

San Diego Refugee Forum

Minutes

Tuesday, March 16, 2010, 10:30a.m.-12:00p.m.

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

I. *Call to order at 10:40 a.m.*

Present: Marc Meyer, Elaine McLevie, Kristen Nelson, Bonnie Copland, Sara Vaz, Samm Hurst, Lora Guillen, James Sly, Crystine Meister, Yvonne Amrine, Sheryl Ashley, Christina Ryan, Paige Newman, Juan Estrada, Ayano Ogura, Phil Mammad, Dung Le, Christine Seisun, Clare Francavilla, Holly Hough, Ellen Malin, Cynthia Estrada, Ester Herrera, Bryan Nazareth, Beverly Warren, Ayaan Khalif, Jibriel Blejani, Mariana Vasconcelos, Paulino Paida, Diane Petach, Jacob Gatkuoth, Peg martin, Barbara Tucker, Brent Freeman, Vernita Gutierrez, Jamie Regalbuto, Majur Mulou, Kathi Anderson, Awichy Akwania, Ralph Achenbach, Elizabeth Lou, Bob Montgomery, Hamse Warfa, Murugi Kenyatta

II. *Introductions & Announcements*

Member announcements were held until the end of meeting to allow time for video conference call.

III. *New Members Welcome- Elizabeth Lou*

IV. *Updates*

- Sara Vaz gave an update on the Census Project. The training has been completed for 28 participants and stipend checks will be mailed with in the next few weeks. It is expected that stipend participants will give updates at future Forum meetings.
- Brent Freeman from the IRC reported they had 50 arrivals for March which was a little slow. Most clients are Iraqi and they expect arrivals to pick up in April.
- Catholic Charities reported they had 177 arrivals for March mostly from Iraq and a few Burmese. The biggest problems continue to be housing and employment.
- AAA's language coordinator is located at a new office: 4067 El Cajon Blvd. 619-794-2380. Funds are available for interpreters.
- Sean Riordan gave an update on the Language Access Conference on 4/9/10. The conference will bring all the players to the table and they are hoping for 100 participants. Registration is available online and the conference will be held at Cuyamaca College. Bonnie Copeland reminded Forum members that doctors and nurses can receive continuing education units for attending. Breakfast and lunch will be provided and it's free.
- Bryan Nazareth reported from the County on the 2 public hearings on Refugee Employment Services. They were very well attended and there was a high level of energy. Bryan will be sending a customer survey through the Forum listserv and asked Forum members to help their clients complete the survey.
- Bob Montgomery had nothing to report from the State Advisory Committee as they have not met since the last Forum meeting.

V. *FOCUS Employment:*

- Rebecca Armstrong from Refugee Works joined us via Skype. Refugee Works provides national technical assistance to providers of refugee employment services. They provide training, publications and individual program consultation.
- San Diego is a community ORR has chosen that they work with because of the bad economy and high number of arrivals.
- Refugee Works will focus their efforts in San Diego on recertification and job development.

Next Meeting: Tuesday, April 20, 2010, 10:30a.m.-12:00p.m.; focus on refugee youth
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Language Access Conference "Collaborating for Healthy Communication";

Friday, April 9, Cuyamaca College- Details and online registration:

www.SDRefugeeForum.org/conference

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- In March they held a 2 day training for job developers and initiated a Employer Relations taskforce. This taskforce will focus on planning an International Night of Networking to be held within the next three months. There will be a conference call follow-up on this event on March 30th at 10:30am and all will be invited to attend. Information will be sent by Rebecca Armstrong to the Forum listserv.
- Refugee Works will focus on next steps in recertification strategies in the Spring/Summer.
- James Sly from the San Diego Workforce Partnership gave a presentation on their services. Services include: training programs, individual training accounts, on the job training, customized training, workshops, a research lab and supportive services. The website is www.sandiegoatwork.com and James' number is 619-516-2281.
- AAA can help pay for credentialing services as well.

VI. Discussion

- Ralph discussed starting specific issue taskforce groups for the Forum membership instead of one advocacy group. It was agreed that this was a good idea moving forward.
- Kathi Anderson from Survivors of Torture, International and Carmen Chavez from Casa Cornelia Law Center agreed to co-chair the Asylum Taskforce for a term of one year.
- Barbara Tucker from Maximus and Bryan Nazareth from the County agreed to co-chair the Employment Taskforce.
- Bonnie Copeland and Sam Hurst agreed to co-chair the Health Taskforce.
- The youth and women's taskforces will be addressed at a later date.
- The Red Cross made an announcement that they have a program to reconnect refugee families. The service is free and they do home visits. The number is 858-309-1422.
- Nile Sisters will be holding a workshop on phone access on 4/2/10. Call 619-265-2959 for more information.
- The ACLU will be holding an Action Summit on 3/20/10 at the Jacob's Center.
- Mike Meyer from the National Conflict Resolution Center said they have a free training on workplace conflict management.
- Bryan Nazareth brought fliers for a paid internship at the Old Globe Theatre.

VII. Adjournment at 12:00pm

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