



**State of Florida
Department of Children and Families**

Rick Scott
Governor

Mike Carrol
Secretary

MEMORANDUM

DATE: September 25, 2017
TO: Members of the Jacksonville Area Refugee Task Force
FROM: Taddese Fessehaye, Refugee Services (RS)
SUBJECT: July 12, 2017 Meeting Minutes

THE NEXT TASK FORCE MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR:

Date: September 27, 2017
Time: 1:30 P.M. - 3:30 P.M.
Location: Baptist Association of Jacksonville
2700 University Boulevard South
Jacksonville, Florida 32216
Contact: Taddese Fessehaye
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E-Mail: Taddese.Fessehaye@myflfamilies.com

This task force has been active in the Jacksonville area for many years. The participants are representatives of various government agencies, private not-for-profit organizations and mutual assistance associations. An average of about twenty-five to thirty people attend these meetings on a regular basis. The purpose of these meetings is to increase awareness of the refugee populations, share best practices, build collaborations between agencies, spot trends in refugee populations, characteristics or movements, help create good communication among service providers; get informed about upcoming community events, request for proposals, training, workshops, conferences, etc., at the local, state and national level; discuss refugee program service needs and possible solutions to meeting those needs. Meeting participants also receive updates, information and clarification on new federal and state regulations and policy changes pertaining to refugees.

If there are any issues that you would like to include in the agenda, please contact me at the above address.

I look forward to seeing you at the meeting!

5920 Arlington Expressway, Jacksonville, Florida 32211

JACKSONVILLE AREA REFUGEE TASK FORCE MEETING

INTRODUCTION

The meeting was held at the Jacksonville Baptist Association. Debbie Ansbacher, Community Liaison represented the Department of Children and Families (DCF), Refugee Services (RS) Program. There were 26 people in attendance. The meeting was called to order and participants introduced themselves and the agency they represented.

GUEST PRESENTATION

Katie Devanny, Jacksonville Public library, Manager, Center for Adult Learning, gave a presentation of library services. They currently have conversation classes at the Westconnect location, 6887 103rd Street, Jacksonville, FL 32210. English classes are offered at three locations and the Main Library. The classes are one and a half hours and are four levels. They meet twice a week. Katie shared the Conversation Essentials Kit link with 56 topics available at www.conversationessentialsweebly.com and ESOL Writing Class information. Computer use is free at the library with a library card. Katie can be reached at 904-630-0353 or devanny@coj.net.

REFUGEE SERVICES CONTRACTED PROVIDERS UPDATE

- **Youth Program:** Nina Frank, Youth Program Manager with Lutheran Social Services reported on the program. They are accepting referrals and getting ready for the start of the school year. Englewood Tuesdays and Thursdays for afterschool tutoring. Terry Parker Mondays to meet with clients. She also handed out informational fliers in English, Spanish and Arabic.
- **Adult Education:** Michelle Karolak, Director of Refugee Resettlement with Catholic Charities reported they are making sure clients with Childcare are attending English Classes to continue getting the funded childcare.

GENERAL UPDATES

- Dr. Shannon Shea from Agape Clinic at Kennerly reported swim lessons for girls under 18 are scheduled for the Gate YMCA on Sundays at 11am for 6 weeks. There was conversation about concerns that immunizations taken prior to arrival in the US are not being entered in Florida Shots and children are having to repeat shots. (Follow up: The Refugee Screening Clinic enters the shots on the second visit but many children are not returning for a second visit and are getting their shots elsewhere. A meeting will be set up to discuss this. The phone issues have a work around. If anyone cannot get through on the phone, please email Sandra at Sandra.rodriques@agapefamilyhealth.org and she will call you back.
- Rafid Mukhtar, Refugee Screening Clinic reminded everyone to schedule screenings as soon as possible after client arrival.
- Debbie Ansbacher announced that Welcoming Week event has started being planned. A tentative event is schedule at the Cork Gallery in September. Brenda Boydston reported Jacksonville Refugee Community Services also has refugee dance troops planning to perform at the Riverside Arts Market during Welcoming Week.

- Kim Bogart, founder of Kim’s Open Door provided information on the many programs her organization offers. They include Block Parties, Life Skills sessions, holiday events, and an upcoming event July 29th titled “My story Matters.” Each refugee child will receive a printed bound book. One hundred children are participating and will receive books. All the books are being donated. During the school year, Kim’s Open Door will offer dance, art, music, and academic tutoring after school. More information is available at kimsopendoor.com.
- Myra Rubenstein from The Healing Project reported they have a Torture Survivor’s program. They can offer training for staff on how to recognize torture victims and victims of extreme trauma.
- There was discussion of review of the World Refugee Day event. The group agreed future events should start at least two hours after the venue opens to allow set-up before the event.
- Michelle Woitt reported they can accept clients in their Preferred Communities program. The grant is for youth ages 16-19.
- The Eligibility Quick Start Reference guides were distributed to contracted providers by Debbie Ansbacher.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, September 27, 2017
1:30 P.M.-3:30 P.M.
Baptist Association of Jacksonville
2700 University Boulevard South
Jacksonville, Florida 32216

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