

# San Diego Refugee Forum

## Minutes

Tuesday, March 20, 2018 – 10:30 am to 12:00 pm IRC – 5348 University Avenue, San Diego, CA 92105

### Call to order at 10:30 am

### Welcome and Introductions:

Present: Robert Walsh, Deona Dorsy, Andrea Frost, Susanne Longwell (Ball), Ahmad Agil, Ayan Mohamed, Elizabeth, Lou, Meigan Afshan, Madelyne Kristoff, Keuw Wang, Brandon, Scott, Ncil Houland, Abdi Abdillahi, Kate Morrisson, Ross Fackrell, Amy Vance, Ryan, Williams, Ban Bakkal, Nao Kabashine, Kristine Aryvello, Leila Voloder, Shlyn Guarian, Victoria Hoong, Karen Hue, Nawal Alkafib, Onu Omodia, Hassan Abdishman, Lucia Acevedo, Elizabeth Castro, Donna Duvia, Ann V, Murgrith Alhijai, Kristen Lowther, Angel Carretero, Justin Bisimwa.

### I. Membership and Financials

1. Treasurer- Inherited \$9,000.00-\$10,000 in the account. The \$500 budgets for the taskforces are ready to be used this year. We have 17 renewed members, however, the largest membership record was 60 and happened last year. We are aiming really high this year with hopes to get 70 new members. The link to sign up for membership is on the home page. One can pay with card or check. The benefits to membership is a vendor table at World Refugee Day, you get listed on the website, and you get two votes whenever we have a vote and you are an organization, or one vote when you are an individual and we vote as a forum. Mailing list is open to all.

### II. Task Force Updates

1. **Advocacy Task Force:** Deferred
2. **Asylee/Asylum Seeker Task Force:** Deferred
3. **Domestic Violence Task Force:** No update
4. **Employment Task Force:** Deona Dorsey-Had a job fair this past Friday, 12 out of 13 employers showed up. 84 job seekers showed up, it was a great turnout. We provided snapshots of the event and a video is on the site.
5. **Health Task Force:** Madelyne Wagner- Currently looking for a new co-chair, if anyone is interested, please contact Madelyne at madelyne@nativeinterpreting.com. The Health Task Force will be hosting a panel discussion on public benefits for asylum seekers on Tuesday, May 8<sup>th</sup> at 1 PM at Molina Healthcare. The Health Task Force will also be hosting a trauma-informed care workshop for about 1 hour on Tuesday, June 10<sup>th</sup> at 1:00pm at Molina Healthcare. We are always looking for new members so

please contact Madelyne Wagner at [madelyne@nativeinterpreting.com](mailto:madelyne@nativeinterpreting.com) if you're interested.

6. **World Refugee Day Planning Committee:** Decided on June 16<sup>th</sup>, the Saturday before the official World Refugee Day. Currently looking at a few potential venue options besides having it at the park due to issues concerning food. We heard from the vendor of World Music and they have a grant, so they will be doing a series of concerts leading up to World Refugee Day and we are looking to partner with them. We are also looking for a new co-chair.

### **III. Resettlement Agencies (formerly VOLAGs) Arrival Data and County Updates**

Resettlement Agency:

1. International Rescue Committee: As of Monday this week we had settled 133 individuals from fiscal year to date with some of them being SIV walk-ins. A breakdown of our demographic is some were from Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and a handful from Sri Lanka Pakistan Iraq and Syria. We've seen an uptick in arrivals in February and it has quieted down again. I'm not sure if there will be other arrivals for March at this time besides the 15 arrivals we have, so far none are SIV. One family is scheduled for April.
2. Catholic Charities: No arrivals in March

County:

1. For the month of February, the County of San Diego welcomed 141 new arrivals (67 Afghan, 3 Burmese, 32 Congolese, 1 Eritrean, 8 Haitian, 10 Iraqi, 9 Pakistani, and 11 Sri Lankan). 58 were SIV, 7 were Cuban/Haitians. There were 34 individuals or couples with no children and 107 families out of the 141 arrivals.

Comparisons I want to report are the following:

October fiscal years 2015-2016 we had 245, 2016-2017 we had 376, 2017-2018 we had 95.

November fiscal years 2016-2017 we had 257, 2016-2017 we had 451, 2017-2018 we had 104.

December fiscal years 2015-2016 we had 244, 2016-2017 we had 366 2017-2018 we had 52

January fiscal years 2015-2016 we had 226 2016-2017 we had 362 2017-2018 we had 58

February fiscal years 2015-2016, we had 183 2016-2017 we had 221, 2017-2018 we had 141.

#### **IV. Presentations:**

Focus Presentation: Deputy City Attorney Onu Omordia,

City of San Diego attorney's Office – Code Enforcement Unit

Spotlight Presentation: Faisal El Azzouzi,

GetChargedUP

*Presentations are available at [sdrefugeeforum.org](http://sdrefugeeforum.org) under minutes.*

#### **V. County Agencies and Committees:**

1. Joel Day from City of San Diego. I need everyone to go onto [welcomingsd.org](http://welcomingsd.org) and under the comment section, annotate your ideas about how our city can be more inclusive, and do better immigrant integration policy. Put those ideas on there so we can put it into our 5-year strategic plan. I want to also reach out to the city attorney's office so I can be that liaison in case issues you discussed happen again. My number is (619)256-6573, I want to be able to run interference and be the intermediary so I can pick up the phone and call the city attorney's office, or call development office. I know you don't have a liaison with the mayor's office, I'll be that. And then we'll figure out a system that will give the community a permanent person in the Mayor's office. I currently am the city's liaison with the school district when it comes to these issues. Email is [jday@sandiego.gov](mailto:jday@sandiego.gov).

#### **VI. Community Announcements:**

1. Nile Sisters Director: We just relocated our office to 5532 El Cajon Blvd, Suite 5 San Diego, CA. We have a new training that centers around mental health designed for refugee community leaders, people can sign up at [nilesisters.org](http://nilesisters.org)
2. UPAC has an office across the parking lot that offers employment services for individuals with mental illness. The requirements are that the individual must be 18 years or older, have a mental health diagnosis and be a part of a behavioral health program.
3. Justin Bisimwa: Just published a book called Understanding the Multifaceted Management Problems of Refugee Resettlement in the United States of America, the book signing will be at the Malcom X Library on Market at 5148 Market St San Diego, CA 92114S from 3:00pm to 5:00pm.
4. Month of March is Women's month, resource fair at Jacobs Center Saturday

**VII. Approval of Meeting Minutes:** Jackline Mola- Motion to Approve Minutes, all in favor.

**VIII. Adjournment** 12:00pm

Next Meeting is Tuesday April 17<sup>th</sup> 2018