

Refugee Child Welfare Advisory Committee  
Lutheran Community Services Northwest  
605 SE 39<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Portland OR 97214

October 7, 2009  
1:30 to 4:30

**Present:** Jan Slick, Gloria Anderson, Oscar Herrera, Michelle Weber, Daniel Amine, Cecilia Baricevic, Vesna Vila, Salah Ansary, Neeru Kanal, Kirsten Brown, and Jeremy Devros

**Absent:** Crystal Riley, Halima Mohamed, Lily Caceres, Mamadou Toure

**Guests:** Lul Abdulle, Director-Somali Women's Association  
Yanna Shumaker-LCS

**Introductions**

The meeting began with introductions.

Jan announced that the oversight of the Refugee Child Welfare Advisory Committee (RCWAC) and refugee family case staffing has been transferred to Gloria Anderson's program. Gloria Anderson and Oscar Herrera will assume the role of facilitating future RCWAC meetings and refugee family case staffing, effective today.

Stacey Ayers, program manager for Child Protective Services at DHS central office, will soon become involved in the RCWAC and his management assistant, Lisa Zacharias, will assume the role of providing support to the RCWAC and case staffing.

**Handouts**

- 2009 Annual RCWAC Report
- Updated Confidentiality Form

## **Review and Approve Minutes of April 1, 2009**

Gloria made a motion to approve the Minutes; they were approved by consensus.

## **Vesna's Sabbatical**

Vesna spoke briefly about her recent three-month sabbatical. Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon/Sponsors Organized to Assist Refugees (EMO/SOAR) has a policy of ensuring their employees have the opportunity to take a sabbatical.

After ten years, Vesna returned to her homeland of Bosnia. She also visited Croatia and Switzerland.

We will enjoy a more in-depth presentation during a future meeting.

## **Bylaws**

The Committee discussed changes to the Bylaws. Michelle will make those changes and send the Bylaws out to the members for review. Members will vote on the changes, at a future meeting.

## **Washington County Training**

Members discussed the September 25, 2009 Washington County refugee training.

Following are main points of discussion:

- The training was well represented by child welfare caseworkers, protective services and permanency workers, DHS district managers, and child welfare supervisors.
- Attendees asked good questions

- Panel members gave good presentations and shared informative materials
- Because there are DHS employees who are not aware of the Refugee Act and the Advisory Committee, there is a need to hold additional training in Washington and Multnomah counties. Perhaps training could be presented at:
  - Supervisor quarterly meetings
  - CPS quarterly meetings
  - Manager meetings
  - Oscar has recently began covering the Refugee Act at new employee orientation
  - Community forums with DHS and voluntary agency partnership
- Hermiston and Boardman are seeing more refugee families
- Hold meetings with refugee community leaders to talk about concerns

#### Questions:

- At what point are refugee families able to understand and process what DHS staff are trying to communicate, at the point DHS becomes involved with the case?
- Who needs to be involved in the refugee trainings?

#### Goals:

- Get community meetings set up
  - Who needs to be involved?
  - Where should the meetings be held?
- Educate refugees about what DHS expects from them (ex: child discipline)
- Develop more tools for DHS to help them work with refugee families
- Develop ways for DHS to partner with refugee service organizations
- Develop ways community leaders can partner with refugee service organizations

## Portland Children's Fund Grant

Yanna Shumaker gave a brief presentation about a new three-year grant that Lutheran Community Services received from the City of Portland. The grant is limited to the population within the City of Portland and is intended to address cultural problems related to child abuse, as a result of discipline. The main focus will be on prevention, but the grant will support services related to:

- U.S. laws and culture; this is intended for people who have not experienced any law violations or issues related to U.S. cultural values. This will help parents discuss new ways to discipline their children.
- Therapy for potential abusing parents (PTSD and/or other stress factors); the therapists are from Ethiopia, Russia, Eastern Europe, Somalia, and also someone who can speak Swahili.
- Helping families who have actually been reported for child abuse

Services are available for refugee families, immigrants or others who live in the city of Portland.

**Create List of Experts** – Defer to next meeting

**OHSU Training and Services** – Defer to next meeting, as Cris and Halima are absent today

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**Action Item:** Jan will contact Cheryl O'Neill to obtain domestic violence information for Daniel.

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**Action Item:** Jan will provide information to the RCWAC about parent training that is available from Oregon State University.

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Meeting adjourned at 3:30 pm

*Future Meetings:*      *January 6, 2010*  
                                  *April 7, 2010*  
                                  *July 7, 2010*  
                                  *October 6, 2010*