

## San Diego Refugee Forum

### Minutes

Tuesday, April 20, 2010, 10:30a.m.-12:00p.m.

Spring Field College, 5348 University Ave. Suite 100, San Diego, CA 92105

#### I. *Call to order at 10:35a.m.*

**Present:** Bonnie Copland, Vernita Gutierrez, David Gangsei, Carolyn Smyth, Brent Freeman, Jibriel Blejani, Elaine McLevie, Mariana Vascongelos, Dawn Toc, Sahra Abdi, Bryan Nazareth, Ralph Achenbach, Ali Ridwan, Lejla Voloder, Cynthia Estrada, Said Abiyou, Kristen Nelson, Alaw Gambi, Paige Newman, Brenda Flores, Mike Buchanan, Holly Hough, Rawan Al Ghani, Nadine Garmo, Alexander Sandowal, Peter Holstin, Deqa Said, hris Rajkiewicz, Dilkhwaz Ahmed, Hamadi H. Hamadi, Abdalla Ali, Meslissa Dennis, Jen Cordaro, Juan Estrada, Adrian Floino, Tim Slade, Abdi Mohamoud, Phil Mamuad, Rebecca Fischer, Sheryl Ashley, Margaret Higgins, Dung Le, Jill McGougan, Marc Meyer, Bridge Lambert, Mike McKay, Paulino Paida, Ayaan Khalif, Debbie Rull, Etleva Bejko, Cara Kiggins, Deanaka Goodwin, Ester Herrera Souad Naoum, Sara Vaz, Elizabeth Lou, Izela Jacobo, Patti Clayton

#### II. *Introduction and Announcements*

- Jen Cordaro from AAA announced that this is the last chance for cultural competency training for the Burmese population.
- Brenda Flores announced a new unaccompanied refugee minor program.
- JFS fix-it service ends at the end of June call 858-637-3354 for details.
- Somali Family Service health fair will be held 6/19/10 from 11-4.
- Welcome Back program will hold a course in June for foreign trained nurses; the cost will be \$500 but stipends will be available.
- Mark Meyer from the National Conflict Resolution Center announced they have a 2 day training for workplace and community. It is a free training and will be run through September.
- Margaret Higgins will be teaching a class as AIU on working with refugees.

#### III. *New Members Welcome- Elizabeth Lou*

#### IV. *Task Force Updates*

- **Census Task Force-** Sara Vaz updated that all census participants stipend checks have been mailed out and to check with her if you have not received your check. She asked participants to give updates.
- Many refugees have not received form or can't identify form.
- Elaine McLevie stated they have helped about 100 families fill out the census form.
- SFS outreach workers have been talking to the Somali population and have been teaching them how to self-identify on the form.
- Horn of Africa has donated space to the census to do orientations at the office and have helped clients fill out the form.
- License to Freedom has helped 115 newcomers fill out the form.
- The San Diego Hunger Coalition has done outreach to educate on the census.
- Nile Sisters has worked with community Elders to help spread info on the census.
- UPAC has partnered with CBOs to do outreach and coordinate media events.
- AAA has gone to apartment complexes to train leaders to help refugees fill out the census.

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- **Health Task Force-** Bonnie Copeland gave an update on the conference. It was a big hit and so much was learned by the more than 150 participants.
- CHIP wants input on refugee issues- Deqa Sayid and Sahra Abdi volunteered to help with this. Elaine, Paulino and Dilhwaz also volunteered to attend the CHIP meetings to advocate for refugee issues.
- **Asylee Task Force-** Sara Vaz gave an update that the CCA Tour will go forward. A sign-up sheet was passed around but no date has been set yet.
- **Employment Task Force-** The task force is working on an event called "International Night of Networking." The event will most likely be held at the Price Charities building in mid-July.
- The event will focus on helping refugees with professional skills find jobs.
- The task force is partnering with Refugee Works on this event.

#### V. Other Updates

- There is a vacancy within the Refugee Forum leadership. The position of secretary is vacant, This position will be voted on in the May meeting. If interested please email Mike Mckay [mmckay@ccdsd.org](mailto:mmckay@ccdsd.org) with a bio.

#### VI. FOCUS: Youth

- Sergeant Patti Clayton of the San Diego Police Department gave a presentation on the problem of youth gangs in City Heights.
- The gangs started with refugee youth for protection but quickly moved to interest in money and recognition in the neighborhood.
- Both boys and girls are involved in the gangs. Boys are beaten into the gang and girls are sexually assaulted.
- Sergeant Clayton stressed that parents need to pay attention to what their children are doing. Parents should know who their child's friends are, should watch for changes in clothing and for changes in sleep patterns.
- Parents should also monitor their child's internet use and social networking sites as well as checking the text messages on their cellphones.
- There has been a decrease in youth criminal activity pointing to the usefulness of all the youth programs available in the community.
- Izela Jacobo from the Cajon Valley School District presented on the English learner students in the district. This is the fastest growing group in the school district and over 100 languages are spoken.
- Over the last 5 years this group has grown to represent 30% of the students in the Cajon Valley School District.
- In 2010, there were 1542 refugee students in the district.
- The district is offering unique specialized instruction for refugee students that includes a newcomer program and curriculum designed specifically for refugee students.
- There is also an ESL program offered to parents that has a parent education

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#### VII. *Youth programs/resources announcements*

- Alliance for Community Empowerment is offering gang awareness trainings and leadership academies.
- National Conflict Resolution Center is creating a training focusing on youth.
- IRC has after school programs at Crawford High School.
- License to Freedom has domestic violence and parenting classes in Kurdish and Arabic.
- Tuan Nguyen has approached the Forum about helping out with an event at Camp Pendleton to celebrate the anniversary of the arrival of the first Vietnamese refugees.

**Next Meeting: Tuesday, May 18, 2010, 10:30a.m.-12:00p.m. Focus on health - Springfield College**