



**El Cajon Collaborative**  
**Newcomer Support Coordination**  
March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2010 Meeting Notes

**I.** **Introductions** - The meeting began with introductions. Kara Vickery is on maternity leave, so Lea led the meeting. Tim Slade of Catholic Charities identified an additional agenda item related to training volunteers for cultural orientation support.

**II. IRC Microenterprise and Career Development Program Introduction** – Joel Chrisco and Thuba Nguyen of the IRC were present to share information about two programs for refugees unique to the International Rescue Committee (IRC).

- Joel discussed the Microenterprise service, which provides business development assistance, training and small start-up loans for qualified refugees. They can help build credit and this program is particularly for those with no credit/collateral and or no experience with banks in the United States. The program has been around for about 10 years. He gave numerous examples of types of businesses that a refugee could start through their program.
- Thuba shared about the IRC's newest service "career development" which can help refugees who are already employed find better jobs and get additional training. The program can also provide a small loan of up to \$5,000 for career-related expenses and education. She also shared information on an upcoming training in El Cajon on 3/19/10 on "How to Get and Engineer License in California". To see the flier:

[http://www.elcajoncollaborative.org/uploads/1/4/1/5/1415935/3.19 how to be an engineer.pdf](http://www.elcajoncollaborative.org/uploads/1/4/1/5/1415935/3.19%20how%20to%20be%20an%20engineer.pdf)

- Both programs are eligible for any refugee/asylee in San Diego County regardless of whether they were resettled by the IRC.

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

- ESL classes update – We discussed that a majority of the ESL classes are full. No additional information was available. Lea will see if someone from the Grossmont Adult School is available to come to our next meeting.
- Alternate ESL activities update – Lea reminded everyone that Kecia Kellam is the new "Work Experience Coordinator" at Maximus and that she is looking for sites for volunteers from the CalWORKS program who are looking for additional work experience as an alternative to their ESL classes. Kecia has informed us that she is particularly looking for medical, dental and veterinary locations at the moment – her contact information is: (619) 937-4408
- Refugee Summit on Education & Employment – Cuyamaca College As a follow-up to the refugee summit they are hosting a Cultural Awareness workshop for staff and community members today.

#### **IV. Discuss Target Areas**

- Job Development
  - Lea met with the East County Chamber of Commerce to discuss the newcomers and potential partnerships for developing job/mentoring programs. The business and education committee meeting is held regularly on the third Friday of the month from 8AM-9:30AM at the Chamber headquarters in El Cajon. She will continue to attend and hopes to organize a presentation to the Committee sometime soon.
- Encouragement respect and understanding of other cultures
  - Cultural Exchange Fair planning meeting on Monday, March 8<sup>th</sup> @ 1:30PM - El Cajon Library (201 East Douglas, El Cajon). Nancy SaintJohn is the new Branch Manager of the El Cajon Library and we will be utilizing her experience with event planning and management to discuss additional logistics and pre-preparations for the fair. A date at the end of September is being discussed.

#### **V. Community Events/Announcements**

Tim Slade of Catholic Charities discussed needing resources for gathering volunteers to help with their Cultural Orientation programming. The group suggested a few resources and directed him to some professional volunteer managing networks as well.

### **Next Meeting: April 8th, 2010!**

(The meeting date was changed at the request of the attendees to be the second Tuesday of the month for this month only).

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