminding all present of the need to remit membership dues by June 30th in order to be eligible to vote in the upcoming election.

VI. Committee Updates

- Jennifer Tracy reported on behalf of the advocacy committee that a tentative date for the Forum's language access conference has been set for March 16th, 2010.
- Mike McKay reported on behalf of the outreach & education committee that the committee would like to organize an event as part of an upcoming general meeting jointly with another committee.

VII. Provider and State Advisory Reports

- Bob Montgomery reported that the state of California has signed a contract for a program serving unaccompanied refugee minors in Southern California. The program will be based in Orange County. Further, he reported the successful passing of SB1569, providing for assistance to non-certified victims of human trafficking. In addition, he reported that the

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time period for assistance of individuals arriving on special immigrant visas (SIVs) has been adjusted to eight months for both Iraqis and Afghans.

- Barbara Jiminez reported that the County of San Diego's Community Action Partnership has been notified of a preliminary allocation of financial support from the federal economic stimulus package, and that the local focus will be on employment, food & nutrition, and better use of available income. More information is available at www.sdcountycap.org. Comments and input can be directed to Barbara and are much appreciated.
- Kelly Brainard reported on behalf of Barbara Tucker that Maximus received 101 new referrals in March and 141 in April.
- Paulino Paidá shared the County's hotline for swine flu related questions at 858-715-2250. Bonnie Copland added that 211 also offers information in this regard.

VII. Adjournment at 11:50 am

IX. Next Meeting: June 16th, 10:30 am