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

**Date**: Tuesday, September 21, 2021

**Location**: Zoom meeting

**Time**: 10:30 a.m. to 11:30 p.m.

**Attendees:**

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| Abdi Abdillahi, SD County Refugee Coordinator |
| Alma Robles-Duran, County Family Resource Centers |
| Amanda Urena, SD Unified School District |
| Angie Esparza, SAY San Diego |
| Ann Vilmenay, COSD-HHSA-BHS-AOA |
| April Moo, Karen Organization SD |
| Avonne Pace, A Better Life Together |
| Becky Moreno-Estrada, FBI Victim Specialist |
| Bill Sutton, Catholic Charities |
| Bob Walsh, SDRF Secretary |
| Bowa Tucker, Office of Refugee Resettlement, SF |
| Brian Tam, Refugee Services Bureau, CDSS |
| Brittney Ochira, National Conflict Resolution Cent |
| Carol Crisp, PCG |
| Carol Lewis, El Cajon Collaborative |
| Cipriano Vargas, Office of Sup. Lawson-Remer |
| Claire Enemark, SDRCC/UWEAST |
| Claire Riley, County Behavioral Health Services, Adult |
| Clint Carney, Survivors of Torture Intl |
| Cynthia To, SD County Community Health |
| Dalia Mohammad, License to Freedom |
| Damaris Garduno, Miramar College CalWORKS |
| Dan Nyamangah, SAY San Diego |
| David Schupack, Bridge Builders Network |
| Diana Vaughan-Jones, County Public Health Nurse |
| Faida Malenga |
| Farhat Popal, City SD Immigrant Affairs Mgr |
| Giselle Barajas, Jewish Family Service, Resettlement |
| Giselle Ontiveros, La Maestra Comm. Health Centers |
| Graciela Mendoza, CA Dept. of Public Health, Binational Border Health |
| Hassan Abdirahman., Somali Family Service |
| Hawi Abdulkadir, Somali Family Service |
| iPhone |
| Irene Elizabeth Garcia, County Child Lead Prevention |
| Jan Jarrell, SD College of Continuing Ed |
| Jane Hoey, Women's Empowerment Intl |
| Jane Le, Rep. Jacobs office |
| Jane Register, World Relief SoCal |
| Jennifer Biggins |
| Joey Beyer, Survivors of Torture |
| Juan Estrada, Molina Healthcare, Community Engagement |
| Judy Amaro, PCG Central |
| Katie Trist, A Better Life Together, BRIDGE Project |
| Khatira Sarferaz, UWEAST Health Worker |
| Kim Roser-Kedward, LCSW Miramar College CalWORKs |
| Kim Thomas, American Academy of Pediatrics |
| Kybur Oberhaus, Rep. Jacobs office, intern |
| Leanne Carroll, CDPH, Office of Binational Border Health |
| Lenda Hanna, SD County Off. Refugee Coord., Immigrant and Refugee Affairs |
| Lucia Gonzales, SAY San Diego, Crawford |
| Lucy Jasso, San Diego Youth Services |
| Luis Monteagudo, 211 San Diego |
| Maria Adriana Gutierrez Sosa, Aetna |
| Maribel Gunner |
| Mary Joy Cunningham, MSW Intern IRC |
| Melissa Casanova, Home Start, First 5 First Steps |
| Michael Serban, FACE Dept., Cajon Valley Schools |
| Michelle Ly, UPAC |
| Natalie Bain, Family Health Centers |
| Nazira Adieva, County Office of Equitable Communities |
| Neil Hovland, SD Unified School District Family Engagement |
| Prisci Quijada, Refugee Health Coordinator, SDCHHS |
| Rahmo Abdi, PANA |
| Renee Nasori, Grossmont College |
| Rita Shamoon, CALWORKS job developer |
| Ross Fackrell, IRC, SDRF Vice Chair |
| Shlyn Guarian, SD County Child Welfare Services, Community Outreach |
| Tammy Burmeister, Child Welfare Services, East |
| Tania Rivera, IRC Emergency Resources Coordinator |
| Thelma Navarro, County Office of Border Health |
| Vernita Gutierrez, Planned Parenthood Pacific SW |

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

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

71 attending, including 16 new in 2021

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

There are currently 23 paid members. Inquiries from several other agencies are being addressed.

The Forum serves not only refugees but asylees and asylum seekers and is relevant to a range of organizations. Membership 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.

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 updates**  Abdi Abdillahi, County Refugee Coordinator

**County Refugee Coordinator report**

County arrivals for August: 428, including 242 Haitians (67%) and 4 Cubans, 164 Afghan SIVs, and 18 primary refugees from several countries. Of the total 428, 285 were families with children, and 143 were single adults or couples with no children.

For the current FFY 20-21 (October 1, 2020, through September 30, 2021) through August 2021, the County has received 1,515 arrivals, including 1,014 Haitians, 344 Afghans, 60 Cubans, and 38 from Iraq. The remaining 59 are from 12 different countries.

For more details, see the County Arrivals Report uploaded on the SDRF website.

**US/State arrival numbers** Lauren Kocher, CA Refugee Programs Bureau

From October 2020 through August 2021:

* US 15,702 total arrivals, including 7,637 refugees, 4,181 SIV
* CA 3,634 including 691 refugees, 2,943 SIV

One month remaining in fiscal year 2020-2021.

**Resettlement agency reports**

Alliance for African Assistance – not in attendance

Catholic Charities – Bill Sutton

CC has been receiving a lot of Cuban and Haitian entrants and is expecting more.

Jewish Family Service – Giselle Barajas

September: 39 arrivals, including 17 from Afghanistan and Iraq, 7 from Democratic Republic of Congo

IRC – Ross Fackrell

September: 52 primary refugees from Afghanistan, South Sudan, Syria, Democratic Republic of Congo, Iraq

IRC is starting to roll out a program for Afghan evacuees.

**4. SDRF officer update**

As was communicated to the Forum email group on September 6, Chair Awichu Akwanya and Treasurer Mejgan Afshan were both dismissed from office on September 27 due to not joining the Forum as a paid member. Dismissal was stipulated in the bylaws in such situations.

An email from Awichu was sent out recently on the Forum email stating that he was resigning from his office. The bylaws do not permit resignation in lieu of dismissal.

The bylaws were rewritten to broaden the scope and provide detail that was lacking in the previous version. Thanks to Bob Walsh for his work on this.

Elections will be coming soon, to be completed by the November meeting, Nov. 16. The Forum will be asking for volunteers for the Nomination Committee from among the paid members. More information on the election will be sent out.

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

Advocacy

Needs members to get started. This group can provide a base for addressing issues that members feel are important for the SDRF to advocate for in the public sphere.

Asylum

Clint Casey reported:

A priority for the group is to update or create a list of resources available to asylum seekers. Once in shelters, this population wants to know what resources are available to them and how they can access them. IRC and other agencies have resources. The Asylum TF would like to use the Forum website Resource page. The group will send out a survey about resources. They will make a presentation at the Forum October 19 meeting.

Graciela Mendoza reported:

All providers serving asylum-seekers are invited to the ASHS partner orientation on Monday, October 4, 2021 at 1:00 pm. The purpose of this orientation is to explain the ins and outs of the ASHS program - background information, client eligibility, how to refer clients to the program and steps clients should take to use the program. Please register at https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2NFQ78B to receive Zoom link for meeting.

Domestic Violence

Dalia Mohammad reported:

* The Sep. 7 meeting included the District Attorney’s office.
* The TF is preparing for an influx of Afghans, how to handle domestic violence situations. They assembling a list of places to call.
* The group met with the police. Community Officer Homayoun with lead a session on domestic violence and reporting.

Education

Amanda Urena reported:

College of Continuing Education

* Sept 7th courses started (many are online, some have optional on-campus sessions)
* Staff is on-campus 4 days a week to provide support (M-Th 8:30-6pm)
* Appointments longer than 15 minutes need to be vaccinated or negative COVID test

Continuing Ed is looking to have a course for parents in the future regarding how to be able to communicate with schools, including breakdown of typical  language used in education, family literacy and more.  If interested in contributing please contact Jan. [jjarrell@sdccd.edu](mailto:jjarrell@sdccd.edu)

Say San Diego

* Ongoing Community Collaborative Meetings once a month Wednesday.
* This month was on September 15th 10a-11am on Zoom
* Email Dan Nyamangah for Zoom link [dnyamangah@saysandiego.org](mailto:dnyamangah@saysandiego.org)

IRC

* Transition planning for tutoring programs for high school students

SD Unified

* School started in-person 5 days a week on August 30th
* Masks are required for students and staff
* Families were given the opportunity to enroll in optional COVID testing for students on-campus
* All students are provided with free breakfast and lunch at all school sites.  If students are enrolled in the Virtual Academy - pickup options are available for those families who enrolled online.
* Transition planning states for two grants supporting refugee youth and families. More information to come shortly.

 Future Meetings

* Team will continue to volunteer to alternate roles to facilitate and records
* Sign up to give presentations or find presenters added to the role signup sheet for 10-20 minute presentations. Then if we get presentations scheduled, we can advertise to anyone to attend.

Employment

Carol Crisp reported:

The group sent out their Refugee Employment Needs Survey again and got similar results from last month. it served as input to their planning, including for a virtual job fair to be held at Grossmont College in October. They are now lining up employers, 30 have registered so far. It will be free for employers and job seekers. Lots of people are looking for work. Employers will be prepared for limited English speakers. Flyers will be sent out.

Health

Cynthia To reported:

- Somali Family Service presented to the group about its resources.

- The group has a new co-chair: Maria Gutierrez of Aetna Better Health.

- Working on updating the Medi-cal Managed Care Map.

- Next meeting on Thursday 9/23/21 at 10:30AM will focus on how refugees can enroll in managed health care plans. Please contact Cynthia.to@sdcounty.ca.gov if interested in attending.

Mental Health

Claire Enemark reported:

- The group is putting together a map of mental health providers who can serve the refugee population.

- If you’re interested in joining the Mental Health Task force - please reach out: Claire@uweast.org

**6. Community Announcements**

Dan Nyamangah, SAY San Diego – Crawford Community Connection

I am a Community Organizer with SAY San Diego – Crawford Community Connection. I work with PSRO (Parent-Student-Resident Organization). We host monthly language-based parents meetings on education to support refugee and immigrants parents with how to support their kids’ education at home, enrollment, academics, education resources, navigating the school system, questions and concerns on different school sites. They are for all parents that speaks those languages. They are for all schools and grade levels. Usually we have parents from Crawford cluster, Hoover cluster, Lincoln cluster, San Diego cluster. For now, the meetings are virtual.

The languages supported are Arabic, Burmese, Swahili, Spanish, Karen, Somali, Kizigua, Haitian Creole, and English. The parents meet once a month and the discussions are in their language. After that, the information is gathered from each language then presented to the district or school site for response. Parents with concerns or questions about their kids’ school site are supported so the principal can respond to them directly.

Any questions about next month’s meetings please email or call me. [dnyamangah@saysandiego.org](mailto:dnyamangah@saysandiego.org)   (8587524792)

Dalia Mohammad, License to Freedom

A busy month with many Afghan refugees coming in. LTF has been helping them find clothing, make appointments, get kids enrolled in school, make therapy appointments. LTF is taking donations of items. The recently got 500 sets of school supplies for children. Contact LTF if you can help.

dalia@licensetofreedom.org

To make donations of items for Afghan refugees: Our address is 131 Avocado Ave., El Cajon. email me for more information dalia.bapeer@gmail.com

Tammy Burmeister, Child Welfare Services

We are working on creating a virtual training for Child welfare social workers on resources available for refugee/asylum families. Late October or November. If you are interested in participating and presenting your program, please email me at Tammy.Burmeister@sdcounty.ca.gov

Amanda Urena, SD Unified

If anyone is interested in joining the Education Task Force, we meet second Monday of the month at 3pm, or if you would like to give a 10-20 minute presentation to our group, please email Amanda aurena@sandi.net

Renee Nasori, Grossmont College

Employer and jobseekers are welcome to attend our FREE Virtual Career EXPO/Job Fair on Wednesday, October 27th from 11 am to 2 pm:

https://www.collegecentral.com/CCNEngine/LiveEvents/LiveEvents.cfm?EventID=5648

We continue to offer 21st century skills workshops to prepare students and community with the event and workforce. Register for any of the free virtual workshops here:

https://www.grossmont.edu/student-support/career-center/workshops.php

Manufacturing EXPO next week:

https://eastcountyedc.org/me2020/

Jan Jarrell, Dean, San Diego College of Continuing Education

SD College of Continuing Education ESL/Citizenship registration - on campus at Mid-City or online, www.sdcce.edu/esl Also please call 619-388-4500 or stop by Mid-City Campus, 3792 Fairmount Ave. Open M-Th, 8:30-6:30pm

Claire Enemark, SDRCC & United Women of East Africa

If you’re interested in joining the Mental Health Task force - please reach out: Claire@uweast.org

Cynthia To, County of San Diego Community Health

Next Health Task Force meeting is on Thursday 9/23/21 at 10:30AM. Will be spotlighting on the process of enrolling in managed care plans. If interested in attending, please contact Cynthia.to@sdcounty.ca.gov

Carol Crisp, PCG

PCG is having challenges assisting our Haitian refugees with housing since they do not have Social Security cards. If anyone has any assistance or insight into what can be provided to landlords we would appreciate the guidance.

(Abdi Abdillahi noted: It is illegal to ask for the legal status of prospective tenants.)

Jane Register, World Relief

Volunteer opportunities for helping with newly arriving refugees.

Contact jregister@wr.org

Michelle Ly, UPAC

For Afghan youth mental health needs: Contact Carmen Pat, (cpat@upacsd.com), Program Manager for Multicultural Community Counseling. The youth will have to receive therapy services and they will get additional case management support as part of the inclusive package of services.

Juan Estrada, Molina Health Care

Molina Healthcare in partnership with Family Health Centers of San Diego clinics and Meridian Baptist church in El Cajon will be hosting a covid-19 vaccination event on Saturday, October 2nd from 9:00am- 3:00pm at 660 S. 3rd street, El Cajon, 92019. Please refer everybody who is in need of the vaccine, thank you.

Melissa Casanova, First 5 First Steps

I am the Family Resource Specialist/Outreach Coordinator for Home Start's home visit program First 5 First Steps. We offer home visits to pregnant women and any mothers with children younger than 2 who are receiving CalWORKs.

We are always taking referrals to serve the community. If you want to reach out to me via email mcasanova@home-start.org or phone (619) 402-0278. I can share more information about our program.

Graciela Mendoza, CA Dept. of Public Health, Binational Border Health

All providers serving asylum-seekers are invited to the ASHS partner orientation on Monday, October 4, 2021 at 1:00 pm. The purpose of this orientation is to explain the ins and outs of the ASHS program -- background information, client eligibility, how to refer clients to the program and steps clients should take to use the program. Please register at https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2NFQ78B to receive Zoom link for meeting.

**7. Approval of the minutes of the August 17 meeting** Bob Walsh, Secretary

The minutes were approved.

**Adjournment** Ross Fackrell, SDRF Vice Chair, 11:30 a.m.

**Next Meeting**: October 19, 2021

Minutes recorded by Bob Walsh, Secretary