



**El Cajon Collaborative**  
**Newcomer Support Coordination**  
Meeting Notes  
February 4, 2010

**I. Introductions**

Kara Vickery opened the meeting and Izela Jacobo, Cajon Valley Union School District asked to add an agenda item.

**II. Welcome Back Center Introduction**

Laura Ann Fernea Educational Case Manager at the Grossmont College Welcome Back Center gave an introduction to the center describing its original development and how the largest of only 8 centers like it in the Country. Their work is primarily with folks who have obtained credentials in the healthcare industries in other Countries who now wish to practice in the United States. A majority of the folks they work with come from Mexico and the Philippines, they are seeing more Middle Eastern/Iraqi doctors and health professionals. The focus is on three things, retraining, licensure and employment.

Unfortunately, Laura Ann shared that it is next to impossible to get a doctor with credentials from another country licensed in this country. The issue is usually language capability (the American Medical Association accreditation process requires doctors to be perfectly bilingual) as well as getting the residency requirement for US licensure (which is hard to do even for some US born and trained doctors). The easiest transition is to have someone to become a nurse, which can be done in about 2 years or less if the person has previously been a nurse. They also offer career counseling for health professionals. The group asked many questions and we hope that the Welcome Back Center can continue to attend our meetings, as they offered a well of resources, information and experience.

**III. Follow-up items from January Meeting**

- Izela Jacobo, English Learner Coordinator for the Cajon Valley Union School District offered information about new Kindergarten enrollment packets being available at individual schools. She recommends that new incoming students get their packet and sign up as soon as possible. Additionally, Izela notified everyone of the transfer process between schools or the school choice process. All the forms have been sent home with students and are in Arabic, but not Burmese. Therefore she is hoping to make sure the Burmese get the information needed through support in the community. The forms are also available online here: [http://www.cajon.k12.ca.us/business\\_services/long\\_range\\_planning/transfers.shtml](http://www.cajon.k12.ca.us/business_services/long_range_planning/transfers.shtml)
- ESL classes update  
Izela noted that the one day registration for ESL classes at Cuyamaca this year was not successful and that they created a system to help enroll students into their classes by opening up their Parent Center and making a computer lab available for parents. Additionally she noted that she had to turn more than 50 people away from some class times and locations, despite the requirement for early registration. However, two classes

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*El Cajon Collaborative Vision: An El Cajon community working collaboratively to ensure children, youth and families are safe, empowered and thriving*

*Mission: The El Cajon Collaborative builds relationships, leverages resources and implements best practices to serve the children and families of the El Cajon Community.*

still had space available as of 2-4-10 one at Naranca and another at Johnson. No update was available regarding the classes at Grossmont Adult School.

- Alternate ESL activities update  
Lea noted that Kecia Kellam from Maximus is the new Work Experience Coordinator and that she is able to help individuals on CalWORKs develop a work experience alternative to ESL, if their English skills are advanced enough. Her contact information is: (619) 937-4408, [keciakellam@maximus.com](mailto:keciakellam@maximus.com)
- Apparently a website is in development regarding the information shared at the Refugee Summit on Education & Employment at Cuyamaca in November of last year.

#### IV. Discuss Target Areas

- Job Development - Lea is scheduling time to meet with representatives of the East County Chamber of Commerce. She is hoping to discuss ideas about job preparation and potential assistance from local businesses for newcomers.  
We also discussed ideas for refugees who want to start small businesses, it was noted that the IRC has a program and also an organization called Acción ([www.accionsandiego.org](http://www.accionsandiego.org)). Lea will talk with someone at the IRC to get more information.
- Encouragement of respect and understanding of other cultures - Friendship Fair planning has begun the next meeting for planning will be on Monday, February 8<sup>th</sup> @ 1:30PM at the El Cajon Library.

#### V. Community Events/Announcements

Bryan Nazareth the new Refugee Coordinator for San Diego County came to share the refugee employment services plan for 2007-2010 and discuss ideas for a forum to get stakeholder feedback on a new plan. He is hoping to host a public hearing later this month. The current plan can be found at:

[http://www.sdcounty.ca.gov/hhsa/programs/sd/documents/Refugee\\_Plan.pdf](http://www.sdcounty.ca.gov/hhsa/programs/sd/documents/Refugee_Plan.pdf)

**Next Meeting:** March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2010

Workgroup Mission: *Our mission is to encourage respect and understanding of diverse cultures through community education and newcomer service support coordination.*