



El Cajon Collaborative
Newcomer Support Coordination Meeting
Meeting Notes – August 6, 2009

I. Follow-up items from July Meeting

▪ *Update on ESL Classes*

According to Sheryl Ashley of Cuyamaca College, the ESL classes at Cuyamaca and Grossmont Adult Education are all full. Cuyamaca will be adding more non-credit “community education” classes and that schedule should be available on August 24th.

Also Barbara Tucker of MAXIMUS, is planning to have a coordination meeting for all the ESL providers in the East Region area in order to share and discuss needs, specific requirements and necessary tracking for ESL classes to meet County standards. She will be sending an email through Lea to the rest of the group asking for participation.

▪ *Translation of El Cajon Neighborhood Connection information*

Lea Bush noted that we have been able to get the El Cajon Neighborhood Connection information translated into Arabic thanks to Kara Vickery at El Cajon Valley High School. This will be formally distributed through the El Cajon Community Development Corporation (CDC) once they have finished formatting it graphically.

▪ *Budget cuts*

The recent cuts to the state budget are impacting many programs. It was noted that there may still be more impact at our next meeting. Lea emphasized the importance of us working together in challenging times. Barbara Tucker noted that she is having conversations with the County and Office of Refugee Resettlement about the number of refugees coming into the East Region/El Cajon area and the funding that needs to follow to support the influx.

II. Target Areas

Parent Education

- Middle Eastern “Promotora” training

The El Cajon Collaborative is coordinating with Ladies of Hope, El Cajon Valley High School and the Cajon Valley Union School District to train Arabic speaking parents in the “Promotora” model. This model taught by and used in the Chula Vista Community Collaborative, will be an adaptation since it is traditionally reserved for Latina/Spanish speaking women. The trainees will hopefully work with a school or program as an ambassador to provide cultural help and family advocacy.

Cajon Valley School entry presentations

Izela Jacobo, EL coordinator for the Cajon Valley Union School District can offer school entry presentations in community settings for newcomers with students in the Cajon

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Valley Union School District. Lea will ask her to forward a short message for the group so that people who are interested can contact her.

Child Welfare Services Training

Charisma De Los Reyes was available to discuss the opportunity for training in Arabic from Child Welfare Services to the community. She would like to schedule two dates and the presenter is ready! Lea noted that it would be best to have a small group of people to convene with the staff from Child Welfare Services prior to any training to help this conversation continue in a positive light in the community.

Mikaela Wallinder also noted that there is a Karen translated presentation from Child Welfare Services that is available for that population. Marilyn Nahas from the Episcopal Refugee Network was going to connect with that staff to look at offering that presentation in El Cajon.

Job Development

- El Cajon Career Center Training is upcoming on Tuesday, August 11 from 3-5pm. The RSVP list was passed around and any additional participants should contact Kara Vickery kvicery@sdyouthservices.org.

- Barbara Tucker asked about creating a list of businesses that when positions are open might be willing to hire and when positions are not available, may be willing to help with trial interviews and other job related activities for practice. Hana Mikail of the Ladies of Hope organization said that Chaldean-Middle Eastern Social Services (C-MSS) does have some information when jobs are available. Lea recommended Barbara's staff connect with Besma Coda from C-MSS at Tuesday's training.

Encouragement respect and understanding of other cultures

- Cheryl Cosart informed the group that the Library has started to consider reviving the "Friendship Fair" in El Cajon. She is looking for support and a contact at the City. She and Lea will connect in between meetings and have more information at the next meeting.

III. Community Events/Announcements

El Cajon Library is hosting multiple story times/reading opportunities for the children of refugees. Times and dates can be found at www.sdcl.org

Holly Christie from Catholic Charities is coordinating an effort for refugee households to have a \$341 credit on their gas/electric bill. Her next presentation in the El Cajon area will be on August 25th @ St. Michael's Church from 9AM-1PM (799 East Washington, El Cajon). Each household will need to bring their last SDGE bill (which needs to be more than \$25, and ID for each person in the household (including children), and proof of income. Holly is attempting to coordinate this once a month, this will be the first event.

IV. Next Meeting: September 3, 2009

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