

San Diego Refugee Forum

Minutes

Tuesday, January 19, 2010, 10:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
Springfield College, 5348 University Ave. Suite 100, San Diego, CA 92105

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I. *Call to order at 10:40 am*

Present: Sara Vaz, Ralph Achenbach, Ayan Mohamed, Paige Newman, Jessica Gillard, Mikaela Wallindes, Rachel Callahan, Vanessa Pridmore, Jamie Regaibuto, Jen Cordaro, Sean Riordan, Debbie Rull, Ayaan Khalif, Jill McGougan, Juan Estrada, Samantha Hurst, Bonnie Copeland, Marcah Marah, Justine Hollowell, Cynthia Estrada, Steve Eldred, Deanneka Goodwin, Anthony Bernal, Rosalina Barreras, Cara Kiggins, Melisa DuBois, Melissa Dennison, Kathi Anderson, Diane Petach, Timothy Slade, Brooke Truesdale, Shannon Rae, Deborah Dorn, Rene Santiago, Bryan Nazareth, Ellen Malin, Holly Hough, Ahmed Sahid, Sonia Mckeeon, Laura Harris, Nicole Robles, Sheryl Ashley, Deqa Sayid, Saima Bahramzi, Christine Seisun, Besma Coda, Dung Le, John Fanestil, Eric Brown, Brent Freeman, Sneha Patel, Mohamed Hassan, Ahmed Farah, Barbara Tucker, Noemi Duenas, Lora Guillen, Jacob Gatkuoth, Elizabeth Luu

II. *Introductions & Announcements*

- John Fanestil from the Foundation for Change was introduced as our guest speaker.
- There was a tremendous response rate to the online survey and forum members were encouraged to go online and complete the survey if they hadn't already done so.
- The Forum meetings will have a change of format with 30 minutes left at the end of the meeting for discussion time.
- The Red Cross is providing a free CPR training on March 13th details on website.
- An Iraqi consulate officer will be at the Chaldean Middle Eastern Social Services office on February 12th and 13th.
- Pacific Safety Council can help low income families with car seats and do trainings.
- The SD hunger Coalition will be helping Burmese fill out food stamp assistance forms on February 3rd.
- Holly Hough from Congressman Hunter's office said to inform her of questions she can forward ORR.

III. *Updates*

- Brent Freeman from IRC reported that January was a quiet month 70-80 cases and February cases booked were mostly Iraqi Chaldeans. JFS reported 62 cases in December mostly Iraqi Chaldeans. Catholic Charities reported 103 Wilson-Fisch cases again mostly Iraqi Chaldeans.
- Kathi Anderson from SURVIVORS reported that ICE issued a new directive on January 4th to release detained asylum seekers. Hearing began January 11th. Asylum seekers must have identity documents to be released. This will bring a challenged in transitioning in to the community.
- Sean Riordan from the ACLU reported that this new directive is a dramatic shift and could result in a large influx of asylum seekers into the community. The ACLU is trying to insure parole hearings proceed in a fair manner.
- Ahmed Sahid from Somali Family Service will bring suggestions to deal with this issue to the next meeting.
- Besma Coda from CMSS reported seeing a lot of Iraqi asylum seekers in her office.

- Sean Riordan gave an update from the Advocacy Committee on the April 9th conference. Volunteers have been assigned duties but they still need volunteers to help. The conference will be held at Cuyamaca College and online registration will be available. Sean also continues to do presentation on the language access issue.

IV. *Focus: Census Project*

- The Forum was chosen as one of three organizations in San Diego to work on a campaign to ensure a complete count in the census. The funding was provided by The California Endowment.
- John Fanestil from the Foundation for Change explained that the census is important for underrepresented communities to ensure allocation of resources to community. This campaign focuses on refugees, immigrants and the border community. The Foundation for Change awarded 17 grants to community advocates to advocate for participation in the census. There will be a training for all community advocates on February 20th at Hoover High school.
- Steve Eldred from The California Endowment explained that they were participating in the state and nationally to improve participation in the census through traditional and grassroots efforts.
- Ralph explained the Refugee Forum's census project. 2 persons per member organization can chose to participate in the project and incorporate census advocacy into their regular work activities. A census taskforce has volunteered to review participation applications forms to ensure full coverage. Outreach workers will receive a stipend. Workers must attend the February 20th training and all participation forms must be in by February 9th. You must be a paid member of the Forum to apply and you cannot receive funding if you are already receiving funding to perform census outreach.
- Eric Brown from the census bureau gave some information on Questionnaire Assistance Centers. They have 100 locations identified and need 300 more. April 1st is census day and the bureau is hiring now for census workers. Preference will be given to US citizens.
- There was some discussion on the best strategic way for refugee to identify themselves on the census.
- The census bureau can provide printed material in 59 languages.
- Bryan Nazareth from the County announced her will be handling the employment plan.
- The Pacific Safety Car seat Program needs help with translated materials. They can provide trainings at member locations. They have free car seats and car seat installation education all over the county. They have 2000 car seats to distribute and will do over 100 trainings.

V. *Adjournment at 12:00pm*

Next Meeting: Tuesday, March 16, 2010, 10:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
Springfield College

Language access conference "Collaborating for Healthy Communication":
Friday, April 9, Cuyamaca College – Details and online registration:
www.SDRefugeeForum.org/conference