

Strengthening Refugee Marriages Newsletter

Feature: Getting Excited

May 2003

Congratulations! We are starting to look behind us and say that we have come a long way from when we started this endeavor several months ago. There have been ups and downs but we continue to move forward with hope and excitement that this will be a rewarding and encouraging project for our families. I wish to extend my warm thanks and appreciation for your hard work and strong strides in making this a successful project.



Things to think about:

As we begin the development of each program we need to continue to think about ways to expand, share ideas, and plan for the future. As we move ahead, gather insights, and hear of things, we want to be able to communicate with everyone. This newsletter will give us an outlet to share our thoughts, challenges, and triumphs as we move forward.

Things to begin to do:

Create a list of marriage programs, private therapists, trainers, and mentors in your area as a reference source to other agencies.

Create a brochure of events and activities in your area that allow families to do activities together, or create a monthly calendar of events.

Create a connection with local legislatures in the area of refugee services and marriage issues.

Look to identify creative and unique partnerships in your community.

Discuss possible volunteer assistance from local agencies for events (AmeriCorp, college groups, high school groups, etc.).

Contact local community businesses that might be willing to donate things for certain events (pizza, soda, meals, etc.).



Websites of interest:

Office of Refugee Resettlement Current Funding Opportunities
<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/orr/funding/cfunding.htm>

List of State Refugee Coordinators
<http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/orr/partners/coordina.htm>

ACF Regional Offices
<http://directory.psc.gov/acf/1465.html>

Smartmarriages website for a large overview of the marriage movement
<http://www.smartmarriages.com/>

Bridging refugee youth and children services
www.brycs.org

The philanthropy round table regarding current philanthropic opportunities
<http://www.philanthropyroundtable.org/magazines/2003/current/index.html>

Site Updates

Allentown – PREP Model

Mrs. Bucci has worked very diligently in putting together the community coalition in Allentown. They held a community symposium in March 2003, for which they had 40-50 community representatives from all over the county. Everyone was very interested in hearing what the buzz is all about for the Marriage Initiative. They are developing a steering committee for their coalition and working on a community action plan.



Nashville

Mr. Muhire has worked continuously with community leaders in the Nashville area and has had success in the Burundi community. They already have a "mentor couple," assisting their community members with marital issues. Nashville continues to work with coordinators in ESL programs for adult refugees, Metro Refugee Social Services Program, and the Somali Community Center, regarding the strengthening refugee families and marriages program. They are also exploring other opportunities for service provision and additional collaboration possibilities with those communities.



Phoenix – PREP Model

Mrs. Nizigiyimana continues to reach out to those within her community interested in this new endeavor. She has met with individuals from Sidney's Community Youth Center at Grand Canyon University; Youth Education Program at St. Paul's; and, the Forum on Healthy Sexuality for Arizona's African American Community, at Arizona State University. They are hosting a kick-off marriage celebration event at the end of June.



St. Paul – Family Wellness Model

Mrs. Mueller has developed a wonderful rapport with the Somalian community leaders in the St. Paul area. Her ability to listen too and speak with community leaders has certainly gotten them interested in some additional support through this project. Continued conversations with the state ORR office has provided them with additional financing in order to train additional community members trained in the Family Wellness Program at the Smart Marriages Conference at Reno in June.



Up Coming Events

- Chattanooga Coalition Conference
(June 10-11, 2003 in Chattanooga, TN)
- Smart Marriages Conference
(June 24-30, 2003 in Reno, NV)
- National Migration Conference
(July 6-10, 2003 in Washington, DC)



Coalition Building Conference (May, June 2003)

These are some thoughts on attending the Coalition Building Conference in Chattanooga. Individuals will have many opportunities to meet and talk about the coalition development activities they are involved in. Some items to consider when attending this conference: first, see if your individual project is ready for this level of coalition development discussion, and whether this would be beneficial to you. Have a clear understanding of what level of coalition development you are at, and what plans have been developed for moving forward.



Next, consider inviting others who are in your coalition's scope, so that you have a diverse set of individuals represented. Select some questions that would be beneficial and helpful for you to know in order to assist your coalition specifically.

There is a lot of concentration on mission, goals, and objectives development. For some this may be overwhelming, and not something you are ready to discuss and consider. Some may listen and take the information to implement later; others may not even be ready for these discussions.

If you are attending the Smartmarriage Conference, consider taking the session on Monday June 30 (# 912) this is a one-day capsule version of the conference. Kimberly Haynes, the Program Developer, will be attending the conference in June, as well as Smartmarriages. She will be sharing insights, suggestions, and assistance throughout this project in order to help everyone.

Contact your regional ORR director in see if there is state set-aside money that might be able to help you and others in attending either the Smartmarriages or Coalition Building conferences.

National Migration Conference (July 2003)

This breakfast meeting is to allow individuals to get informed about the Healthy Marriage Initiative. We will be inviting all those who are attending the conference. This will allow individuals to hear about the Strengthening Refugee Families and Marriages program within USCCB, and hear about the national scope of the Healthy Marriage Initiative. Bill Coffin, a special assistant for marriage education at ACF, will present a brief overview of the project and how things are progressing, as well as what the future funding opportunities will look like. Kimberly Haynes will review the involvement of USCCB and Hebrew Immigration Aid Society (HIAS) in the Strengthening Refugee Families and Marriages Project. Some of our sites, directors will review some of the challenges and successes though this project. Finally, an open discussion will allow for individuals to answer any particular questions regarding this new initiative.



Proposed Site Visit Dates

September 2003-St. Paul, MN
October 2003-Allentown, PA

November 2003-Phoenix, AZ
December 2003-Nashville, TN

**This newsletter written and distributed by Kimberly Haynes, MSW at USCCB/MRS
3211 4th Street NE, Washington, DC 20017, 202-541-3264**