**Minutes of the San Diego Refugee Forum Meeting**

**Date**: Tuesday, July 20, 2021

**Location**: Zoom meeting

**Time**: 10:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

**Attendees:**

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| Alexis Burnstan, UCSD TASET Project |
| Amanda Berry, County Sup. Lawson-Remer |
| Andrea Garcia |
| Bill Sutton, Catholic Charities |
| Bob Walsh, SDRF Secretary |
| Bowa Tucker, Office of Refugee Resettlement, SF |
| Brett Hall, CHIP Comm. Health Improvement Program |
| Brian Chavez, Vegan Food Aid Program |
| Brian Tam, Refugee Services Bureau, CDSS |
| Brittney Ochira, National Conflict Resolution Cent |
| Carmen Kcomt, La Maestra Community Health Centers |
| Carol Crisp, PCG |
| Carol Lewis, El Cajon Collaborative |
| Claire Enemark, SDRCC/UWEAST |
| Cynthia To, SD County Community Health |
| Dalia Mohammad, License to Freedom |
| Daria Tomsky, IRC |
| Esme Flores |
| Farhat Popal, City SD Immigrant Affairs Manager |
| Giselle Barajas, Jewish Family Service, Resettlement |
| Irene Elizabeth Garcia, SD Co Child Lead Prevention |
| Jan Jarrell, SD College of Continuing Ed |
| Jane Hoey, Women's Empowerment Intl |
| Jane Register, World Relief SoCal |
| Jessica Hernandez, East Region Adult Ed |
| Juan Estrada, Molina Healthcare, Comm Engagement |
| Katie Trist, A Better Life Together, BRIDGE Project |
| Lauren Kocher, CA Refugee Programs Bureau |
| Lenda Hanna, SD County Off. Refugee Coord., Immigrant and Refugee Affairs |
| Lilian Matingkwony, SAY San Diego |
| Lily Mojdehi, Breaking Down Barriers, Jewish Family Service |
| Lucy Jasso, San Diego Youth Services |
| Michele Einspar, SD Unified School District |
| Michelle Ly, UPAC |
| Mu Aye, Karen Organization |
| Nadia Moshirian Binderup, Sheriff's Dept. |
| Nazira Adieva |
| Prisci Quijada, Refugee Health Coordinator, SDCHHS |
| Rachel Evans, Somali Family Service |
| Renee Nasori, Grossmont College |
| Rita Shamoon, CALWORKS job developer |
| Ross Fackrell, IRC, SDRF Vice Chair |
| Shadi Haddad, Chaldean & Middle Eastern Social Services / San Ysidro Health |
| Shlyn Guarian, SD County Child Welfare Services, Community Outreach |
| Tania Rivera, IRC Emergency Resources |
| Vernita Gutierrez, Planned Parenthood Pacific SW |

46 attending, including 10 new in 2021

**Meeting facilitator**: Ross Fackrell, SDRF Vice Chair

**1. Greetings and introduction of attendees** Ross Fackrell, SDRF Vice Chair

Ross noted that a number of Forum regulars would not be in attendance due to the Eid holiday.

**2. Treasurer’s report** Ross Fackrell, SDRF Vice Chair

For the current year 2021 there are 19 (paid) active members. The names of members are posted on the website. Although all can join our monthly meetings, paying members enjoy a number of benefits. They are entitled to a table at our World Refugee Day event. Their dues support the mission of the Forum and the concept of this organization. Funds go to each task force for activities they plan, $500/year.

Members have priority in giving presentations and can promote their organization in this way. Only paid members can vote in officer elections. The Forum serves not only refugees but asylees and asylum seekers and is relevant to a range of organizations.

To join, go to the Forum website http://www.sdrefugeeforum.org/members.html You can pay with PayPal, but you don’t need a PayPal account to do so. Specify whether membership is for an organization or an individual. Membership dues are $35/year for individuals and small ECBOs and $70 for other agencies and organizations. Thanks to all for their dedication in serving the community.

**3. Resettlement update**  Ross Fackrell, SDRF Vice Chair

**Agency reports**

Alliance for African Assistance – not in attendance

Catholic Charities

June arrivals

0 SIV

146 Haitian asylum seekers

10 Cuban asylum seekers

July (so far)

12 SIV (all from Afghanistan)

2 refugees (both from Afghanistan)

90 Haitian asylum seekers

7 Cuban asylum seekers

August (projected)

2 refugees (from Somalia)

9 refugees (from Afghanistan)

Likely to receive a large number of Haitian asylum seekers

Jewish Family Service

June arrivals: 12 individuals

8 Afghanistan (4 SIVs; 4 refugees)

4 Central African Republic

July arrivals: 27 individuals

17 Afghanistan (SIVs)

3 Iraq

1 Ethiopia

6 Democratic Republic of Congo

August arrivals: Only 1 case scheduled so far – 3 Iranians

IRC

June arrivals: 27 total (Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria)

July arrivals: 11 to date (Afghanistan, DRC)

No August arrivals

September arrivals (SCHEDULED): 4 (South Sudan)

**County Refugee Coordinator report** (from Abdi Abdillahi)

Haitians continue to be the dominant arrivals in San Diego County. For June 2021 arrivals, 146 out of the total 198 (74%) are from Haiti. The remainder were from Afghanistan (23), Central African Republic (4), Cuba (10), Iran (1), Iraq (10) and Syria (4). As expected, the Haitians trend will continue for the remainder of the current FFY until we see refugee arrivals from overseas pick up.

For the current FFY 20-21 (October 1, 2020, through September 30, 2021), 614 out of the total 832 (74%) of the San Diego County arrivals are from Haiti; 12% are from Afghanistan and 6% from Cuba. For more details, see the County Arrivals Report uploaded on the SDRF website.

Finally, for FFY 20-21, 693 out of the total 832 (83%) are number of individuals eligible for CalWORKs including children, and the remaining 139 are singles or couples with no children.

**4. Task force update** Bob Walsh, SDRF Secretary

Advocacy

Advocacy Task Force, active in the past, has not yet had volunteers stepping forward. It may depend on identifying key issues to get behind, and they’re no doubt out there. Clint Carney of Survivors of Torture Intl suggests that each task force think about a need relevant to their focus to be advocated for. These could be things they would take on or that could be matters for an Advocacy Task Force.

Asylum

Alexis Burnstan reports that the group is creating a survey of services relevant to the asylum community. They hope to have something to report on this at our next meeting.

Domestic Violence

Dalia Mohammad reports the group has been meeting but is seeking to recruit more members. Email her at dalia.bapeer@gmail.com

Education

- The group has members representing San Diego Unified and San Diego Community College District.

- They are considering bringing in community members to join their group to get their perspective but are holding for now until they set up their discussion topics.

- Jan Jarrell of SDCCD Continuing Ed recently joined and at their last meeting described their programs:

Classes begin in September for all vaccinated students. They have lost 2/3 of their usual numbers of students during the pandemic, are hoping to recover.

Links to Continuing Ed offerings, Health and Digital Learning, SDCC Skill Center, counseling services:

Adult ESL: www.sdce.edu/esl

Healthcare Careers Programs:

https://sdccd0-my.sharepoint.com/:w:/g/personal/mbroene\_sdccd\_edu/EbIU6\_NjCHtNj5CY\_vMd0yYBDH\_E\_tHdhtH3t-gwyAG6Cw?rtime=RxXxJ6pL2Ug

The Promise Program is running, scholarships are available.

Promise program-https://www.sdccd.edu/about/departments-and-offices/student-services-department/promise/apply-promise.aspx

Employment

- The group currently has three members – Carol Crisp of PCG, Renee Nasori of Grossmont College, and Deona Dorsey of SD Workforce Partnership.

- They are doing a survey to identify employment needs of the community: “Employment Needs Identification Surveys”, including employment goals, education experience including in native country, hopes for training. Also demographic info. Will also be available in Arabic and Spanish. Sending to providers who will share it with their clients and customers. They need this input so they can come up with appropriate activities for the community. Need cooperation of agencies to make this happen.

English Survey: https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/X5K5PFX Arabic Survey: https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/59VNSQN Spanish Survey: https://es.surveymonkey.com/r/X8F7J8G

Surveys will be emailed again, please share with all your clients and customers. Thank you!

- If you are interested in joining the Employment Task Force please email Carol Crisp: crisp@pcgus.com

Health

Cynthia To reports:

- They just had their first meeting since pre-Covid on July 7. Now have 11 members.

- They are taking nominations for Chair and Co-chair and are working out their monthly meeting schedule.

- They are looking to survey Covid resources. It would be helpful to have a comprehensive list.

Mental Health

Claire Enemark reports:

- They had their second meeting. They meet the third Monday of every month. They have six members.

- They are clarifying their goals. One goal is to create a map of service providers in San Diego that are appropriate for working with refugee, asylum and relevant immigrant communities.

- They are interested in helping to link migrants to health and mental health services and seeing how the Forum can help with that.

- If you’re interested in joining the Mental Health Task Force you can reach out to Claire@uweast.org

World Refugee Day Special Task Force

Many thanks to the members of the World Refugee Day special task force who put in a lot of work over the last few months in a very challenging situation to carry out our annual event in celebration of World Refugee Day. Your efforts are much appreciated!

**5. Discussion Topic 1:**  Revision of SDRF Bylaws Bob Walsh, SDRF Secretary

The Forum Bylaws were last amended in 2017. This document has significant gaps and lacks important detail. A complete rewrite was undertaken, and a complete new draft was sent out for review to the Forum group on July 16. See the 2017 version for comparison at the About tab on the SDRF website:

http://www.sdrefugeeforum.org/bylaws.html

Main points of the changes:

* New text added describing the Structure and Purpose of the Forum.
* Functions and Activities has been expanded.
* Membership section was revised, detail added.
* Officers: Detailed description added on duties and responsibilities of the officer positions. New section on the Officer Team. Clarification on terms of office. New points on resignation, filling vacant positions, and suspension, dismissal, removal.
* Elections dealt with in detail in a new section.
* More detail on Committees and Task Forces.

All Forum members and participants are asked to review the new draft Bylaws and send in their comments and suggestions to Bob Walsh within the next two weeks, if possible; we welcome your input.

The process: New draft Bylaws are officially presented at today’s July 20 meeting. Input will be gathered, and a final draft will be prepared for presentation at the August 17 meeting for a vote. According to the current Bylaws, only paid members paid up by June 17 will be eligible to vote. A quorum of the majority of those paid members is required for the vote. If this quorum is not present at the 8/17 meeting, voting will be done by email to all paid members, and a majority of those returning a vote will decide the outcome.

**Discussion Topic 2:**  Use of Forum website, social media Ross Fackrell, Bob Walsh

The SDRF website can be a useful resource for the Forum as a repository for information relevant to the community and to the Forum’s mission. The “Resources” page currently contains documents that are mostly out of date that need to be reviewed for continuing relevance and accuracy. New resources can be added, such as the resource listings that several task forces are now intending to create. COVID resources should be reviewed and expanded. Innovative ways of accessing the resources could be developed, such as a QR code link that could be used by asylum seekers across the border to access documents that the Asylum Task Force might post at Resources.

The website and the Resources page are there and available to be used in whatever way the Task Forces would like.

As for social media, the Forum has a Facebook page that is little used for relevant purposes. There is a Twitter account that is inactive, and the Forum may or may not have an Instagram account. There was not enough time for discussion on the feasibility of using these services. The Forum will try to survey members about this and bring the subject back for discussion.

**6. Community Announcements**

Dalia Mohammad, License to Freedom

LTF is offering a small business program. It continues to offer COVID testing.

Michelle Ly, UPAC

UPAC has a mental health event coming up. We hope you will join us for this important discussion on why BIPOC Youth Mental Health matters to ALL of us. Register here: https://bit.ly/3riUMl6 #MentalHealthMatters #BIPOC #UPAC

Brittney Ochira, National Conflict Resolution Center

Offering a free, self-paced e-learning course for new arrivals. Participants get a $50 gift card from NCRC and certificate of completion.

Arabic Sign-up: https://forms.gle/PZmHE3yiCQ6CkDmcA

Dari Sign-up: https://forms.gle/r16Z827yfGJn3BmP9

English Sign-up: https://forms.gle/tAWYexwfhKhaBhpG9

Or contact Brittney bochira@ncrconline.com

Brett Hall, CHIP/SPC (Community Health Improvement Program/ San Diego County Suicide Prevention Council

They are preparing a resource guide for services.

Next meeting: SPC Priority Populations & Communities Subcommittee Meeting, Thursday, 8/19 from 1:00-2:30pm. Zoom link: https://zoom.us/j/93719055835?pwd=WGlYUDV3ZWVaM3E2QVhZMmltNlV2dz09

Meeting ID: 937 1905 5835

Passcode: ppc21

Please feel free to contact me for more information, bhall@sdchip.org.

Amanda Berry, Office of County Supervisor Lawson-Remer

- Focusing on In-home supportive services. Doing a cost benefit survey on quality and access. Looking at how to improve access to benefits.

- Supervisor Lawson-Remer continues to promote Immigrant Rights Legal Defense Program.

- Sign up for more updates from the County via our newsletter at: http://tiny.cc/BOSd3Updates

I can be reached at Amanda.berry@sdcounty.ca.gov

Brian Chavez, Vegan Outreach

Wants to connect re distributing free vegan food to our community.

Brian, Vegan Outreach, Vegan Food Aid Program. brianc@veganoutreach.org

Carmen Kcomt, La Maestra Community Health Centers

If any of you have unaccompanied minors in need of social services, therapy, financial assistance, please refer them to me. Carmen Kcomt 619 971 4185 for texts, my email is ckcomt@lamaestra.org

Farhat Popal, City of San Diego Immigrant Affairs Manager

I've started putting together a weekly City of San Diego Immigrant Affairs update newsletter. If you don't already receive them and would like to be added to the distribution list, please email me at FPopal@sandiego.gov.

Renee Nasori, Grossmont College

Grossmont College fall registration is open in person on campus. The semester starts August 16th. For help, jump on our virtual front desk (zoom):

Meeting ID: 932 3045 3786

Telephone: 669-900-6833

Tania Rivera, IRC

The IRC is providing FREE/ONLINE CITIZENSHIP CLASSES. Next group starts on July 26th (8 week morning class). Please call at 619-340-8498 or email Christina.Augsburger@rescue.org to register.

Claire Enemark, SDRCC (San Diego Refugee Communities Coalition)/UWEAST

CalHOPE Community Support Line 1-888-222-0980 for Emotional Support and Resource Navigation in 18 languages (Amharic, Arabic, Burmese, Dinka, English, Farsi French, Haitian Kreyol, Karen, Kizigua, Kirundi, Kurdish, Nuer, Oromo, Pashto, Somali, Swahili or Tigrinya)

Feel free to reach out to me at Claire@uweast.org for more information about our community support line!

**7. Approval of the minutes of the June 15 meeting** Bob Walsh, Secretary

**Adjournment** Ross Fackrell, SDRF Chair, 11:48 a.m.

**Next Meeting**: August 17, 2021

Minutes recorded by Bob Walsh, Secretary