



Strengthening Refugee Marriages Newsletter

Looking to the Future

January 2004

Welcome!!

New Project Sites

Many of you are aware USCCB/MRS has been awarded the Category 1: Family Enrichment Grant from Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR), which allows for the expansion of activities in that area of Family Enrichment to new sites. USCCB has invited an additional 14 sites to join us in this expansion effort of the Strengthening Refugee Families and Marriage Program. We will also provide assistance for our four pilot programs to continue for an additional year.

As we look forward to a new year, there is even more need to stay connected and communicate our efforts, activities, and progress; to share ideas, and thoughts; and remain informed of what project sites are involved in. Please feel free to contact other affiliates and organizations, and collaborate among yourselves.

Many Threads Many Weavers

2003 NACFLM Conference

In September, the National Association of Catholic Family Life Ministers held its 23rd annual conference in Houston, Texas. The theme this year was multicultural ministry and inclusive communities.

Rev. Eric Law, an internationally known facilitator trainer and author, presented a two-day workshop on cultural differences. Law's training was particularly refreshing in its approach through a greater understanding of oneself and one's internal cultural make-up. He provided tools for facilitating discussion groups that included Respectful Communication Guidelines, the Iceberg Analogy of Culture, and Mutual Invitation, which is a mutual empowerment tool.

Arturo Chavez, member of the pastoral team with the Mexican American Cultural Center based in San Antonio, presented a keynote address titled "The Heart of the Latino Family: Faith and Culture." Chavez focused on the relationship between faith and culture for the Hispanic families. He supported Rev. Law's Iceberg Analogy as a demonstration of those values ingrained in us from our own cultures, which, below the surface of casual communication, may collide with those from another culture. Where Rev. Law helped participants identify their own particular internal

culture, Chavez shared his Mexican American heritage and culture, providing insights respectful of differences in faith expressions, cultural values, and what it means to be a family.

Nancy Bucci, Strengthening Refugee Families Project Coordinator in Allentown, PA, attended this training and found it very helpful for her work with the large Hispanic communities in Berks and Lehigh counties. Nancy said, "For me, the most impressive detail I came away with is that in multicultural groups there is an underlying struggle for power. If we really want a respectful conversation we must be mindful of mutual empowerment. We must be willing to let go of the power we hold, allowing others to step forward. Once that is done, those who have become empowered must relinquish their position thus creating a cycle of mutual respect. I learned much about myself and my own internal attitudes, and this will be invaluable for my work with refugee families."

ORR Healthy Marriage Workshop Dec. 9-11, 2003

As the year begins, so do so many new projects. ORR awarded nine grants in the area of Family Enrichment to Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS), Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS), Ethiopian Community Development Council (ECDC), Kurdish Human Rights Watch, Boat People S.O.S., LAO Family Community Development, Medical College of Wisconsin, Orange County Social Service Agency, and United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Migration and Refugee Services (USCCB/MRS). These numerous projects are all dedicated to helping refugee families sustain their family unity through tremendous difficulties of acculturation.

The conference was held in Washington, DC for all grantees of ORR. Many were invited to attend the conference to hear about the federal government's interest in this effort and to gather additional information about what is happening around the country. Everyone got an opportunity to meet with one another and hear from the eight pilot projects that USCCB and HIAS have worked with over the year.

USCCB funded sites include:

Allentown, PA	Pittsburgh, PA
Phoenix, AZ	Cleveland, OH
Nashville, TN	Indianapolis, IN
Oakland, CA	Chicago, IL
Orange, CA	St. Paul, MN
Portland, ME	Richmond, VA
Hartford, CT	St. Louis, MO
Dallas, TX	Galveston - Houston, TX
Grand Rapids, MI	

Pilot Project Updates

Allentown – Nancy Bucci - PREP

In October 2003 Allentown's Families First hosted a conference where they brought in PREP instructors for three day training and then added a day for community development and coalition building. Speakers from Chris Gersten and Bill Coffin from the Administration of Children and Family Services (ACF), Scott Stanley from Prevention and Relationship Enhancement Program, and Julie M. Baumgardner from Chattanooga's First Things First all came out to support and encourage the activities taking place throughout Allentown. This conference put Allentown on the map in the Community Healthy Marriage Initiative. This conference brought together large numbers of professionals from all sectors to further discuss the integration of the Community Healthy Marriage Initiative into other programs throughout the community.

Phoenix – Jeanne Nizigiyimana - PREP

Over the course of the past several months Phoenix continues to forge forward. They have reached numerous Voluntary Agencies and Mutual Assistance Associations to strengthen the coalition's collaboration and capacity to serve numerous refugees throughout the Phoenix area. Phoenix held a special refugee marriage celebration in October 2003, the State Congressman Mark Anderson came out in support of the work Phoenix is doing in the area of Strengthening Refugee Families and Marriages. The dedication, hard work and enthusiasm that Phoenix has demonstrated encompassed many refugee communities throughout Phoenix, many communities have gotten involved in the Community Healthy Marriage Initiative.

St. Paul – Elaine Mueller –Family Wellness

In September 2003 significant achievements were made for St. Paul as they held their first Somalia Family Wellness group session with 19 women and 9 children.

As they look to the future of their project, they have recently been awarded additional funds from the State ORR Coordinator to enhance their efforts in the Strengthening Refugee Families and Marriages Program. The additional support and continuation of the Strengthening Refugee Families and Marriages program in St. Paul will strengthen the collaboration they have developed with the Somali Confederation. This collaboration will allow St. Paul to expand their program by providing courses in an assortment of locations, times, and to different generations of Somali. They have recently held a second group session which was attended to by grandparents, husbands, wives, and teens. They continue to utilize the Family Wellness Model with great success.

Additional Grantees

Boat People S.O.S.

- Dr. Nguyen Dinh Thang 703-538-2190
thang.nguyen@bpsos.org
- Aruna Radhakrishna 703-538-5510 #207
aruna.radhakrishna@bpsos.org

Kurdish Human Rights Watch

- Pary Karadaghi 703-385-3806
parykara@khrw.org
- Jacques Wilson 703-385-3806
jwilson@khrw.org

Lao Family Community Development

- Chaosarn Chao 510-533-8850
chaosarn@laofamilynet.org
- Jennie Mollica 510-533-8850
jennie@laofamilynet.org

Lutheran Immigration & Refugee Services

- Diane Landino 410-230-2765
dlandino@lirs.org

Medical College of Wisconsin

- Sheryl Cowling 414-456-8927
scowling@mail.mcw.edu

Orange County Social Services Agency

- Dolores Mejia 714-541-7874
Dolores.Mejia@ssa.ocgov.com

Ethiopian Community Development Council

- Tori A. Wolan 703- 685-0510 ext.217
tori.wolan@eccdinternational.org

Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society

- Maria Teverovsky 212-613-1471
Maria.Teverovsky@hias.org

FYI:

1. **There are no quarterly reports. There will be semi-annual and annual reports:**
 - a. **First semi-annual report due April 15, 2004 (Oct. 1, 2003 – March 30, 2004)**
 - b. **First annual report due October 15, 2004 (April 1, 2004 – September 30, 2004)**
2. **Updated materials for reporting will be provided in the coming months.**

PROPOSED SITE VISITS IN 2004

Dates still being determined



All fully funded projects will have program development site visits from the Program Developer during the upcoming years.

First semi-annual report is due April 15, 2004



Kimberly Haynes, MSW
Program Developer
Strengthening Refugee Families and Marriages
USCCB/MRS
3211 4th Street NE
Washington DC
202-541-3264
khaynes@usccb.org