

## SAN DIEGO REFUGEE FORUM 2015 ANNUAL REPORT



### **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

- I. Membership and Attendance
  - a. Member Organizations
  - b. Member Individuals
  - c. Attendance Summary
- II. Task Force Reports
  - a. Domestic Violence Task Force
  - b. Employment Task Force
  - c. Health Task Force
  - d. Asylum/Asylee Seeker Task Force
- III. Events
  - a. World Refugee Day
  - b. Special Forum Meeting: Trauma-Informed Care
  - c. Japanese and Korean Delegation Dialogue
  - d. Georgian Delegation hosted by the San Diego Diplomacy Council
- IV. Financial Report
- V. Meeting Minutes
  - a. General Forum Meeting Minutes
  - b. Executive Committee Meeting Minutes



# I. MEMBERSHIP ATTENDANCE

### a. Member Organizations

African Coalition Workforce Alliance for African Assistance Alliance Health Clinic **American Red Cross CASA Cornelia Legal Services Catholic Charities** Chaldean & Middle Eastern Social Services **City heights Preparatory Charter School** County of San Diego Family Health Centers of San Diego **Florence Crittenton Services** Home Start. INC. **IRC-** International Rescue Committee **Jewish Family Services** Karen Organization KRA /San Diego Metro Region Career Centers Kurdish Human Rights Watch La Maestra Health Center License to Freedom Molina Healthcare Neighborhood Health Care Nile Sisters Development initiative **Operation Samahan** Partnership for the Advancement of New American (PANA) PCG Planned Parenthood of the Pacific Southwest ResCare San Diego county office of Emergency Services San Diego Unified School District Somali Bantu Association of America Survivors of Torture International The Episcopal Refugee Network Union of Pan Asian, UPAC United Nation Association of San Diego United Women of East Africa Support Team University of California, San Diego Women's Empowerment International



### **b. Member Individuals**

Aber Mayaah Bonnie and Geoff Copland Brandi Michelle Bourgon Elizabeth Lopez

### c. Attendance Summary

The San Diego Refugee Forum was attended by 169 different individuals from 60 different organizations.



# II. TASK FORCE REPORTS



### a. Domestic Violence Task Force

The Domestic Violence Task Force team has been working on getting more community members involved in finding solutions to the major challenge that our refugees face, finding more trauma informed resources, and more awareness and education efforts on domestic violence dynamics and cycles. New members joined us from IRC, San Diego Youth Services and ResCare. At the beginning of May, Alliance for African Assistance was awarded a mini grant that allowed them to conduct three 40 hour trainings on mental health interpreting, which will be an excellent resource to find well trained trauma informed interpreters for DV cases when needed. On August 8th 2015 Center for Community Solutions and License to Freedom participated in providing presentations on DV 101, Role of an Advocate based on Trauma Informed Care Model and working with Refugees DV victims. Also, on October 13<sup>th</sup> 2015 Center for Community Solutions provided a second presentation on the same topic. In our last meeting in October 2015, the main focus was on collecting updated and current statistics on DV incidents, calls, prosecuted cases, DV detectives, DV cases denied for all San Diego and for East County in particular. This will help us as a Team to address each barrier that faces our job as service providers and in coming with policies or solutions. We also covered the importance of Cultural Challenges and how we can provide Culture Sensitivity trainings to Law Enforcement DV Task Force meeting schedule has been changed to be on the first Tuesday of every other month from 10:00 - 11:00 and we have been meeting at License to Freedom office.

Submitted by Afrah Abdulkader and Dilkhwaz Ahmed



### **b. Employment Task Force**

### **Meetings**:

Monthly meetings Every 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday 3pm-4pm. Location: Various locations: Decided monthly (AAA. KRA. IRC, CMSS, PCG).

#### **Activities**:

Share employment resources, job leads, share information about the employment assistant services provided by each agency.

#### **Events:**

July Refugee Job Fair (Central City):

- Date: 7/27/2015
- Location: Metro Career Job Fair (University Ave.).

October Refugee Job Fair (East County):

- Date: 10/29/2015
- Location: Regan Community Center (El Cajon).

#### **Expenses:**

No expenses yet.

Members		
Name	Title	Agency
Deona Dorsey	ESE Coordinator	Metro Region Career Centers –
Co-Chair		Workforce Partnership
Mohammed Tuama	Business Service Representative	Public Consulting Group (PCG)
Co-Chair		
Julius Mayfield	Business Services Consultant	ResCare
Carlos Mendez	Employment Specialist Refugee	Catholic Charities
Jenny Daniel	Job Developer	Jewish Family Services
Bill Sutton	Job Developer	Alliance for African Assistance
Sophie Cheetham	Employment Supervisor	International Rescue Committee (IRC)
Renee Nasouri	Navigator/Educational Case Manager	Cuyamaca College
Ismael I Cortés	Continuing Education & Workforce	Cuyamaca College
	Training	
Nawal Alkatib	Program Director	Chaldean & Middle Eastern
Sherry Naum	Case Manager	Home Start
Alison Aragon	Training and IT Coordinator	National Conflict Resolution Center



### c. Health Task Force

The Refugee Health Task Force has met on 2/6/15, 3/2/15, 4/10/15, 5/4/15, 6/1/15, 8/3/15, 9/11/15, 10/9/15, and 12/11/15. We were black in January, July and November.

No expenses have been incurred.

Some of the organizations who participated are: Karen Organization, Project Shine, Nile Sisters, County of San Diego, Planned Parenthood, Community Health Improvement Partners (CHIP), Mental Health America, Grossmont College, Cuyamaca College, Survivors of Torture, Alliance for African Assistance, Center for Community Counseling Engagement, Scripps Wellness Center, Women Infant Children (WIC), UPAC, Language and Cultural Solutions, International Rescue Committee, and Somali Family Service.

Through the course of this year, the HTF has discussed and prioritized one major issue that permeates all areas of health for the refugee population:

- Health literacy:
  - a) Assessment of the health care system: What is already out there through other agencies to address these concerns:
    - ✓ On April 10, 2015, HTF took a tour of the 211 call site to determine what language services they can offer when people call in for services that speak other languages.
    - On May 4, 2015, Kristin Garret and Emilie Dang presented to the HTF on (Community Health Improvement Partners) CHIP"S work on Health Literacy in San Diego.
    - ✓ On September 11, 2015, Ismael Cortes, presented on Project SHINE and the classes they teach for Refugees through Cuyamaca College. There are modules specifically toward health, proper nutrition, and doctor appts, hospital stays, and taking medications, etc.
    - Christine Murto, Refugee Health Coordinator for the County of San Diego shared that health screening for refugees will now include Mental Health; PTSD, anxiety and or depression with the PHQ2 and PC PTSD assessment forms and the refugee will be referred to a mental Health provider if needed.
    - CDC website has many useful and user friendly sites in many different languages on health issues , i.e. flu, communicable diseases, preventative measures for spread of germs, tuberculosis, etc.
    - ✓ San Diego County News Center offers emergency information in ASL and Spanish and has developed a system to get the emergency updates to other communities through designated key leaders in other refugee communities. October is Health Literacy Month and County has useful resources on their website.



- b) Communication and language translation for health issues, particularly Mental Health and access to medical appts due to language barriers:
  - ✓ On 6/23/15, Betsy Knight gave a presentation to Refugee Forum on "Trauma Informed Services for Refugees".
  - ✓ The Alliance for African Assistance offered a 40 hour course on Mental Health Interpreting" to become trained in the skill of interpreting in Mental Health settings. This course was offered three times during 2015.
  - ✓ On July 21, 2015, the Refugee Forum presented a panel of County programs to discuss and educate members on various County programs who may work with refugees; Child Welfare, Public Health Nursing, Refugee Health program, refugee employment services, County clinic services.
- c) Lack of knowledge of Health Care system in USA; navigation through the MediCal insurance application and implementation of which plan to choice.
  - HTF is presently working on streamlining and developing a logic model to assist refugees with their navigation through the MediCal application and choosing a medical plan which best meets their needs. Bonnie Copland and Christine Murto are actively involved with this process and will report back to task force at December 2015 mtg.



### d. Asylum/Asylee Seeker Task Force

Due to a transitional period, the Asylum/Asylee Seeker Task Force did not meet this year, but will be revamped for next year.



## **III.Events**



### a. World Refugee Day

Planning for the World Refugee Day 2015 celebration began in February 2015. The World Refugee Day 2015 Event Planning Committee members are representatives from various organizations serving refugee populations in San Diego, including the County of San Diego, International Rescue Committee (IRC), Catholic Charities, Chaldean and Middle Eastern Social Services, El Cajon Collaborative, United Nations Association of the United States of America, and Karen Organization of San Diego. San Diego Refugee Forum (SDRF) sponsors the event, and the total cost for the World Refugee Day 2015 was \$2,443.51. Since 2011, SDRF has held its World Refugee Day events in Balboa Park, Museum of Photographic Arts, and the Jacob Center. In 2015, the Planning Committee decided to hold this year's event in city of El Cajon for the first time. El Cajon has resettled not only the largest number of refugees in San Diego County but in the entire state. The event was held on June 20, 2015 from 9:30 AM - 12:30 PM at the Prescott Promenade Park at 299 E Main Street in El Cajon.

By sharing with attendees many contributions of our refugee community members, SDRF aimed to create a better understanding among community members vital to strengthening community relationships and creating more welcoming community. The World Refugee Day 2015 celebration combined educational material and cultural performances to create a culturally vibrant atmosphere. We had about 200-300 participants the day of the event, many of whom were refugee community members.

The World Refugee Day 2015 started at 9 am with speech by Kathi Anderson, SDRF Chair, and two guest speakers: Star Bales, El Cajon City Councilmember, and Maryam Sattar, a Refugee community member. In 2014, Maryam received a SDRF award to recognize her success by overcoming challenges and achieving significant goals as a newly arrived refugee. Programming included traditional dance and music programs presented by local refugee performers, refugee youth panel, activities for children, resource tables by SDRF member organizations, and documentary film screening. The World Refugee Day 2015 event also included refugee owned businesses selling their craft merchandise. These components provided attendees a multi-dimensional experience that familiarized them with the culture and experiences of the newer members of their community, what brought them to the United States, and the many contributions they make to their new home community.

### (1) Cultural Performances

The World Refugee Day 2015 included 6 cultural performances from various countries: the 5 Star Girls (Iraq/ Lebanon), Karen dance and music performances by the Karen Organization of San Diego, Peace Band (Iraq), Cuban music performance by Pablo Ernesto Mori, and Iraqi music performance by Samer Samouel.



(2) Refugee Youth Panel by IRC Peacemakers and Vietnamese Panel

As educational components of the event, we had a Refugee Youth Panel. Three students from Iraq, Burma, and Bhutan shared their stories as refugees and their struggles and successes after their resettlement in San Diego. They are members of the IRC Peacemakers. Panel discussion was followed by Q&A sessions.

Also, to recognize the 40th Anniversary of Fall of Saigon, we had a speaker from the Vietnamese community in San Diego to share stories from the Vietnamese community in San Diego. San Diego started to be a refugee resettlement hub due to this event.





### (3) International Food and Craft Market

With more than four craft vendors from Iraq, Somali, and Karen refugee communities, the World Refugee Day event hosted an international market. No food vendor was available this year. We would like to invite more vendors for the World Refugee Day 2016 event.

(4) Resource Tables by SDRF Member Organizations



There were 17 organizations participated the event by hosting resource tables. They are: Alliance for African Assistance, Cajon Valley Union School District, Caldean Middle Eastern Social Services, Catholic Charities, County of San Diego, Episcopal Refugee Network, Karen Organization of San Diego, International Rescue Committee, Jewish Family Service, La Maestra Community Health Center, Molina Healthcare, Neighborhood Health, Nile Sisters, Partnership for Advancement of New Americans (PANA), San Diego Metro Career Center, Survivor of Torture International, and United Nations Association of the United States of America.

### 2. Outreach Efforts

Outreach for the World Refugee Day 2015 celebration was conducted in a variety of ways to reach communities in San Diego as well as the San Diego County community at large. Press releases were sent to media outlets that reach communities throughout San Diego County. Event flyers were posted on the event Facebook page and made available at local businesses in city of El Cajon as well as surrounding communities. Event announcements were sent to agencies, organizations, schools, colleges, and supporters of the San Diego Refugee Forum's member organizations. Also, event information was posted in local media's online calendars: San Diego Union Tribune, San Diego Readers, City Beat, and KPBS. Press coverage can be found at the following link:

http://www.kpbs.org/news/2015/jun/19/world-refugee-day-event-moves-changing-el-cajon/



### **Press Release: For Immediate Release**

Contact: Nao Kabashima P: (619) 719-0567 E: nao@karensandiego.org

(San Diego, CA) May 14, 2015—The San Diego Refugee Forum is excited to host a World Refugee Day Celebration in honor of the annual World Refugee Day. The event will be held on June 20, 2015 from 9:30 AM - 12:30 PM at the Prescott Promenade Park at 299 E Main Street in El Cajon. This exciting event connects the many communities that coexist in San Diego, highlights the struggles and resilience of refugees thriving in their new homes, and showcases the rich cultural features of our community through performances, food, music, panel presentations, youth activities, traditional arts and crafts, and interactive activities.

In recognition of the refugee experience, World Refugee Day commemorates the strength and courage demonstrated by refugee communities around the world. There are approximately 51.2 million displaced refugees who have fled their homes as a result of persecution, conflict, and violence. San Diego happens to be home to one of the largest refugee populations in the United States.

This year's World Refugee Day Celebration event will showcase the diverse community of refugees who have made San Diego County their home. The event is being held in El Cajon, which has resettled not only the largest number of refugees in San Diego County, but in the entire state. Attendees will have the opportunity to experience aspects of almost every refugee culture found in San Diego as they walk through the park. The event allows visitors the chance to view traditional performances from Iraq, Burma, Senegal, and other ethnic communities in San Diego, taste delicious foods from around the world, and enjoy cultural arts and crafts. There will also be resource sharing from San Diego Refugee Forum members and organizations active in the refugee community. It will be a memorable event that exhibits the contributions made by refugees to enrich the lives of San Diegans.

We invite you and your family to participate and attend this free event that is open to the public. Come discover the vibrant refugee communities of San Diego and those that have the privilege of working with them.

Welcome to San Diego's World Refugee Day 2015!

**Press Opportunities:** For additional information or to schedule an interview, please contact Nao Kabashima, Co-Chair of the World Refugee Day Task Force of the San Diego Refugee Forum at (619) 719-0567 or <a href="mailto:nao@karensandiego.org">nao@karensandiego.org</a>.



LIKE US ON FACEBOOK—San Diego World Refugee Day







### **b.** Trauma-Informed Care Special Presentation

Tuesday, June 23, 2015, 10AM to 12PM Price Charities, 4305 University Avenue, San Diego, CA 92105 Presenter: Betsy Knight, MFT, County Behavioral Health

The Refugee Forum hosted a special presentation by Betsy Knight on Trauma-Informed Care on June 23 at the Price Charities building. Betsy Knight provided an overview of the mental health disorders that many trauma survivors experience and effective strategies to guide them to a variety of resources that are available for them in the county.



### c. Japanese and Korean Delegation Dialogue

Monday, February 9, 2015, 10AM-12PM SDPD Community Room: 5348 University Ave Suite 100, San Diego CA 92105

The Japan Association for Refugees (http://www.refugee.or.jp/en/) is visited San Diego from February 9-11, to conduct a study tour in an effort to advocate for refugee resettlement and asylum programs in Japan and Korea. This was a part of a 3-year Japan-Korea-US Good Practice Exchange Project on Refugee Social Integration. Japan is the first country in Asia to become a resettlement country, and Korea announced that they will now be the second, and they are conducting research as they construct their new program.

As a part of the study project in San Diego, the JAR delegate had a round table meeting with members of the San Diego Refugee Forum to see how in San Diego, County HHSA office refugee resettlement agencies, community based organizations, and other service providers are collaboratively working together to support newly arrived refugees and asylum seekers/ asylees.



### d. Georgian Delegation Hosted by San Diego Diplomacy Council

Tuesday, August 18, 2015, 12PM-1PM YMCA, 4300 El Cajon Blvd. San Diego, CA 92105

The Refugee Forum's August general meeting was extended by one hour to include a dialogue on Legal and Ethical Aspects of Refugee Assistance Programs within the U.S. with five delegates from the country of Georgia.

### **DELEGATES:**

**Tamar Bekauri** Director, Kakheti Regional Development Fund (KRDF)

### Sopio Japaridze

Advisor to the Prime Minister, Human Rights and Gender Equality Issues

#### Irakli Kokaia

Head, Department of Migration, Repatriation, and Refugee Issues Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) from the Occupied Territories, Accommodation, and Refugees

#### Irakli Lomidze

Head, Asylum Issues Division Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) from the Occupied Territories, Accommodation, and Refugees

#### Aleksandre Svanidze

Refugee and Migration Program Director, United Nations Association of Georgia



## **IV.Financial Reports**



### San Diego Refugee Forum Financial Report 2015

2014 Balance	\$9,135.05
Membership Income	\$2,430.00
Webhost Credit (GoDaddy)	\$202.48
Returned Uncashed Checks	
City of El Cajon Insurance	\$207.00
United Site Service	\$449.66
World Refugee Day Deposit Return	\$400.00
Total Income	\$12,824.19
EXPENSES	
World Refugee Day 2014	\$110.00
World Refugee Day	\$3,077.12
Special Event	\$30.00
Refugee Achievement Appreciation	\$400.00
Training (Adeem/IRC)	\$20.00
Miscellaneous/Supplies	\$76.26
Total Expenses	\$3,713.38
2015 Balance:	9,110.81



## V. Meeting Minutes



### a. General Forum Meeting Minutes

### Tuesday, January 20, 2015, 10:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m. Alliance for African Assistance, 5952 El Cajon Blvd., San Diego, CA, 92115

### 1. Call to order at 10:30 am

*Present:* Bonnie Copland, Neda Rivera, Abdi Abdillahi, Lorna Strang, Angel Lopez, Kim McDermott, Kathi Anderson, Nao Kabashima, Deona Dorsey, Nawar Yousif, Rita Shamoon, Kristen Aster, Jason Martinez, Aileen Gulan, Renee Nasori, Ayan Mohamed, Brittney Yackley, Besma Coda, Genevieve Caston, Bill Sutton, Eric Miller, Alexiz Martinez, Mohammed Tuama, John Marcin, Carin Anderson, Mohamed Ilad, Carlos Mendez, Jane Hoey, Al Thomas, Nadine Pedusseau, Dalia Mohammad, Celia Balistreni, Brenda Quezada, Afrah Abdulkader, Diode deDios, Vanessa Peters, Amy Hines, Dianne Bourgue, Jo-Ann Julien, Vernita Gutierrez, Ute Maschke

2. Executive Committee Announcements and Participant Introduction:

- Kathi Anderson (Chair) opened the Forum meeting and introduced the new officers.
- General Introductions
- Ute Maschke (vice-chair) welcomed new members. As of today, we have 9 renewed or new memberships. All attendees and supporters of the refugee community are encouraged to become members of the forum. Members will be featured on the website and can participate as co-chairs in the task forces.
- Refugee Forum Officers Kathi Anderson and Ute Maschke are in attendance. Nawal Alkatib (Treasurer) and Carmen Kcomt (Secretary) are absent due to vacation and illness, respectively.

#### 3. Task Force Updates:

- Health Task Force: The task force met for a review of last year's activities (including the very successful "Happy & Healthy" health fair) and for some preliminary planning of new activities. Enlarging the health fair is one of those plans, and there are some other plans. So please join the task force to learn more and to contribute with ideas. The next meeting is scheduled for February 6, 3:30pm, at the Karen Organization. At that time, task force members will determine the agenda for the year and have a chance to determine the best meeting time (since Friday afternoons might not work for everyone). Please contact Bonnie Copland, if you want to be on the task force's email list.
- Employment Task Force: We are looking for new co-chairs and new members. Please contact Carlos Mendez if you are interested.



- Domestic Violence: The task force met last week (as always, on the second Monday of the month) and reviewed the achievements of 2014. Members are currently setting the agenda for the year which will include raising awareness, strengthening the role of advocates, reaching out to agencies that work with refugees, and preparing flyers for service providers. Please send volunteers A curriculum for a short training module for selected candidates is also being developed.
- Asylee/Asylum Seeker Task Force: The asylum seeker/asylee task force met for and continued their work on asset mapping, a gap analysis and a priority/feasibility matrix for asylum seekers. This project will continue into the next meeting and lead to a decision what to do next in response to the analysis. Please keep an eye on forum email announcements for the next meeting.
- World Refugee Task Force: Nao (chair) is currently looking for a co-chair. The task force should start meeting in February and needs all the help possibly available. World Refugee Day is June 20<sup>th</sup> (a Saturday).

#### 5. Other Updates

Resettlement Agencies (formerly VOLAGs)

- Alliance for African Assistance: arrivals from (mostly) Iraq but also from Afghanistan. We also welcomed some parolees, and there is talk that Syrians will be coming.
- Catholic Charities: arrivals are lower; much lower than anticipated. Arrivals are primarily from the Middle East. We had some arrivals from Burma and Afghanistan.
- Jewish Family Service: No one present to comment
- IRC: We have been busy and resettled a rather high number of refugees (251) during the first quarter. So far, we have 50 arrivals for January, from Iraq, Somalia, and Afghanistan.

#### County Agencies/Committees

 County: The county is working on a new initiative focusing on Mental Health, including strengthening the health assessment, training on trauma-informed care, and developing activities. At this point in time, we are focusing on training for RHAP health navigators (2 hours, at Catholic Charities), but this is only the first step. We could bring the training to the forum is there were enough interest. The county's child welfare services are reaching out to work with refugees more directly through presentations on childcare laws. We are also available for direct



training at our office in El Cajon.

• State Advisory Committee: No one present to comment.

*6. Focus: Covered California – ACA and impending deadlines/penalties.* Jan Spencley, Executive Director, San Diegans for Healthcare Coverage

Jan Spencley provided an in-depth look at the current state of things and outlook on things to come. Please consult the pdf file attached to the minutes for details.

Q&A: The best way to apply for coverage is in person. We know the ins and outs of the system and can help avoid detours and extra challenges. We can also connect applicants to the right resources right away. 211 San Diego is now also doing enrollments online. Coverage needs to be based on the 10 points of minimal coverage, so dental insurance in itself is not enough. Penalties for lack of coverage will go up drastically within the next year(s).The biggest challenge in the next year(s) will be taxes and tax credits related to health coverage.

### 7. Spotlight: San Diego Refugee Forum

• The presentation has been postponed until February (to allow more time for the *Focus* discussion).

### 8. Community Updates

- Nao KOSD proudly announced that a newly established Japan Association for Refugees will visit San Diego to learn from San Diego resettlement programs for Karen Refugees and from the Karen Organization. Japan will be the first resettlement country in Asia (soon to be followed by Korea), and the association heard about San Diego and its well-developed collaborative network supporting refugees. They will visit February 9 11, and want to meet with representatives from the community February 9<sup>th</sup>, 10 am (building across from the Karen Organization, where IRC is, too). Please join us in learning from each other.
- Nile Sisters has an upcoming Health Insurance Enrollment event January 31sr, 10 AM 4 PM. We will have counselors ready to work one-on-one, in several languages: English, Arabic, Spanish, Burmese, and Swahili. Location: 6035 University Ave, Suite 22. Contact
   <u>Ibom@nilesisters.org</u> for more information.



- The Legal Network of San Diego County is providing legal assistance to Filipino, Middle Eastern, Vietnamese and Mixteco immigrant and refugee victims of sexual assault, domestic violence, date violence, and stalking. Please contact Anne S Bautista (858)560-0871 for referral to weekly confidential legal intake clinics.
- The Urban League of San Diego County is offering *Pathways* of opportunities for youth between the ages of 16 and 21. There are training sessions on job readiness, resume writing and interview preparation, job and internship placement assistance, completing High School or GED as well as financial coaching. Contact Kea Hagan for more information: <u>kea@sdul.org</u> (619)266-6265
- On February 13<sup>th</sup>, <u>loveyourheartsd.org</u> will offer free blood pressure screenings at various locations countywide. For more information contact the organization or call 2-1-1.

Kathi Anderson encouraged attendees to complete the survey:

https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/XGSQXVB.

Adjournment: 12:00 pm

Next Meeting: Tuesday, February 17th, 10:30 – 12:00 pm @ Alliance for African Assistance



### Tuesday, February 17, 2015, 10:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m. Alliance for African Assistance, 5952 El Cajon Blvd., San Diego, CA, 92115

### 1. Call to order at 10:30 am

*Present:* Abdi Abdillahi, Kathi Anderson, Nao Kabashima, Deona Dorsey, Nawar Yousif, Rita Shamoon, Renee Nasori, Brittney Yackley, Genevieve Caston, Carin Anderson, Carlos Mendez, Jane Hoey, Al Thomas, Dalia Mohammad, Celia Balistreni, Afrah Abdulkader, Dianne Bourque, Jo-Ann Julien, Ghazia Hassan, Najla Ibrahim, Amy Hines, Bridget del Garza, Elaine McLevie, Socorro Heather, Diana Rhoades, Mary Rutland, May Hasan, Neda G. Rivera, Maggie Fenn, Kim Forrester, Ismal Cortes, Sheryl Ashley, Mariana Perricelli, Cameron Brown, Perla Vallejo, Veronica Silva, Ayan Mohammed, Anne Hoiberg, Jackie Harchick, Nawal Alkatib, Ute Maschke

2. Executive Committee Announcements and Participant Introduction:

- Kathi Anderson (Chair) opened the Forum meeting.
- General Introductions
- Kathi Anderson (Chair) shared with the attendees that Bob Montgomery will be retiring as the Executive Director, IRC San Diego, March 2<sup>nd</sup>. Bob Montgomery has been a driving force in the community. Anyone working with refugee newcomers has been touched by his work, one way or another. At the next forum meeting, Bob will be presented with a card (a big card reading, "Congratulations to your Retirement"). All attendees were encouraged to sign the card.
- Ute Maschke (vice-chair) provided updates on the state of the website and the forum listserv. The <u>website</u> is undergoing some revisions to better serve the community. We are also updating our listserv. Anyone who would like to make corrections or updates to their email address should contact Ute directly (<u>umaschke@ccdsd.org</u>)
- Nawal Alkatib (treasurer) welcomed returning and new members. As of today, we have 18
  renewed or new memberships. All attendees and supporters of the refugee community are
  encouraged to become members of the forum. Members will be featured on the website and
  can participate as co-chairs in the task forces. A list of current members can be accessed on our
  website.
- All Refugee Forum Officers were in attendance.

### 3. Task Force Updates:

Health Task Force (Dianne Bourque; co-chair):
 The first meeting took place February 6, at the Karen Organization. We had an open discussion



about most critical issues to cover this year: health literacy (from wellness to chronic diseases) and mental health. We decided to switch meetings to Mondays; the next meeting will be March 2<sup>nd</sup>, 10 am, at the Wellness Center in City Heights. We would love your input. Please contact Bonnie Copland or Dianne Borque, if you want to be on the task force's email list.

- Employment Task Force: During our most recent meeting, we elected new co-chairs: Mohammed Tuama and Deona Dorsey. (A big "Thank you" to the previous co-chairs, Carlos and Sophie!)
- Domestic Violence: The task force meets every other month, so there are no updates yet. Our goals are to provide more training for volunteers and translators on trauma-informed services. The next meeting will be at *License to Freedom*.
- Asylee/Asylum Seeker Task Force Carin Anderson, co-chair): The asylum seeker/asylee task force set goals for this year. We will focus on looking into housing alternatives, educating professionals, and establishing a CCA tour. Please keep an eye on forum email announcements for the next meeting.
- World Refugee Task Force: Nao Kabashima and Mohammed Tuama will co-chair the taskforce. During our meeting we discussed this year's location. We will hold the event in El Cajon, on June 20<sup>th</sup>, but haven't decided on the actual location yet. We want the event to be open and more public. Please join us for our next meeting, March 9<sup>th</sup>, 3 – 4 pm. The location for the meeting will be announced through email.

#### 5. Other Updates

#### **Resettlement Agencies**

- Alliance for African Assistance: 49 arrivals last month; 37 arrivals so far in February
- Catholic Charities: Arrivals are still low.
- Jewish Family Service: No one present to comment
- IRC: Our arrival numbers are low, too. We are not sure why. 43 are booked

#### County Agencies/Committees

- The arrival total in January is 168. (113 Iraqis, 55 from 22 other countries.) The total for the Federal Fiscal Year is 926 arrivals.
- The report for CalWorks family looks very good. The employment numbers were great: 44 %. Thank you to everyone engages in supporting our clients on their path to self-sufficiency.
- Every year, the Refugee Health Program is looking for public health champions. This year, we



nominated Catholic Charities for their stewardship in public health.

• Child Welfare Services offers training and presentations on issues such as domestic violence and abuse.

State Advisory Committee: There will be a training for County Refugee Coordinators in April, in Sacramento.

6. Focus: Utility Advocacy for Refugees. Cameron Brown, Alliance for African Assistance Cameron provided an overview, introducing *Team* and *Changes*, two grant programs to support those in need. The *Team* grant is administered through Milestone Consulting, who provides training for *Team* subcontractors (such as AAA). Subcontractors are rewarded for their efforts. Please consult the pdf file attached to the minutes for details. Cameron is available for more presentations at any organization interested. Please contact him at <u>cameron@alliance-for-africa.org</u>. In general, 211 San Diego is an excellent resource for more information.

### 7. Special Election – officer position of Secretary

Carmen Kcomt resigned, and we are looking to fill the very important position of secretary. The secretary meets with the executive committee monthly, is responsible for meeting minutes, and keeps track of attendance. A special election will be held March 17<sup>th</sup>. Please send your nominations to Nao Kabashima, at nao@karensandiego.org, by February 27<sup>th</sup>.

### 8. Community Updates

- Anne Hoiberg, Board President of the <u>Women's Museum of California</u>, announced the museum's special exhibition, "Tears of War: The many Faces of Refugee Women." The exhibition reflects the strengths and resilience of refugee women and features at least five or six women who are regular attendees of the forum meetings. We need to educate our community on the struggles and strengths of our refugees. Please join me at the museum. On Saturdays between 2 3 pm, I can even give you a private tour. The museum is located at 2730 Historic Decatur Road, Suite 103 (Liberty Station).
- San Diego Youth Services is hosting a Wellness Fair, April 17<sup>th</sup>, 12:30 3:30 pm, in El Cajon (1035 E. Madison Ave).



- IRC is offering information sessions on immigration and administrative relief the third Tuesday of each month, 12pm, at the IRC office in El Cajon and the third Wednesday of each month, 6pm, at the IRC office in City Heights.
- The San Diego Volunteer Lawyer Program presents a "Women's Resource Fair," Saturday, February 28<sup>th</sup>, at Golden Hall, 202 C St, San Diego, 8:30 am – 1 pm. We offer free services for women: health exams, legal advice, self-defense class, financial assistance referrals, career consultation, and more. Brunch will be provided. For more information visit <u>wrfsandiego.org</u>.
- The Covered CA application period ended. However, there is a grace period for clients who weren't able to finish their applications. Check the <u>website</u> for help.
- Grossmont College is offering special programs, "Back to Work 50+" and information sessions for those who are interested in attending college. The next info session for "Smart Strategies for 50+ Jobseekers" will take place Friday, April 10, at Grossmont College, Room 55-511, 1 – 3 pm. Please contact Renee Nasori for more information.
- Kathi/Ute At almost all forum meetings, all seats have been filled. Therefore, we were looking into new spaces to accommodate our needs. If things go as planned, the Refugee Forum meetings will take place at a new location, starting March 17<sup>th</sup>: the Copley Family YMCA, at 4300 El Cajon Blvd, San Diego, CA 92105. Our sincere thanks to AAA for hosting the forum.

Adjournment: 12:00 pm

Next Meeting: Tuesday, March 17th, 10:30 – 12:00 pm @ TBA



### TUESDAY, MARCH 17, 2015, 10:30 A.M.-12:00 P.M. YMCA – 4300 EL CAJON BLVD, SAN DIEGO, CA 92105

### 1. Call to order at 10:40 am

*Present:* Aber Maayah, Abdi Abdillahi, Awichu Akwanya, Adela Mason, Afrah Abdulkader, Alonza Thomas, Andrew Holets, Amy Hines, Artemisa Valle, Ashley Barbee, Bob Montgomery, Bridget de la Garza, Carin Anderson, Carlos Mendez, Celia Balistreri, Dalia Mohammad, Deona Dorsey, Diana Rhoades, Gabriela Guzman, Ismael Cortes, Juan Estrada, Judi Patterson, Kains Grounds, Kajeen Abdul, Kathi Anderson, Lou Case, Maggie Fenn, May Hasan, Mohammed Tuama, Mohamed Dad, Nao Kabashima, Nawal Alkatib, Nawar Yousif, Neda G. Rivera, Ramla Sahid, Rita Shamoon, Sheryl Ashley, Vernita Gutierrez, Holly Hough, Bonnie Copland, Ute Maschke

2. Executive Committee Announcements and Participant Introduction:

- Kathi Anderson (Chair) opened the Forum meeting and introduced the Madelyne Wagner as the new Secretary of the Refugee Forum.
- Ute Maschke (Vice-Chair) explained that the Refugee Forum venue has changed to the YMCA . To receive any announcements or event notifications you can sign up for the email list through the Refugee Forum website.
- General Introductions
- Kathi Anderson (Chair) acknowledged Bob Montgomery's retirement from the IRC and recognized his invaluable contributions to the San Diego refugee community in his 39 years of work in the field.
- Holly Hough presented Bob Montgomery with a Congressional Recognition for his commitment to the refugee community.
- Bob Montgomery recognized the San Diego Refugee Forum's foundation in 1978 and the way the forum has grown and developed from a resettlement effort to better serve and advocate for the refugee community. He thanked the Refugee Forum for their service.
- Nawal Alkatib (Treasurer) explained that the forum has \$10,238 dollars and 19 current memberships.
- Refugee Forum Officers Kathi Anderson (Chair), Ute Maschke (Vice-Chair), Nawal Alkatib(Treasurer) and Madelyne Wagner (Secretary) are in attendance and Abdi Abdillahi (exofficio).

#### 3. Task Force Updates:

• Health Task Force: The task force met for a discussion on the county's training on better traumainformed services for refugees, which has been updated and is currently being offered to different resettlement agencies in the county. The task force is still figuring out what to concentrate on for the year, but is leaning toward issues surrounding language access. The next



meeting is scheduled for April 6th at 10am, at 211 for a presentation on interpretation services and language access in the county. If you would like to attend this presentation please email Dianne or Bonnie for the address. Please contact Bonnie Copland, if you want to be on the task force's email list.

- Employment Task Force: The task force will be holding a job fair in July 2015. The date and location have not been set at this time but there will be two job fairs, one for East County and the other for Central. Updates will be given once a location is determined.
- Domestic Violence: The task force met last month (on the second Monday of every other month) and agreed to continue on the mission that was started a year ago to offer training to Arabic speaking volunteers. The training will be a short, two day training from 9am-1pm. Once the dates are set and the flyer is completed it will be shared with the forum.
- Asylee/Asylum Seeker Task Force: The asylum seeker/asylee task force met yesterday to continue discussing housing resources for asylum seekers. The task force will meet the third Monday of every month at Survivors of Torture. Email reminders will still be sent out for future meetings.
- World Refugee Task Force: The task force met on March 9<sup>th</sup> to discuss the venue for the World Refugee Day event, which will take place on Saturday, June 20, 2015. The event will be held at either Balboa Park or El Cajon City. The venue will be finalized during the next meeting which is will be held on Monday, March 23 at the El Cajon Collaborative. The task force is still seeking sponsorships and donations. If you know anyone who would be interested in donating please contact Nao Kabashima.

### 5. Other Updates

Resettlement Agencies (formerly VOLAGs)

- Alliance for African Assistance: 39 arrivals for the month of February from Afghanistan, Iraq, Burundi, Congo, Burma and Sri Lanka. There are 26 arrivals for the month of March from Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria and Burma.
- Catholic Charities: arrivals are still very low with only 18 cases in March.
- Jewish Family Service: No one present to comment.
- IRC: No one present to comment.

County Agencies/Committees

- County: Abdi Abdillahi The arrivals for the month of February were low, with a total of 138, with 56 Iraqis. The total for the year, which is from October to February, is 1,064.
- State Advisory Committee: An email announcement went out twice to the Refugee Forum announcing that an RFP has been released for the vocational ESL program. There will be two contracts total – one for Central region and one for East. The RFP number is 6617 and it can be found on the county's website. For more information about this you can attend the pre-proposal conference next Wednesday, March 25<sup>th</sup> at 9AM at 5469 Kearny Villa Road.
- Kathi Anderson presented the announcement on behalf of Jo-Ann Julien that the state's annual technical sight visit will be the first week of April.



*6. Focus: Lobbying and Advocacy 101 for Nonprofits.* Ramla Sahid, Executive Director, Partnership for Advancement of New Americans (PANA).

- Ramla Sahid provided an introduction to nonprofit advocacy and lobbying rules and the federal and state rules that govern these practices. Ramla started by providing an introduction to the term advocacy and lobbying (both direct and grassroots) and explained the protected rights to lobby and the restrictions nonprofits face because of the 501[c]3 tax exemption status. The presentation broke down the different rules and restrictions at the federal and state levels and the penalties you can face for these violations.
- For more information, free resources and assistance can be found at Alliance for Justice's website at <a href="www.afj.org">www.afj.org</a> or email <a href="mailto:alliance@afj.org">alliance@afj.org</a>
- Ramla also suggests The Lobbying Strategy Handbook by Pat Libby as another resource
- 7. Spotlight: San Diego Refugee Forum
  - There was no spotlight presentation to allow more time for the focus presentation.
- 8. Community Updates
  - The Domestic Violence Task Force is currently recruiting volunteers to attend the training to serve survivors of domestic violence in their community.
  - Wellness Fair at El Cajon Valley High School to provide resources and education for refugee families on April 17<sup>th</sup>.
  - The YMCA announced that the room the forum is in is available to the community and nonprofit
    organizations at little to no cost. The new YMCA is open and to encourage people to join they
    are taking nominations for a "Hometown Hero," which is someone who should be recognized for
    doing good in the community. The winner will get up to five days free at the YMCA. There is a
    planning committee meeting immediately after the refugee forum to plan for Healthy Kids Day
    on April 25<sup>th</sup> and anyone in the community is invited to join.
  - Chaldean Middle Eastern Social Services announced that they will be starting classes to for families with someone with a disability or mental illness to teach them how to communicate with a disabled or mentally ill person These classes will be every Monday from 11am -1pm.
  - Child Welfare Services announced that as part of their preventative services they are reaching
    out to organizations that serves new arrivals to the country to educate them on laws
    surrounding child welfare and safety. Anyone that is interested in this can contact Neda G.
    Rivera.
  - Mental Health America is offering free 8 hour Mental Health First Aid classes. For more information visit <u>www.MHASD.org</u>.
  - Ute Maschke announced that if you do not receive the emails for the refugee forum you should visit the forum's website to be added. The blog for World Refugee Day can also be accessed on the website and is now open for comments. Any suggestions for the website can be directed to



Ute.

- Kathi Anderson announced that some of the upcoming presenters for the forum:
  - Trauma Informed Care Training
  - School districts that receive refugee school impact grants
  - County Health Agencies
  - World Refugee Day nominations
  - Presentation on cyber security
  - Presentation on the similarities and differences in health plans

Adjournment: 11:45am

Next Meeting: Tuesday, April 21st, 10:30 – 12:00 pm @ YMCA



### Tuesday, April 21, 2015, 10:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m. YMCA – 4300 El Cajon Blvd, San Diego, CA 92105

### 1. Call to order at 10:40 am

*Present:* Aber Maayah, Abdi Abdillahi, Awichu Akwanya, Adela Mason, Afrah Abdulkader, Amy Hines, Ashley Barbee, Abdul Kajeen Bethlehem Pegu, Bridget de la Garza, Carin Anderson, Carlos Mendez, Cecily Thorten-Stearns, Celia Balistreri, Dalia Mohammad, Deona Dorsey, Diana Rhoades, Dianne Bourque, Herbert Mills, Ismael Cortes, Jennifer Navala, Juan Estrada, Kathi Anderson, Katie Judd, Kim Forrester, Kim McDermott, Maggie Fenn, Mariana Perricelli, Mariana Vasconcelos, Melba Yarlerough, Michael Huesca, Michael McKay, Mohammed Tuama, Nadine Pedusseau, Nancy Martey, Nawal Alkatib, Nawar Yousif, Nayaab Chowdhury, Oren Robiison, Perla Vallejo, Rita Shamoon, Sara Ramos, Traci Kim, Ute Maschke

### 2. Executive Committee Announcements and Participant Introduction:

- Kathi Anderson (Chair) opened the Forum meeting and made an announcement about the 2 hour Trauma-Informed Care special presentation on June 23<sup>rd</sup> at 10AM at Price Charities. An announcement was also made about the Refugee Academy put on by the state at Garden Grove on December 8<sup>th</sup> 10<sup>th</sup>.
- Nawal Alkatib (Treasurer) announced that there are 6 new members for the month of March (Somali Bantu Association of America, San Diego County Office of Emergency Services, Planned Parenthood of the Pacific Southwest, San Diego Unified School District, Bonnie and Geoff Copland, County of San Diego) and one new member for the month of April (License to Freedom).
- Kathi Anderson (Chair) announces that the San Diego Refugee Forum is not a 501[c]3 and therefore is unable to complete w9's for memberships. The Forum can provide receipts for memberships, but if this is not sufficient, the forum can work with the members. She also explained that the Refugee Forum researched getting a fiscal agent for the forum, but the cost is \$500 dollars and the officers determined it was not the best use of the funds.
- Refugee Forum Officers Kathi Anderson (Chair), Ute Maschke (Vice-Chair), Nawal Alkatib(Treasurer) and Madelyne Wagner (Secretary) are in attendance and Abdi Abdillahi (exofficio).

### 3. Task Force Updates:

- Health Task Force: The task force met on April 6<sup>th</sup> at 211 for a tour of their services to better assess what is available in terms of language access to the refugee community. The task force is working on assessing the needs of the refugees and has not yet determined its goals. The next meeting is scheduled for May 4th at 10am at Price Charities in suite 400. Please contact Bonnie Copland or Dianne Bourque, if you want to be on the task force's email list.
- Employment Task Force: The Employment Task Force met yesterday and continues to work on the July job fair. There will be two fairs; one in the east county region and one in the central



region. More updates will be provided to the forum as the job fair approaches.

- Domestic Violence: The task force meets every other month on the second Monday from 10-11:30 at License to Freedom. The mission for the task force remains to recruit and train volunteer interpreters. They continue to work on the curriculum for the two day training, but have yet to determine the location of the training.
- Asylee/Asylum Seeker Task Force:. The task force will meet the third Monday of every month at Survivors of Torture. The task force is currently seeking a new co-chair, if you are interested please email Carin Anderson at canderson@notorture.org.
- World Refugee Task Force: The World Refugee Day celebration will be held on June 20<sup>th</sup> from 9AM-12:30PM in El Cajon. The task force is currently working on the emergency plan for the event. They are working with Borrego Community Health Group to secure two registered nurses for the event. The task force will produce a flyer for the event and will send it out to the forum when it is ready.

#### 5. Other Updates

Resettlement Agencies (formerly VOLAGs)

- Alliance for African Assistance: 46 arrivals for the month from Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan, Colombia, and Democratic Republic of Congo.
- Catholic Charities: Arrivals for the past 6 months have been very low, but are expected to pick up in April. We had 40 arrivals in April. Catholic Charities has been accepted as a CHEP site (Cuban Haitian Entrant Program).
- Jewish Family Service: No one present to comment.
- IRC: No one present to comment.

County Agencies/Committees

- County: Abdi Abdillahi The arrivals for the month of March were very low, with just 109 arrivals. The majority of the refugees were from Iraq (67) and 15% of the arrivals were from Afghanistan. From October 2014 to March 2015 there have been 1,176 arrivals, 62% Iraq, 15\$ Afghanistan and 7% Somalia.
- State Advisory Committee: The State Advisory Committee will be attending a two day training in Sacramento with all of the state refugee coordinators. They will report on anything they learn to the forum at the next meeting.

6. Focus: Cultural Competency. Cecily Thorton-Stearns, County of San Diego

- Cecily Thorton-Stearns provided an overview of Cultural Competency and the factors that determine a cultural perspective. Please consult the PDF attached to the minutes for details.
- Cecily Thorton-Stearns recommended watching the TED Talk by Chimamanda Ngozi Adiche called "The Danger of a Single Story."
- (http://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda\_adichie\_the\_danger\_of\_a\_single\_story?language=en)

7. Spotlight: San Diego Refugee Forum: County Refugee Services.



• Maggie Fenn provided an overview of the employment services that the County of San Diego Health and Human Services offers refugees.

# 8. Community Updates

- Crittenton has recently opened an office in San Diego County and is currently trying to recruit host families in San Diego.
- Nile Sisters Development Initiative is recruiting refugees who have been here for less than 5 years for their Childcare Licensing Program.
- Mental Health America is offering free 8 hour Mental Health First Aid classes. For more information visit <u>www.MHASD.org</u>.
- The World Refugee Day task force is seeking sponsors for World Refugee Day. Please email Mohammed Tuama at <a href="mailto:mtuama@pcgus.com">mtuama@pcgus.com</a>.
- The Employment Task force is also seeking sponsors for the employment fair in July. Please email Mohammed Tuama at <a href="mailto:mtuama@pcgus.com">mtuama@pcgus.com</a>.
- The County Office of Emergency Services will be simulating a county wide power outage on May 20<sup>th</sup> to improve emergency and public health services and communication.
- Alliance for African Assistance made an announcement about their Family Childcare Program, which provides training and assistance to refugees who have been here for 5 years or less. Please contact Mariana at mariana@alliance-for-africa.org.
- Kathi Anderson announced some of the upcoming presenters for the forum:
  - May: School districts that receive refugee school impact grants (San Diego Unified School District, Grossmont Union High School District and Cajon Valley Union School District)
  - June: In honor of refugee month the forum is asking members to nominate a refugee or asylum seeker who has been extremely successful. We would like to highlight them by presenting them with an award and certificate and having them speak at the June meeting. An email will be sent out to the Forum about the nominations.
  - July: County Health Agencies for a presentation public health nurses, preventative health, refugee health, mental health

# Adjournment: 11:45am

Next Meeting: Tuesday, May 19th, 10:30 – 12:00 pm @ YMCA



# Tuesday, May 19, 2015, 10:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m. YMCA - 4300 El Cajon Blvd, San Diego, CA 92105

# 1. Call to order at 10:40 am

*Present:* Abby Maayah, Abdi Abdillahi, Amy Hines, Awichu, Afrah Abdulkader, Alejandra Solozano, Alicia Deleon-Torres, Bethlehem Pegu, Bill Sutton, Bonnie Copland, Bridget de la Garza, Carlos Mendez, Cassie Murray, Celia Balistreri, Dalia Mohammad, Dan Breuninger, Deona Dorsey, Diana Rhoades, Dianne Bourque, Emily Serafy Cox, Erin Richison, Elaine Rosas, Jamie Schroer Colbert, Jane Hoey, John Ramirez, Kathryn Shade, Kim Mcdemott, Madelyne Wagner, May Hasan, Mohamed Dad, Mohammed Tuama, Nadine Pedusseau Nao Kabashima, Nawal Alkatib, Nora Bota, Oren Robinson, Rita Shamoon, Ute Maschke, V. Gutierrez

#### 2. Executive Committee Announcements and Participant Introduction:

- Ute Maschke (Vice- Chair) opened the Forum meeting and began with Task Forse Updates due to limited
- Refugee Forum Officers Ute Maschke (Vice-Chair), Nawal Alkatib(Treasurer) and Madelyne Wagner (Secretary) are in attendance and Abdi Abdillahi (ex-officio).

#### 3. Task Force Updates:

- Health Task Force: The task force met on May 4th at Price Charities at 10:30AM. The task force met with Community Health Improvement Partner (CHIP) because they have health education materials translated. They came knowing they had to rewrite their health literacy report and they came to the Health Task Force for advice and feedback. The next meeting is scheduled for June 1st at 10:30AM at Price Charities in suite 400. Please contact Bonnie Copland or Dianne Bourque, if you want to be on the task force's email list.
- Employment Task Force: The Employment Task Force met yesterday and continues to work on the July job fair. There will be two fairs; one in the east county region and one in the central region. More updates will be provided to the forum as the job fair approaches.
- Domestic Violence: The Domestic Violence Task Force met on May 11<sup>th</sup> at License to Freedom to discuss the challenges of distributing flyers for their training. The Domestic Violence Task Force will now meet every month on the second Monday at License to Freedom.
- Asylee/Asylum Seeker Task Force: No members from the Asylum Seeker Task Force were present.
- World Refugee Task Force: The World Refugee Day celebration will be held on June 20<sup>th</sup> from 9:30AM-12:30PM in El Cajon. The flyers for the event have been printed and sent to all of the Refugee Forum members. There will be tables for Refugee Forum members available, and those who are interest can sign up with Nao.

#### 5. Other Updates

# Resettlement Agencies (formerly VOLAGs)

• Alliance for African Assistance: 28 arrivals for the month of May from Afghanistan, Democratic



Republic of Congo and Burma.

- Catholic Charities: 37 arrivals for the months of April and 80 arrivals for the month of May.
- Jewish Family Service: No one present to comment.
- IRC: No one present to comment.

County Agencies/Committees

- County: Abdi Abdillahi There were 109 arrivals for the month of March and 78 arrivals for the month of April.
- State Advisory Committee: No one present to comment.

6. Focus: Refugee Impact Grant Recipients (Cajon Valley Union School District, Grossmont Union High School District, San Diego Unified School District)

- All three schools districts were given 10 minutes each to answer the following questions:
- 7. Spotlight: Center for Community Solutions Afrah Abdulkader
  - Afrah Abdulkader provided an overview of the programs and services that the Center for Community Solutions offers. Please see the attached presentation for more information.
- 8. Community Updates
  - US Citizenship and Immigration Services is offering a Free Naturalization workshop on Saturday, May 23, 2015 from 10am-12pm at the City Heights Weingart Library.
  - There will be a public health dentist doing free health screenings at the San Diego African Culture Festival and World Refugee Day. They will be collecting data at both events for to apply to a grant that will help provide dental services to San Diego County refugee population.
  - Crawford Community Collaborative will have a forum meeting on Friday, May 29<sup>th</sup> from 5-7PM for a free screening of the documentary "Chosen: A Documentary on Human Trafficking."

Adjournment: 12:08

Next Meeting: Tuesday, June16<sup>th</sup>, 10:30 – 12:00 pm @ YMCA



# Tuesday, June 16, 2015, 10:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m. YMCA – 4300 El Cajon Blvd, San Diego, CA 92105

# 1. Call to order at 10:40 am

*Present:* Abdi Abdillahi, Andrew Amoraoe, Brandi Michelle Bourgen, Bridget de la Garza, Celia Balistreri, Dalia Mohammad, Deona Dorsey, Diana Rhoades, Hayblu Mueywa, Hser K. Moo, Jackie Hardict, Jamie Schroor Colbert, Jessica Mier, Juan Estrada, Kim Mcdemott, Lorna Strang, Maggie Fenn, Madelyne Wagner, Michael Leonardo, Nancy Martey, Nao Kabashima, Nawal Alkatib, Nawar Yousif, Nicole Kalmus, Neabh Allen, Oliver Cabara, Oren Robinson, Ricardo Naupremier, Rita Shamoon, Ute Maschke, V. Gutierrez

2. Executive Committee Announcements and Participant Introduction:

- Ute Maschke (Vice-Chair) opened the Forum meeting and explained that this forum's meeting is to celebrate and honor refugees in conjunction with World Refugee Day.
- Nawal Alkatib (Treasurer) announced seven new members (Advancement of New American (PANA), Jewish Family Services, Family Health Centers of San Diego, United Women of East Africa Support Team, Karen Organization, Brandi Michelle Bourgon).
- Refugee Forum Officers Ute Maschke (Vice-Chair), Nawal Alkatib (Treasurer) and Madelyne Wagner (Secretary) are in attendance and Abdi Abdillahi (ex-officio).

# 3. Task Force Updates:

- Health Task Force: The task force met on June 1st at Price Charities at 10:30AM. The task force proposed recommendations for the CHIP draft report, and all of the recommendations have been added and implemented. The next meeting will be July 6, at Price Charities 10:30AM.
- Employment Task Force: The Employment Task Force met yesterday and continues to work on the July job fair. There will be two fairs; one in the east county region and one in the central region on July 27<sup>th</sup>. The latter will focus on retail.
- Domestic Violence: No members from the DV Force were present.
- Asylee/Asylum Seeker Task Force: No members from the Asylum Seeker Task Force were present.
- World Refugee Task Force: The World Refugee Day celebration will be held on June 20<sup>th</sup> from 9:30AM-12:30PM in El Cajon. The flyers for the event have been printed and sent to all of the Refugee Forum members.

# 5. Other Updates

Resettlement Agencies (formerly VOLAGs)

- Alliance for African Assistance: 32 arrivals for the month of May from Somalia. Iraq, Afghan, Syria, and Burma.
- Catholic Charities: 79 arrivals for the month of May and scheduled for 65 arrivals for the month of June from Somalia, Democratic Republic of the Congo and Iraq. There have been 311 arrivals for the whole year (up until May 31). We should be up to 339 in the month of June.



- Jewish Family Service: No one present to comment.
- IRC: No one present to comment.

County Agencies/Committees

- County: Abdi Abdillahi There were 186 arrivals for the month of May. For the year (October to June 16<sup>th</sup>) 1,539 arrivals.
- State Advisory Committee: No one present to comment.
- 6. Focus: Panel of Successful Refugees and Asylees
  - All four panelists were provided with the following questions to answers in their speech:
    - Where are you from, and how and when did you arrive in the United States?
    - What would you say was your biggest challenge so far?
    - What would you say was your biggest success so far?
    - What are your future plans?
    - What advice would you give someone who has just arrived here?
- 7. Spotlight: Survivors of Torture, International (Niki Kalmus)
  - Niki Kalmus provided an overview of the programs and services that Survivors of Torture, International offers. Please see the posted presentation (sdrefugeeforum.org) for more information.
- 8. Community Updates:
  - The Refugee Forum will have a special presentation on June 23, 2015 for Trauma-Informed Care Services at Price Charities, at 10AM.
  - Ethnic Studies Now Coalition had a resolution passed for Ethnic Studies courses at San Diego Unified School District for grades K-12. There will be a meeting next Tuesday to discuss the creation of the subcommittee for content, program design and implementation. The meeting will be held at Filipino Food and Bakery - 2852 Main Street; San Diego, CA 92113 from 6pm-8pm.

Adjournment: 11:35

Next Meeting: Tuesday, July 21st, 10:30 – 12:00 pm @ YMCA



# Tuesday, July 21, 2015, 10:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m. YMCA – 4300 El Cajon Blvd, San Diego, CA 92105

# 1. Call to order at 10:35 am

*Present:* Abdi Abdillahi, Andrew Holets, Besma Coda, Betsy Knigh, Bonnie Copland, Cameron Brown, Carlos Mendez, Celia Balistreri, Christine Muto, Chloe Hoft, David Murphy, Deona Dorsey, Diana Bourque, Don Glibert, Emily Rowley, Eric Quiroz, Ghazia Hassan, Ismael Corles, Jackie Hardict, Jasmine Gilham, Josefina Blanco, Juan Estrada, Kathi Anderson, Kim Forrester, Kim Mcdemott, Lorna Strang, Maggie Fenn, Madeline Garcia, Madelyne Wagner, Margaret Lujan, Melba Yarbrough, Mohammed Tuama, Monica Hua, Najla Ibrahim, Nancy Martey, Nao Kabashima, Nawal Alkatib, Nawar Yousif, Oliver Cabara, Rebecca Paida, Renee Nasori, Rita Shamoon, Santiago Leor, Sheily Paule, Shelly Paule, Sheryl Ashley, Ute Maschke,

2. Executive Committee Announcements and Participant Introduction:

- Kathi Anderson (Chair) opened the Forum meeting.
- Nawal Alkatib (Treasurer) announced four new members: Elizabeth Ann Lopez, Madelyne Wagner, Operation Samahan and Aber Mayaah.
- Refugee Forum Officers Kathi Anderson (Chair), Ute Maschke (Vice-Chair), Nawal Alkatib (Treasurer) and Madelyne Wagner (Secretary) are in attendance and Abdi Abdillahi (ex-officio).

# 3. Task Force Updates:

- Health Task Force: The task force did not meet this month but will meet on August 3<sup>rd</sup> at Price Charities at 4305 University Avenue from 10am to 11:30am. For the past few months they have been discussing the issue of health literacy. At the next meeting they will be discussing what they will be doing for the rest of the year, whether it's an event or a project.
- Employment Task Force: The employment fair will be on Monday, July 27<sup>th</sup> at 11am at the San Diego Metro Career Center on the third floor.
- Domestic Violence: No members from the DV task force were present.
- Asylee/Asylum Seeker Task Force: No members from the Asylum Seeker task force were present.
- World Refugee Task Force: The World Refugee Day celebration was on June 20<sup>th</sup> from 9:30AM-12:30PM in El Cajon City. There will be a wrap up meeting this Thursday, July 23<sup>rd</sup> the Karen Organization of San Diego at 3pm to discuss how the event improved from last year and how they can improve next year.

# 5. Other Updates

Resettlement Agencies (formerly VOLAGs)

- Alliance for African Assistance: 43 arrivals for the month of May from Somalia, Iraq, Afghanistan, Colombia, Ethiopia and the Congo.
- Catholic Charities: 47 arrivals in July so far (Congolese, Somali, Iraqi). About a week ago, all the



VOLAGs had a conference call with the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM). The PRM expects to reach the projected ceiling of 70,000 refugees in the fiscal year 2015, and 8,000 Special Immigrant Visa holders. This will result in high arrivals over the next two and half months. PRM anticipates 6,000 arrivals throughout the whole month of July, 7,500 in August and 10,300 in September. Larger numbers of Burmese, Bhutanese, Iraqi and refugees from several African countries (1,000 more than projected) are expected. In response to this bulge, all stakeholders are urged to prepare community partners, such as the local health department, for an increase in arrival numbers.

- Jewish Family Service: No one present to comment.
- IRC: 49 arrivals for the month of June, 54 arrivals for the month of July. The State Department is expected to hit 70,000 refugees this year, but they are way behind in processing due to security issues in the Middle East. The Horn of Africa has also seen significant slow downs in the Somali population. They are expecting more refugees out of Asia, particularly Burma.

County Agencies/Committees

- County: Abdi Abdillahi For the month of June there were 147 arrivals, down from 185 for the month of May. Total for the year (October 14 until July 21) is 1,686. All of the numbers for the year are up on the Forum's website.
- State Advisory Committee: No updates.

6. Focus: County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA) Facilitator: Bonnie Copland Panelists: Betsy Knight, Behavioral Health; Jasmine Gilham, Eligibility Services; Christine Murto, Refugee Health Services; Diana Barrantes and Madeline Garcia, Child Welfare Services; Diane Bourque, Central Region Public Health

- Behavioral Health
  - 98% of direct mental health and psychiatric services are contracted out into the community, some of the contractors include:
    - Survivors of Torture, UPAC, Family Health Centers, Chaldean Middle Eastern Social Services
  - There is nothing relevant for drug and alcohol services for the refugee population.
  - Access and Crisis Line is a 7 days a week, 24 hours a day service for suicide prevention, crisis intervention, community resources, mental health referrals and alcohol and drug support services. This service is confidential and free of charge. The phone number is 1.888.724.7240
- Refugee Health Services
  - Refugee Health Assessment Program's goal is to provide health assessments to incoming refugees, asylees, and parolees to get health screenings in the first 30 days of their arrival.
  - The county is not a direct service provider, but they contract with Catholic Charities and UCSD.
  - For the first appointment the refugees go to Catholic Charities to meet with an Health



Navigator to complete intake forms, which are then provided to UCSD physicians for the health assessment.

- For the second appointment the refugees go through a full health evaluation with a physician who can then provide referrals.
- Catholic Charities then provides follow up services for clients to help set up appointments and ensure that an interpreter is provided.
- Eligibility Services
  - Applies eligibility determination for calWORKs, CalFresh and Medi-Cal and issues benefits.
  - Also includes a refugee cash assistance program.
  - Applications are accepted through the mail and online.
    - The online service allows you to check the status of the case.
  - There is a CBO phone line for specific questions.
- Central Region Public Health Center
  - The Central Region Public Health Center is located at 5202 University Avenue and all services are free to anyone without insurance.
  - Services include: immunizations, STD testing, TB testing and flu vaccines
  - Nurse Family Partnership
    - Home visit services by registered public health nurses for women who are having their first baby (must be eligible for Medi-Cal).
    - A registered nurse will visit the mother in their home throughout pregnancy and continue to visit until the baby is 2 years old. The program teaches mothers about pregnancy, growth and development, becoming a better parent and how to build a strong support network.
- Child Welfare Services
  - Objectives: Keep children safe, address mental health needs and ensure children stay in community to minimize trauma
  - Referrals for Child Welfare Services are made through the hotline.
  - The goal is to link family to services, educate them on laws and act as a support.
  - Interpreters are provided for the family.
- 7. Spotlight: San Diego Metro Career Centers Deona Dorsey and Santiago
  - Deona Dorsey and Santiago Leor provided a brief overview of the services offered by San Diego Metro Career Centers.
  - Goal: find and maintain employment for clients
  - There is no fees for the services, but clients need their Right to Work documentation
  - San Diego Metro Career Centers teach members how to communicate their value to employers to gain employment.
    - Self-directed service: For individuals who are more independent workshops for job readiness training are provided and they have access to the computer lab to search and apply for jobs.



- Staff assisted program: links clients with staff for more guidance.
- On The Job (OJT) training program: allows people to connect with employers to learn the job
  - The employer is compensated by the state to provide an incentive to hire clients.

# 8. Community Updates:

- Andrew Holets from the YMCA announced that the YMCA has a fully commercialized demonstration kitchen. The YMCA will be conducting a survey of how they can best utilize the kitchen, which will be sent out to the forum.
- Alliance for African Assistance is facilitating the Domestic Violence Interpreting Essentials training on Saturday, August 8<sup>th</sup>, from 9am-5pm at Meridian Baptist Church in El Cajon. The training cost \$25 and for registration email <u>Brittney@alliance-for-africa.org</u>.
- Employment Task Force Employment Fair on Monday, July 27<sup>th</sup> at the San Diego Metro Career Center at 11am. The task force is also looking for sponsors for their East County career fair, which will be in late August or early September.
- Grossmont College will be having an AARP Back to Work 50+ program. The information session will be on Thursday July 23<sup>rd</sup> in building 55 room 522.

Adjournment: 12pm

Next Meeting: Tuesday, August 18<sup>th</sup> from 10:30am-12pm at YMCA



# Tuesday, August 18, 2015, 10:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m. YMCA – 4300 El Cajon Blvd, San Diego, CA 92105

# 1. Call to order at 10:35 am

*Present:* Abdi Abdillahi, Afrah Abdulkader, Alejandra Solorzano, Beatrice Maleno-Gaeto, Besma Coda, Bill Sutton, Brittney Yackley, Cameron Brown, Dalia Mohammed, Dan Nyanangah, Deona Dorsey, Diana Bourque, Eddie Meyer, Elaine Rosas, Eric Quiroz, Erikka Jones, Fasienne Perlor, Ghazia Hassan, Habiba Jana, Ismael Cortes, Jackie Kersey-Hardrick, Jaime Schroer Colbert, Jason Martinez, Jasmine Gilham, Jennifer Navala, Jennifer Stiff, Juan Estrada, Kathi Anderson, Kim Forrester, Kim Mcdemott, Maggie Fenn, Madelyne Wagner, Margaret Lujan, May Hassan, Monica Hua, Najla Ibrahim, Nawal Alkatib, Neda Rivera,Neil Horland, Nora Bota, Rebeca McMillan, Renee Nasori, Rita Shamoon, Said Abiyou, Sara Ramos, Sherwan Al-Qaderi, Sheryl Ashely, Ute Maschke, V. Gutierrez

#### 2. Executive Committee Announcements and Participant Introduction:

- Kathi Anderson (Chair) opened the Forum meeting.
- Nawal Alkatib (Treasurer) announced that there were no new members for the month of August.
- Refugee Forum Officers Kathi Anderson (Chair), Ute Maschke (Vice-Chair), Nawal Alkatib (Treasurer) and Madelyne Wagner (Secretary) are in attendance and Abdi Abdillahi (ex-officio).

# 3. Task Force Updates:

- Health Task Force: The Task Force just sent out a Doodle invite to survey the availability of people to increase attendance at the meetings. A new meeting date and time will be sent out to the forum shortly.
- Employment Task Force: The employment fair will be on Monday, July 27<sup>th</sup> was a success. There were about 300 people walk through and about 10 people hired on the spot. The Task Force is now planning for the East County employment fair in October.
- Domestic Violence: The Task Force met the second Monday of the month at License to Freedom. At the meeting they reviewed the Domestic Violence Interpreting Essentials training provided by the Alliance for African Assistance. They also discussed how they will get access to the interpreters who are trained. The Domestic Violence Task Force encourages more people to attend their meetings and is moving the meeting to every other month on the first Tuesday from 10am-11am. Information about the location will be sent out to forum.
- Asylee/Asylum Seeker Task Force: No members from the Asylum Seeker Task Force were present.
- World Refugee Task Force: No members from the World Refugee Task Force were present.

#### 5. Other Updates

#### Resettlement Agencies (formerly VOLAGs)

• Alliance for African Assistance: 87 arrivals for the month of August from Sudan, Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Iraq, Congo, Syria,



- Catholic Charities: Catholic Charities has already resettled 27 people in August and are expected to resettle 60 more. All the resettlement agencies are expecting an increase in arrivals from now until the end of September.
- Iraqis and Sudanese The number of arrivals is picking up with many more refugees expected to arrive from now until the end of September.
- IRC: No one present.

County Agencies/Committees

- County: Abdi Abdillahi There were 164 arrivals for the month of July, 72 of which were Iraqis. The county is expecting a large number of Burmese and Congolese arrivals in the next two months. The total for the year (October 15<sup>th</sup> – July 15<sup>th</sup>) is 1,850.
- State Advisory Committee: No one present.

# 6. Focus: Securing our eCity Foundation – Liz Fraumann

- Liz Fraumann provided an overview of cyber security and cybercrime and how to protect ourselves and our clients in the office and at home.
- 7. Spotlight: San Diego Diplomacy Council Natalie Maroun
  - Natalie Maroun provided an overview of the San Diego Diplomacy Council.
  - San Diego Diplomacy Council will be hosting a Pride World Forum on Monday, August 24 from 6pm-8:30pm at the San Diego LGBT Community Center, 3909 Centre St. San Diego, CA 92103. This event will provide a glimpse at LGBT diplomacy and will include delegates from 24 countries.
  - Diplomacy Day 2015 event will be held on November 14 from 5pm-8pm at the Bristol Hotel, 1055 1<sup>st</sup> Ave. San Diego, CA 92101

#### 8. Community Updates:

- Alliance for African Assistance is facilitating a 40-hour Mental Health Interpreting course. There are three sessions, the first starting in September and the cost is \$35. You can apply for any of the session on their website at <a href="http://www.globalvillagelanguage.com">www.globalvillagelanguage.com</a>.
- Congressman Juan Vargas offers a variety of constituent and legislative services, as well as federal information.
- Crawford Community Connection has partnered with Crawford High School to offer services to apply for any public assistance services.
- Child Welfare Services is reaching out to community organizations and providers serving refugees to educate people about their services.
- La Maestra Community Health Centers now offers low cost immigration legal services. For a free 30 minute consultation, please contact them at (619) 564-7010 Elizabeth: ext. 3192, Eric: ext. 3555
- Crawford Community Connection has a meeting on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of the month at Crawford High School from 10-11:30am to discuss the opportunities and trends impacting the students



and family.

• The San Diego Black Nurses Association, Inc. will be having their annual health expo and back-toschool kickoff on Saturday, August 22, 2015 from 9am-3pm. The event is free and includes free health screenings and will be located at the Joe & Vi Jacobs Center at 404 Euclid Avenue, San Diego, CA 92114.

Adjournment: 12pm <u>Next Meeting:</u> Tuesday, September 15<sup>th</sup> from 10:30am-12pm at YMCA



# Tuesday, September 15, 2015, 10:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m. YMCA – 4300 El Cajon Blvd, San Diego, CA 92105

# 1. Call to order at 10:35 am

*Present:* Abdi Abdillahi, Afrah Abdulkader, Andrew Holets, Awichu Akwanya, Bill Sutton, Bridget de la Garza, Cameron Brown, Carlos Mendez, Chris Williams, Christine Murto, Claire Henry Enemark, Dalia Mohammed, Danny Washle, Deona Dorsey, Diana Rhodes, Eddie Meyer, Eric Quiroz, Hermila Yifler, Ismael Cortes, Jane Hoey, Jesse Imsrieno, Jessica Mier, John Ramirez, Joseph Miesner, Kathi Anderson, Kim Forrester, Kim Mcdemott, Lindsay Winters, Madelyne Wagner, Maggie Fenn, Marie Saint Louis, May Hassan, Mohammed Tuama, Nancy McCormick, Nawal Alkatib, Neda Rivera, Neil Hovland, Rachel Molloy, Renee Nasori, Ricardo Valadez, Sapra Iyer, Sherry V., Ute Maschke.

# 2. Executive Committee Announcements and Participant Introduction:

- Kathi Anderson (Chair) opened the Forum meeting and announced that is National Welcoming Week.
- Nawal Alkatib (Treasurer) announced that there were no new members for the month of September.
- Refugee Forum Officers Kathi Anderson (Chair), Ute Maschke (Vice-Chair), Nawal Alkatib (Treasurer) and Madelyne Wagner (Secretary) are in attendance and Abdi Abdillahi (ex-officio).

# 3. Task Force Updates:

- Health Task Force: The Health Task Force met last Friday, September 11<sup>th</sup>. The meeting included a presentation from Project Shine and continued the discussion about the project. The next meeting will be on October 9<sup>th</sup> from 1pm-3pm at Price Charities in suite 400. All are welcome to join.
- Employment Task Force: The task force is in preparing for the East County employment fair on October 29. The next meeting will be on the third Monday of the month.
- Domestic Violence: The location of the Task Force meeting will be changed and the Forum will be notified by email of the change.
- Asylee/Asylum Seeker Task Force: No members from the Asylum Seeker Task Force were present.
- World Refugee Task Force: No members from the World Refugee Task Force were present.

# 4. Other Updates

# Resettlement Agencies (formerly VOLAGs)

- Alliance for African Assistance: Alliance for African Assistance expects 128 arrivals from Iraq, Syria, Somalia, Sudan, and Afghanistan.
- Catholic Charities: There have been 50 arrivals so far for the month of September, with the expectation to receive 80 more by the end of the month. The clients are coming from Afghanistan, Iraq, Congo and Burundi. By the end of the fiscal year (September 29<sup>th</sup>), Catholic



Charities will have received an estimate of 530 arrivals all together.

- President Obama has announced that there will be about 10,000 refugees arriving to the country within the next weeks or months. San Diego has received 42 Syrian refugees up until July 31<sup>st</sup>. The state of California has received 128 Syrian refugees, which is roughly 9% of all Syrian arrivals into the United States. If you go by this data, California gets roughly 3 to 4 percent of the Syrians arriving into the country. At most, this would be about 300-400 Syrians refugees for the whole year for San Diego. San Diego has all of the resources to assist the Syrian refugees, many of whom have experienced trauma.
- IRC: The IRC expects 120 arrivals for the month of September from Syria, Congo, Burma, Iraqi, Iran, and Somalia.

# 5. Selection of Nominations Committee

- Elections are coming up in November for the Vice-Chair and Treasurer.
- Three people were nominated for the Selection of Nominations Committee Nao Kabashima, Diana Rhodes and Deona Dorsey
- 6. County Agencies/Committees
  - County: Abdi Abdillahi The County has a total of 204 arrivals for the month of August, 2015 from Afghanistan, Bhutan, Burma, Burundi, Congo, Cuba, Ethiopia, Iran, Iraq, Somalia, Sudan and Syria. In regards to Syrian and Iraqi refugees, the County has received a total of 50 Syrians and 1,062 Iraqis. The total refugee counts for the Federal Fiscal Year (October 2014-August 2015) is 2,054.
  - State Advisory Committee: No one present.
  - Refugee Health: Christina Murto The County has been working on strengthening the refugee mental health component of the health assessment process.

7. Focus: U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) – Alana Ow: USCIS District Director, John Ramirez: Community Relations Officer, District 24

- John Ramirez provided an overview of the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS).
- Immigration forms are available online for free at <u>www.uscis.gov/forms</u>.
- The services provided by USCIS are fee-based, but the fees can be waived if certain criteria is met.
- 8. Spotlight: YMCA Andrew Holets: Director of Community Outreach and Development
  - Andrew Holets provided an overview of services offered by the mid-city YMCA
  - The YMCA offers a financial assistance program to provide support to those in need. The application can be access on their website or at the front desk.
  - If you have any questions or would like to reserve the community room, please email Andrew at Andrew.holets@ymca.org



- 9. Community Updates:
  - SIATech Charter School South Bay announced that they have opened an independent study program to earn an accredited high school diploma. The program is free and allows for a flexible schedule. For more information visit their website at www.siatech.org.
  - Grossmont College has an information session on Friday from 1-3pm for their short term career program for individuals 50 and over.
  - San Diego Public Library City Heights Branch is open 7 days a week and offers free tutoring for K-8, as well as free computer access.

# Adjournment: 12pm

<u>Next Meeting:</u> Tuesday, October 20<sup>th</sup> from 10:30am-12pm at YMCA. The focus presenter will be UCAN.



# Tuesday, October 20, 2015, 10:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m. YMCA – 4300 El Cajon Blvd, San Diego, CA 92105

#### 1. Call to order at 10:35 am

*Present:* Abdi Abdillahi, Afrah Abdulkader, Awichu Akwanya, Bill Sutton, Bridget de la Garza, Carlos Mendez, Celia Balistreri, Dalia Mohammed, Deona Dorsey, Dianne Bourque, Elaine McLevie, Elizabeth Lopez, Eric Quiroz, Harris Niazi, Ismael Cortes, Jane Hoey, Jennifer Stiff, Joseph Jok, Juan Estrada, Kathi Anderson, Kelly Wraight, Lorna Strang, Madelyne Wagner, Mark Zambon, Melba Yarbrough, Mohammed Tuama, Nawal Alkatib, Nawar Yousif, Neda Rivera, Rebeca McMillan, Rita Shamoon, Ross Fackrell, Sedrick Ntwali, Ute Maschke.

2. Executive Committee Announcements and Participant Introduction:

- Kathi Anderson (Chair) opened the Forum meeting.
- Nawal Alkatib (Treasurer) announced that Home Start was the only new member for the months of September and October. She encouraged nonmembers to become members in order to be able to vote in next months election.
- Refugee Forum Officers Kathi Anderson (Chair), Ute Maschke (Vice-Chair), Nawal Alkatib (Treasurer) and Madelyne Wagner (Secretary) are in attendance and Abdi Abdillahi (ex-officio).

# 3. Task Force Updates:

- Health Task Force: The Task Force met on October 9<sup>th</sup> to further discuss ways that they can assist refugees in terms of health literacy. The Task Force discussed the challenges that refugees face in choosing a health plan and provider. The Task Force is going to assess how they can streamline the existing informative material on the different health plans. The next meeting will be on Friday, November 13<sup>th</sup> from 1PM-3PM at Price Charities.
- Employment Task Force: The East County Job Fair will be on Thursday, October 29<sup>th</sup> from 10AM to 1PM at the Ronald Reagan Community Center. The Task Force will also be nominating a new Chair and Co-Chair at the next meeting, which will be on November 16<sup>th</sup>.
- Domestic Violence: The DV Task Force meets on the second Tuesday of every other month from 10AM-11AM at License for Freedom. Afrah Abdulkader announced that October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month and everyone has been very busy with events and outreach. At the previous meeting the Task Force discussed the linguistic challenges service providers face when serving survivors of Domestic Violence. It is difficult to both find volunteer interpreters who are trained in domestic violence and mental health interpreting and to get law enforcement to use interpreters. The Task Force is also exploring ways to train and educate law enforcement on cultural competency and the importance of using an interpreter.
- Asylee/Asylum Seeker Task Force: No members from the Asylum Seeker Task Force were present.



# 4. Other Updates

Resettlement Agencies (formerly VOLAGs)

- Alliance for African Assistance: No one from the Alliance for African Assistance was present.
- **Catholic Charities**: Catholic Charities had 135 cases for the month of September, many of them being large families from the Democratic Republic of Congo. Arrivals for the month of October will be similar to September with arrivals from Iraq, Democratic Republic of Congo and Burma.
- IRC: The IRC had 138 cases for the month of September, only 4 of which were Syrian families. It has been very difficult to find housing for their clients, especially for the large families from the Democratic Republic of Congo. Joseph Jok asked for members of the Forum to collaborate in finding secure housing options, as well as educating and advocating on behalf of refugees. For the month of October the IRC has about 40 scheduled arrivals but expects to reach about 80 by the end of the month.
- Jewish Family Services: No one from Jewish Family Services was present.

5. Selection of Nominations Committee

• Elections will take place at the next Forum meeting on November 17<sup>th</sup>. Only member organizations are allowed to nominate and vote in the election. An email announcement will be sent out to the Forum from Nao with instructions on how to nominate and the nominations will close on October 31.

# 6. County Agencies/Committees

County (Abdi Abdillahi): Abdi Abdillahi addressed the rumors regarding the arrival of Syrian refugees to the United States, as well as San Diego County specifically. Per state's data, the last six years, San Diego has only had 76 Syrian arrivals, 51 of which arrived this past fiscal year (as of August 2015). The existing data indicates that the Syrians arriving in California will be primarily be resettled in the Los Angeles area.

Per Resettlement Agencies, total number of arrivals for the Federal Fiscal Year (October 2014-September 2015): 2,519

- Iraq: 1,226 (49%)
- Afghanistan: 311 (12%)
- Somalia: 238 (9%)
- Rest (29 Countries): 30%
  - Congo: 201
  - Burma: 154
  - Syria: 55
- State Advisory Committee: The State Advisory Committee did not meet this past month.

7. Focus: Utility Consumers' Action Network (UCAN) – Jane Krikorian, UCAN Supervisor of Advocacy and



#### Administration

- Jane Krikorian provided a brief overview of the services offered by UCAN. Please refer to the PowerPoint for more details.
- 8. Community Updates:
  - The Co-Chair of the East County Domestic Violence Coalition announced its annual Hope Rally in El Cajon. The rally will take place on Friday, October 30<sup>th</sup> and will meet at the El Cajon Police Station at 9:15AM.
  - Sedrick Ntwali from ResCare discussed some challenges that refugees face in San Diego County, such as affordable housing, renter's rights, and transportation. Sedrick Ntwali encouraged the Forum to consider these issues and how they can be addressed. Many of the Forum members responded with information about organizations and community resources that are available for refugees. The Forum's Vice-Chair, Ute Maschke, suggested that Sedrick Ntwali start a Housing Task Force. The Chair of the Forum, Kathi Anderson, challenged Sedrick Ntwali to initiate the Housing Task Force and to find a Co-Chair, which Awichu Akwanya volunteered to do.
  - Doctor Harris Niazi from City Heights Family Health Center specializes in family medicine and announced that he provides services in Dari, and encouraged Forum members to send any clients that speak Dari to him. Harris can be reached by email at harrisn@fhcsd.org
  - Dianne Bourque announced free flu shots will be available at the Logan Heights Library on Thursday, October 22 from 10AM to 4PM. The shots are available for ages 6 months and up while supplies last.
  - Kathi emphasized the value of completing the Survey Monkey. The input will guide the activites of the Forum next year.

Adjournment: 11:15AM <u>Next Meeting:</u> Tuesday, November 17th from 10:30AM-12PM at YMCA. Focus: Self-care by Survivors of Torture, International



# Tuesday, November 17<sup>th</sup>, 2015, 10:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m. YMCA – 4300 El Cajon Blvd, San Diego, CA 92105

#### 1. Call to order at 10:40 am

*Present:* Abby Maayah, Abdi Abdillahi, Aseel Ross, Ashley Barbee, Bill Sutton, Bonnie Copland, Carlos Mendez, Carmen Kaomt, Cassie Murray, Christine Murto, Claire Henry Enemark, Dalia Mohammad, David Murphy, Diana Rhoades, Elaine McLevie, Elizabeth Terrazas, Erika Hess, Eyal Bergman, Henri Migala, Ismael Cortes, Jane Hoey, Jennifer Navala, Jessica Mier, Kans Grounds, Kathi Anderson, Keshav Damoor, Kieu Do, Madelyne Wagner, Maggie Fenn, Margaret Lujan, Marie Saint Louis, May Hasan, Melba Yarbrough, Nawal Alkatib, Nao Kabashima, Neda Rivera, Oren Robinson, Ramla Sahid, Renee Nasori, Rita Shamoon, Ross Fackrell, Sheryl Ashley, Ute Maschke

#### 2. Executive Committee Announcements and Participant Introduction:

- Kathi Anderson (Chair) opened the Forum meeting.
- Nawal Alkatib (Treasurer) announced that the forum had a total of 41 members for the year and a total of \$9,058 in funds, thanks to the members.
- Refugee Forum Officers Kathi Anderson (Chair), Ute Maschke (Vice-Chair), Nawal Alkatib (Treasurer) and Madelyne Wagner (Secretary) and Abdi Abdillahi (ex-officio) were in attendance.
- David Murphy from the IRC explained that the IRC was currently using our regular meeting place for a course that teaches refugees using the YMCA's full service kitchen.

#### 3. Selection of Nominations Committee

 Nao Kabashima announced on behalf of the Nominations Committee of the Refugee Forum that November elections have been postponed until the January meeting. The Forum has elections every year for two officer positions and this year the Forum is seeking nominations for the Vice-Chair and Treasurer positions. The elections were supposed to take place at today's meeting, but there were not enough nominations. Nao encouraged everyone at the meeting to nominate someone for the positions, which you can do by emailing Nao at nao@karensandiego.org.

#### 4. Task Force Updates:

• Health Task Force: The Health Task Force developed a proposal at the last meeting to develop a



strategy that refugees can use to pick a health plan. It would involve allowing the refugees to choose a health plan based on the primary clinic they would like to go to. Bonnie Copland and Christine Murto have been gathering more information about the health plans and will present at the next Task Force meeting on Friday, December 11<sup>th</sup> from 1PM-3PM at Price Charities.

- Employment Task Force: The East County Job Fair took place on Thursday, October 29<sup>th</sup> from 10AM to 1PM at the Ronald Reagan Community Center. The Job Fair was very successful.
- Domestic Violence: The DV Task Force did not have a meeting this month. The DV Task Force meets on the second Tuesday of every other month from 10AM-11AM at License for Freedom or Center for Community Solutions.
- Asylee/Asylum Seeker Task Force: Elizabeth Lopez is working on revamping the Task Force and will be reaching out to Forum Members for participation. The Task Force will start again in January, 2016.

#### 5. Other Updates

- David Murphy (IRC): David led a discussion and provided some information on the status of refugee resettlement given the attacks that occurred in Paris over the weekend. There has been serious backlash and anti-refugee rhetoric in the United States and around the world in regards to resettling Syrian refugees. Already in the United States 27 governors have said their states will not accept refugees and many other politicians are trying to defund the resettlement of Syrian refugees.
- The United States has agreed to resettle 85,000 refugees this year, 10,000 of which should be coming from Syria. It is important to remember that the refugees that are resettling in the United States are the most vetted in the world. The United States has the most thorough and comprehensive background and security checks for refugees in the world. It is a process that takes a year and half to two years.
- San Diego is expected to receive about 300 Syrian refugees this year
- Jessica Mier from Congresswoman Susan Davis's office informed the Refugee Forum that the office has been receiving many phone calls that are anti-refugee. The representative encouraged everyone in attendance that supports refugees to contact the office to voice their support. It is important for the Congresswoman to hear support from both sides.



• Ute Maschke announced that the Refugee Forum's website now includes facts and data on refugee arrivals.

#### 6. Resettlement Agencies (formerly VOLAGs) Arrival Data and Updates

- Alliance for African Assistance: No one from the Alliance for African Assistance was present.
- **Catholic Charities**: Catholic Charities has 101 cases for the month of November, most of them coming from diverse backgrounds (Congo, Afghanistan, Iraq, Burma, Cuba and Haiti).
- IRC: For the month of November, the IRC is expecting about 80 arrivals from Iraq, Afghanistan, Somalia, and Iran. The IRC did receive a few Asylee cases and have seen a rise in free cases and medical cases for the month.
- Jewish Family Services: No one from Jewish Family Services was present.

#### 7. County Agencies/Committees

- County (Abdi Abdillahi): The county received a total of 245 arrivals for the month of October (90 Iraqi, 46 Afghan, 37 Congolese, 22 Cuban, 17 Burmese, 9 Somali, 7 Syrian, 5 Ethiopian, 4 Iranian). Abdi also noted that the County of San Diego has only resettled 76 Syrians from October 2008 to August 2015, 51 of which arrived in the last Federal Fiscal Year (October 2014-August 2015).
- State Advisory Committee: The State Advisory Committee did not meet this past month.
- Refugee Health: Christine Murto wanted to remind resettlement agencies that arrivals need to get tested for TB at the County clinic on Rosecrans Street. The number for the clinic is 619-692-8631. Patients will need to bring a copy of their chest x-ray, but they will also have another x-ray done. She also wanted to congratulate the IRC for their successful flu shot outreach, which reached about 70 new people.

#### 8. Focus: Self-Care by Survivors of Torture, International – Erika Hess and Cassie Murray

- Erica and Cassie presented on the topic of self-care and the different techniques and exercises that can be done to improve your mental and physical health.
- Resources:
  - Help for the Helper by Babette Rothschild



- Keeping the Peace by Thich Nhat Hanh
- Calm.com App

#### 9. Spotlight: Child Welfare Services – Neda Rivera

- Neda provided an overview of the services that Child Welfare Services provides and the way in which those services are tailored toward the refugee community.
- Child Abuse Hotline: 858-560-2191

# 8. Community Updates:

- Kathi encouraged attendees to use the space by the coffee kiosk near the front entrance of the building as a space to continue conversations at the end of the meeting.
- The IRC announced their eight week vocational ESL classes, which starts every month. To sign up clients please call the IRC at 619-440-6208 or visit their office. Participants must be:
  - 18 years or older and a refugee, asylee or SIV holder.
  - The parents of a dependent child or children under age 18
  - Have been in the U.S. less than 5 years.
- PANA is an organization whose mission is to promote the economic, political and social inclusion of refugees in the community. They are currently collecting data for a report on the what they can do to create a more welcoming society beyond the services that are being provided.
- Cajon Valley Union School District announced the creation of a new team that will assist newly arrived parents and students.
- Cajon Valley Union School District also announces that they will be starting their after school program in January through the Refugee School Impact Grant. Please call Souad at 619-588-3261 for more information.
- Karen Organization will be hosting an event on Saturday, January 9<sup>th</sup> for the Karen New Year. The location is not yet finalized, but invitations will be sent out soon.
- Nao Kabashima announced that guest from the Good Practice Exchange Project from Japan and South Korea will be coming to San Diego again in March. They will coming here to learn from the organizations that serve the refugee community. They are here to learn from San Diego because Japan and South Korea are beginning to resettle refugees from Burma.



- Chaldean Middle Eastern Social Services is hosting their 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Family Nutrition & Health and Wellness Fair on Friday, November 20<sup>th</sup>. The event will take place from 1PM-4PM at St. Michael Chaldean Church Hall.
- San Diego Unified School District announced that they have reached out to all the resettlement agencies to provide information on the schools that are prepared to educate new arrivals.
- Nile Sisters reminded the Forum that they offer a service that assists clients with enrollment in Covered California.
- Kathi reminded the Forum of the elections in January and to send in your nominations to Nao.

#### The San Diego Refugee Forum will not hold a December meeting.

Adjournment: 11:15AM

Next Meeting: Tuesday, January 19th from 10:30AM-12PM at YMCA.



# **b. Executive Committee Meeting Minutes**

# Thursday, January 8, 2015 10:00 – 11:00 am Catholic Charities, San Diego

- 1. Present: Kathi Anderson, Ute Maschke, Nawal Alkatib, Abdi Abdillahi, Carmen Kcomt.
  - a. Kathi opened up a conversation regarding the State's training academy, we had comments about the registration fee amount and other expenses that have to be covered by the participant. We still have many questions with no answers, the theme and topics are unclear, we do not know the dates and place for the event. We will present the topic in the General Refugee Forum when we receive clarifying information. Kathi will follow-up with the State.
  - b. Presentation Jan Spencley from San Diegans for Healthcare Coverage will be presenting. Kathi will inform her that she has 45 minutes for the presentation and 15 minutes for questions and answers.
- 2. Kathi also commented that the presentation is timely because February 15 is the deadline for health care enrollment and there will be an increase in penalties for those who don't enroll.
- 3. Spotlight Internal business of Refugee Forum
- 4. Next meeting will be at Alliance for African Assistance. Other venues such as the new City Heights Y and Faith Lutheran are being pursued. Criteria for new location includes: adequate parking, centrally located, large enough room to accommodate different seating arrangements, A/V tech capabilities and availability on a consistent basis. The Mission Valley Public Library is not open until 11:30 on Tuesdays per Ute.
- 5. Website Ute said that soon the hosting website will be free.
- 6. Nawal gave each member a copy of the 2014 financial report. Kathi suggested some minor additions and changes and she also congratulated Nawal for the good work.
- 7. Britney is working on the annual reports that will be sent via email to the membership.
- 8. Task Forces Conversation regarding if is necessary to meet with Task Force co-chairs half an hour before every General Meeting. We exchanged ideas and concluded that is not necessary to meet with task force 30 minutes before the general meetings because task force co-chairs can request a meeting if they need it and vice versa. Carmen has asked if the co-chairs of the task forces are permanent members or they are up for elections every year, then we talk that



may be good not only to ask for reports from the TF but to also try to motivate other members to get involved in TF.

- 9. Ute is working on connecting with SAY San Diego to be the fiscal agent for the Refugee Forum. In the meantime, it is still with Somali Family Services.
- 10. A Survey Monkey is being designed and will be sent to Refugee Forum members before the next meeting to ask for input about what they would like to see happen in the forum this year. It will be sent for a total of 3 times to increase response rate. Last year, the response rate was high and enough ideas were generated to establish a full calendar of presenters and spotlights.

Respectfully Submitted,

Carmen Kcomt

Secretary



# Thursday, February 5<sup>th</sup>, 2015 10AM-11:45AM Faith Lutheran Church - 5310 Orange Ave., San Diego

Attendees: Kathi Anderson. Ute Maschke. Abdi Abdillahi. Nawal Alkatib, Carmen Kcomt.

- 1. Options for change of venues:
  - a. Ute: Working to get YMCA, new in City Heights. Needs to inquire about fees and specifics.
  - b. Kathi: The church has no cost and is in a good location with good parking, but no screen and technology. Unclear about WiFi but will check with church
  - c. Abdi: Rest care is not big enough and parking is not good.
  - d. Nawal: United Way is is not close to the refugee community.
  - e. Ute: Expressed her opinion about not having our meeting in a place that is faith related.
  - f. Price Charities: We do not know about the fees and parking validation but Ute will find out.
  - g. Abdi: May be good to get input from the community.
- 2. Fiscal sponsor for the Forum:
  - a. Say San Diego no longer provides this service
  - b. Catholic Charities said no, but Ute will ask again
  - c. SURVIVORS said no
  - d. Somali Family Services has said no
  - e. IRC said no
  - f. Kathi and Ute met by phone with Mission Edge but their fee is 9%
  - g. The Media Arts Center charges a fee of 5%
  - h. Ute will check with Workforce Partnership
  - i. Kathi also checked with Community Partners and Social & Environmental Entrepreneurs which charge 6.5%
  - j. Ute suggested Alliance. Kathi will follow-up with Andrea.
  - k. Abdi asked about filing for 501 3 C status but group decided against it for many reasons including the lengthy process of at least one year.
- 3. 3. Survey Monkey
  - a. Ute distributed the results of the survey to all the officers for review and discussion.
  - b. Topics for presentations/panels included: trauma informed care, cultural competency, healthcare plans/carriers (Molina, Community Health, First Care and HealthNet) refugee school impact grants, self-care, cyber security, advocacy vs.lobbying, county health (public nursing, preventative, mental), spam protection asylum (immigration and benefits) and client appreciation panel
  - c. Kathi: Betsy and Jo-Ann of the County could present about trauma informed care after March. Kathi will also contact County for a cultural competency training, ACLU for



advocacy, City Schools, GUSD and CVUSD, ESET for cyber security and Bonnie and Dianne for County Health.

- d. Ute, Nawal and Abdi will contact the healthcare plans/carriers.
- 4. Spotlights
  - a. Ute will follow-up with Center for Community Solutions, Somali Bantu Association of America, Nile Sisters, San Diego Metro Region Center, CWF and SURVIVORS (June)
- 5. Bob Montgomery of IRC
  - a. Kathi reported that he is retiring March 2 and recommended the Forum recognize him at an upcoming meeting for his many contributions to the field and our community. Kathi will check with IRC about ideas of how to best acknowledge him.
- 6. Sacramento
  - a. Kathi contacted Thuan who is not available to come to an upcoming Refugee Forum meeting but could be available by speaker phone and possibly the next time she will be in San Diego.
  - b. Upcoming conference in December will be statewide, replace the summit and probably held in Southern California
- 7. Treasurer's Report by Nawal
  - a. New Members: USD, La Maestra, CMSS and SURVIVORS. Total of 11 in new year.
- 8. Debrief January
  - a. Meeting Positive feedback.



# Monday, March 09, 2015, 11am – 12:40pm Refugee Services, Catholic Charities, San Diego

Present: Kathi Anderson, Nawal Alkatib, Ute Maschke

- 1. Review of monthly presentation schedule ("Focus"):
  - a. March: Advocacy Presentation by Partnership for New Americans (to be confirmed)
  - b. April: Cross-Cultural Competence (presentation by the county)
  - c. May: Trauma-informed Services
  - d. June: Refugee Recognition
  - e. July: What is public/county/ ... health?
  - f. August: Self-care (speed meetings)\*
  - g. September: School districts\* Health Care Providers\*
  - h. October: Cyber Security\*
  - i. November: Elections / Asylum Seekers and Immigration\*
- \* topic might change
- 2. Review of Spotlight Schedule:
  - a. March: SDRF
  - b. April: County of San Diego (to be confirmed)
  - c. May: Center for Community Solutions
  - d. June: Survivors of Torture, International
  - e. July: SD Metro Region Career Centers
  - f. August: Somali Buntu Association of America
  - g. September: Red Cross
  - h. October: Nile Sisters
  - i. November: Child Welfare Services
- 3. Change of venue has been confirmed. We will meet at the Copley Family YMCA, mid-city. We are still exploring best ways to fulfill liability (paperwork) requirements. For now, each attendee will fill out a personal liability form. Kathi will send information and reminders through the listserv.
- 4. Conversations with the San Diego Alliance are moving forward thanks to Kathi's persistence. We might have a fiscal agent soon and will develop a contract that fits the forum's and the alliance's needs.
- 5. Special elections for a secretary might not really take place. Only one person voiced interest in the position.
- 6. The next meeting (March 17) will start with a moment (or two or three) of appreciation, in recognition of Bob Montgomery's work. (Bob will attend.)



- 7. The website is going through updates to better serve the community. We might integrate a page for volunteer opportunities.
- 8. Finances are in order. We would like to learn and understand better why some organizations request a W-9 form. We will inquire through email.
- 9. Lenore Lowe of Nonprofit Management Solutions has agreed to assist the Forum with by-laws' revisions when the officers are ready to take on this task.
- 10. Membership list was distributed by Nawal: 2 new members. Also, current balance: \$10,238.13.



# Thursday, April 9, 2015, 11am-12pm Refugee Services, Catholic Charities, San Diego

Present: Kathi Anderson, Nawal Alkatib, Ute Maschke, Abdi Abdillahi, Madelyne Wagner

- 1. Review of monthly presentation schedule:
  - April: Cultural Competence (presentation by the county)
  - May: Refugee School Impact Grant recipients (Cajon Valley Union School District, Grossmont Union High School District, San Diego Unified School District)
  - June: Refugee Recognition
  - July Overview of Health Care Plans (Panel with Molina Healthcare, Community Health Group, Health Net and Care 1<sup>st</sup>)
- 2. Special Presentation: Trauma-Informed Care training with Betsy Knight from San Diego County tentatively planned for the month of June. Ute will try to schedule a room at Price Charities.
- Email announcement will be sent out for Refugee Acknowledgement for World Refugee Day.
   The number of refugees to be acknowledged is to be determined.
- 4. Participation in the December Refugee Academy will be presented to paying forum members once the agenda for the event is released.
- 5. Forum officers have decided that a fiscal agent would not be a sufficient use of the Forum's funds. The Refugee Forum is not a 501[c]3 and therefore cannot provide a w9 to paying members, but receipts and invoices can be generated for payments.
- 6. The Refugee Forum meeting minutes will be used for members who cannot attend meetings because technology may discourage members from attending the forum, and attendance is essential to the Forum's mission.

Next Meeting: Thursday, May 7<sup>th</sup>,11am-12pm @ Catholic Charities



# Thursday, May 8, 2015, 2:15pm-3:15pm Refugee Services, Catholic Charities, San Diego

Present: Kathi Anderson, Nawal Alkatib, Ute Maschke, Abdi Abdillahi, Madelyne Wagner

- Special Presentation: Trauma-Informed Care training with Betsy Knight from San Diego County on June 23<sup>rd</sup> at Price Charities.
  - RSVP is strongly encouraged and will be sent to Madelyne Wagner at Madelyne@alliance-for-africa.org
  - Mental Health First Aid training will be mentioned as a complimentary training to expand knowledge on the subject of trauma-informed care.
- May 19<sup>th</sup> Refugee Forum Meeting Presentation: Panel of Refugee School Impact Grant recipients (Cajon Valley Union School District, Grossmont Union High School District and San Diego Unified School District). Each panelist will answer the same five questions and provide an introduction to their district.
  - Briefly explain the district
    - i. Union vs. Unified?
    - ii. What does the grant look like for the district?
    - iii. What is the target population?
    - iv. What specific goals did the district set?
    - v. Summer program?
  - What is the district's history with the refugee school impact grant? Have you previously been awarded the refugee school impact grant?
  - What are the district's objectives for this grant? What are the anticipated outcomes and what is the action plan to achieve these goals?
  - What are the biggest challenges? What are your best practices?
  - How does the district envision engaging with the refugee forum and its members?
- 3. The spotlight for the May 19<sup>th</sup> Forum meeting will be Center for Community Solutions.
- There are three new memberships for the month Central Region Career Center, UPAC and Crittenton.
- 5. Forum officers would like to create a space for Forum members to share their opinions on the



presentations at the monthly meetings on the Refugee Forum's website. The goal of surveying the Forum members would be to better gear the presentations toward the community serving refugees.

 Another email announcement will be sent out for Refugee Acknowledgement nominations for World Refugee Day.

Next Meeting: Thursday, June 4<sup>th</sup>, 11am-12pm @ Catholic Charities



# Friday, June 5, 2015, 2:30pm – 3:45pm Refugee Services Catholic Charities, San Diego

Present: Kathi Anderson, Nawal Alkatib, Abdi Abdillahi, Maggie Fern, Ute Maschke

- 1. Special meeting on trauma-informed services
  - We agreed to reach out to the El Cajon Collaborative and other community partners.
  - Kathi will send out another reminder to the listserv, emphasizing that we would appreciate RSVPs and that the event is open to the public.
  - We will provide plastic cups for the event; there is a water cooler in the room. Nawal will get the plastic cups.
  - Set up has been confirmed with Price Charities.
  - Kathi will check with Betsy on equipment. (Betsy will have to bring her own laptop.)
- 2. Nominations for the award ceremony during our meeting June 16th
- 3. Website

We briefly discussed the state of things as far as the website is concerned. Brittney will provide all new officers with access (user name, passwords, etc.) and will contact GoDaddy for possibly setting up email accounts through them.

- 4. World Refugee Day
  - Kathi mentioned that Nao will most volunteer as a co-chair. We agreed that planning should start soon.
- 5. Location of General Meeting
  - Brittney graciously offered AAA's meeting room for next year; the January meeting will take place there.
  - We might look into other (larger) spaces that would allow us to get away from theater-seating.
     The Family Health Center on El Cajon Blvd. might be a possibility; we will look into it. (See # 8 below).
- 6. We discussed the following issues, based on Kathi's inquiries:
  - According to the by-laws, the executive committee has six positions (four officers, the county's refugee coordinator, and a member-at-large). We didn't have a member-at-large in 2015 but will revisit (the need) this position once goals and objectives for the next year have been determined. A "social media person" might be a good candidate.
  - The task forces each have a chair and a co-chair. Only members of the forum can become chairs.
     Currently, co-chairs for the employment task force have to be newly elected. Task forces, their co-chairs, and their activities will also be featured on the website. Task forces are also asked to present (or organize a presentation) during one of the general meetings.
  - Finances are currently handled by the treasures (only) but three of us have access to the bank account at San Diego County Credit Union. The account has a little bit more than \$ 9.000. At the



moment, we present financial matters quarterly; there was evidence that membership did increase when we announced less. We might consider 100% transparency by disclosing matters on our website. Monies were spent pre-dominantly for World Refugee Day; each task force also has \$ 500 at their disposal annually, and we awarded five refugees with a check of \$ 100. Nawal will present all financial details during our next meeting. We will need to clarify our policies regarding the handling of financial matters. There should be a segregation of services.

- So far, the fiscal agent has always been the chair's organization (i.e., Somali Family Services for 2014). We will need to switch the agent. We will consider switching to a more permanent agent, for example Say San Diego.
- We need to announce now that membership fees are due for 2015.
- Terms for officers are staggered. (Ute and Nawal will serve for one more year. Carmen and Kathi will serve for the next two years.) Only the chair is elected by all (participating) members. All other positions are decided by the officers.
- 7. Open Business
  - The Domestic Violence task force requests their \$500 for this month, to pay for intensive interpreter training. The training will be held next year; however, the \$500 would be invoiced now for curriculum and training preparation.
  - The annual report will be compiled by Brittney. All officers will submit materials (minutes, special event reports, etc.).
- 8. Officer Duties for 2015
  - Chair: Kathi Anderson
  - Vice Chair: Ute Maschke
  - Secretary: Carmen Kcomt
  - Treasures: Nawal Alkatib

Of course, these duties only describe the basic roles. Officers plan, advocate, and network collaboratively.

- 9. Tasks/To-do-list
  - Najla will inform forum members and members of the listserv about the new officers and their roles.
  - Before the end of this month, Nawal will send out a reminder that membership fees are due.
  - Najla and Brittney will provide all 2015 officers with information on passwords (dropbox, website, email accounts).
  - Najla will forward survey questions and results to the 2015 officers.
  - Nawal will set up a meeting with SD County Credit Union for the morning of December 29<sup>th</sup> and confirm which documents are required for the transition. (Ideally, we will meet at 9:30 am.) For the time being, Somali Family Services will remain the fiscal agent.



- Ute will re-establish contacts with Say San Diego to initiate discussions about the latter becoming the fiscal agent for the forum.
- The new officers need to decide on a topic for January's general meeting. Brittney offered to have AAA present on utilities spending, saving, avoiding scams.
- Ute will check for possible contacts at the Family Health Center and email Kathy.
- All officers have to schedule 1:1 meetings to onboard new officers.

#### 10. New meeting times

- The new officers will meet December 29<sup>th</sup>, one hour prior to the meeting of old and new officers at the bank. The new officers' meeting will be at Starbucks, Camino Del Rio North & *Mission* Gorge. 4262 Camino Del Rio North; San Diego, CA. Ute will send an invitation to Abdi.
- The January executive committee meeting has been scheduled for January 8<sup>th</sup>, 10 11am, at Catholic Charities, 4575-A Mission Gorge Place.

#### 11. Good-Byes

- Brittney and Najla expressed their gratitude for having had the opportunity to serve as officers. Both offered their general availability whenever the new officers were in need.
- Both did an amazing job! Thank you!



# Tuesday, July 7, 2015, 4pm-5pm Refugee Services, Catholic Charities, San Diego

Present: Kathi Anderson. Ute Maschke, Abdi Abdillahi, Madelyne Wagner

- 1. Next Steps: Rotary Invitation:
  - a. Ute Maschke and Madelyne Wagner will present at the Mission Valley Rotary Club meeting on Wednesday, October 14<sup>th</sup> and will cover the following three things:
    - i. A short introduction to the San Diego Refugee Forum
    - ii. The challenges that the San Diego refugee population face
    - iii. And how the Rotary club can help
      - 1. How does a community create a welcoming environment beyond the VOLAGs and the first 90 days?
- 2. Debriefs: June monthly meeting, World Refugee Day and Trauma-Informed Care Training
  - a. June Meeting
    - i. It is in the best interest of the clients and forum to ensure that we have obtained photo releases for all the pictures from the June panel of successful refugees and asylees.
      - 1. All photo releases have been collected.
  - b. World Refugee Day
    - i. The turnout for this year's event was lower than expected. This could be attributed to the Ramadan holiday, as well as the event taking place in the morning.
    - ii. Why was the event unsuccessful and how can we do better next year?
      - 1. To be discussed at the next meeting for the World Refugee Day Task Force.
  - c. Trauma-Informed Care Presentation
    - i. The forum received a lot of good feedback on the presentation.
- 3. Upcoming topics: Future monthly meetings
  - a. July: Focus County Presentation, Spotlight –San Diego Metro Careers Center
    - i. Behavioral Health, Public Health, Child Welfare Services, Eligibility and Refugee Health
    - ii. Panelist will cover the following questions:
      - 1. What their role is in the agency
      - 2. What the agency's function is
      - 3. And how it relates to the refugee community
  - b. August: ESET will present on Cyber Security
  - c. September: To be determined
  - d. Three meetings need to be filled
    - i. Potential Presenters: UPAN, ICE and a presentation on self-care



- e. Another survey will be sent out to gauge people's interest in topics and general feedback.
- 4. Next step: By Laws
  - a. To be continued at next officers meeting

Next Meeting: Thursday, August 6<sup>th</sup> at 8:30am



# Thursday, October, 1<sup>st</sup> 2015, 8:30am-9:30am Refugee Services, Catholic Charities, San Diego

Present: Kathi Anderson, Ute Maschke, Madelyne Wagner, Abdi Abdillahi.

- 1. October General Meeting
  - a. Focus: UCAN
  - b. Spotlight: Nile Sisters
  - c. Reminders:
    - i. Discuss Election
    - ii. Survey Monkey reminder
- 2. East County Refugee Meeting with San Diego County Supervisor, Dianne Jacob
  - a. Abdi Abdillahi and Kathi Anderson attended the meeting. Kathi was representing the Forum at the meeting and advocated for more experienced voices from the Refugee Forum, VOLAGs and other providers to be included in the conversation.
- 3. Survey Monkey
  - a. The Officers reviewed the very few results from the survey that was received and agreed to announce again at the next meeting.
- 4. Rotary Club Presentation (October 14<sup>th</sup>)
  - a. Madelyne will contact the Rotary Club to confirm the presentation.
  - b. The presentation will cover the following items:
    - i. Provide a brief overview of what the Forum does.
    - ii. Provide a brief overview of the challenges refugees face in San Diego County (i.e. housing and employment)
    - iii. Encourage Rotary Club members to attend the monthly meeting.
    - iv. Encourage the Rotary Club members to create welcoming community through employment, housing, etc.
- 5. Syrian Refugees
  - a. The existing data does not indicate that San Diego will receive many Syrian refugees.
- 6. November General Meeting
  - a. Focus Presentation: Self-care by Survivors of Torture
- 7. Debrief September General Meeting
  - a. Kathi is making an effort to revitalize the Asylum Seeker Task Force, which has not met for the majority of the year.

Next Committee Meeting: November 5<sup>th</sup> at 4pm at Catholic Charities



# Thursday, November 5th 2015, 4:00-5:00pm Refugee Services, Catholic Charities, San Diego

Present: Kathi Anderson, Ute Maschke, Madelyne Wagner, Nawal Alkatib

- 1. Nominations
  - a. At this time, the Forum has only received one nomination for the positions of Vice-Chair and Treasurer. The officers will encourage the Forum members to nominate more people.
- 2. Planning Next Meeting
  - a. There will be elections (if there are enough nominations).
  - b. Focus Presentation: Self-Care by Survivors of Torture, International.
  - c. Spot-light Presentation: Child Welfare Services has confirmed with Ute.
- 3. Task Forces
  - a. Asylum Seeker Task Force: Elizabeth Lopez has agreed to take on the Asylum Seeker Task Force.
  - b. Housing Task Force: Kathi sent information to Awichu and Sedrick about starting a Housing Task Force and has not received a response.
- 4. Survey Monkey Response Rate and Results
  - a. Response Rate: 22
  - b. How do we get a better response rate? The officers will try conducting a live survey or facilitating a discussion at the January meeting.
- 5. Financials
  - a. Deposit was returned for World Refugee Day. There were no expenses for the month of October 2015.
  - b. One new member for the month of October: Home Start
- 6. Annual Report
  - a. Madelyne will complete the Annual Report before January.
- 7. Projected Arrival Numbers (including Syrians)
  - a. Ute suggested posting resettlement information on the Forum's website as a resource to the public. The data will include the arrival ceiling, the number of arrivals in San Diego County and the geographic distribution of the people in the county.
  - b. Kathi and Ute will reach out to the County and El Cajon Collaborative to contribute data and information.
- 8. Dianne Jacob's follow-up meeting with County and VOLAGs
  - a. The Forum officers discussed the follow-up meeting with Dianne Jacobs. All of the VOLAGs were present at the meeting, except Jewish Family Services.
- 9. Rotary Club Presentation
  - The Rotary Club presentation was a success. One of the club's members was going to email information about the San Diego Refugee Forum to a Youth Rotary Club in City Heights.



#### 10. Listserv

a. The officers are considering starting a new Listserv because of the lack of administrative access.



# Tuesday, November 24th 2015, 4:00-5:00pm Refugee Services, Catholic Charities, San Diego

**Present:** Kathi Anderson, Ute Maschke, Madelyne Wagner, Nawal Alkatib, Nao Kabashima, Abdi Abdillahi

- 1. January Meeting
  - a. Elections
  - b. Focus Presentation: Refugee Program's Bureau in Sacramento
  - c. Spotlight Presentation: None to give the Refugee Program's Bureau enough time to present, since they will be flying in for the meeting.
- 2. HR 4038 and upcoming Senate Bill
  - a. There was an impromptu meeting with Representative Peters because he voted for the House Bill HR 4038, which requires Iraqi and Syrian refugees to go through a more extensive background check process.
  - b. The Refugee Forum officers will pay attention to when HR 4038 goes through the Senate.
  - c. Kathi Anderson will contact a representative from all Refugee Forum member organizations to get their opinion on posting a call to action on the Refugee Forum's website. The call to action will:
    - i. Encourage people to respond to their Congressmen on how they voted on HR 4038.
    - ii. Encourage people to contact Senators once the bill reaches the Senate.

#### 3. Elections

- a. The Forum has received only two nominations and has two other people who have expressed interest in the positions. Ideally, the Forum officers would like to have at least four to five nominees. In order to increase nominations, Nao will reach out to representatives from member organizations and all officers will personally reach out to people.
- b. Only members of the fiscal year 2015 will be able to vote in the election.
- c. Deadline for the nominations will be December 10<sup>th</sup>.
- d. Ideally, we were will have four to five nominees