



STRENGTHENING REFUGEE FAMILIES AND MARRIAGES

Administering Organization

The Strengthening Refugee Families and Marriages Program is offered through Catholic Charities of the East Bay, Refugee Resettlement Services working in collaboration with the Diocesan Family Life Office, the Diocesan Ethnic Pastoral Centers, the East Bay Refugee Forum and the Mental Health Counseling Department of Catholic Charities.

Program Objectives

The program goal is to strengthen refugee families and marriages through education, advocacy and collaboration.

Program Description

The Strengthening Refugee Families and Marriages Program provides skill development training, educational workshops using the Power of Two model written by Dr. Susan Heitler, PH. D. to support and promote healthy refugee marriages and families. Above this, the program provides training and technical assistance to leaders of the different ethnics, Mutual Assistance Associations, social service agencies to conduct workshops to their refugee community. Staff works closely with the leaders to tailor their social, educational and cultural aspects into the curriculum to meet their needs.

Groups served by Program

The Strengthening Refugee Families and Marriages Program serves refugees in the East Bay communities. Using the Power of Two curriculum, our program has been developed to work with adults, parents and youths from Vietnam, Afghan, Khmu/Laos, Cambodia, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Bosnia, Russia and Iran.

Training Model Explanation

The Power of Two Program is a researched based approach by psychologists to teach couples the basics of communicating with their partner, how to communicate, resolve differences effectively, and enhancing their good marriages and families. The program includes the following topics: coming to America as a couple/family, basics of talking effectively, safe talking, listening skills, expressing and controlling anger, receiving anger, fix-it talk, and shared decision making. The curriculum has been adapted for the refugee populations.

Our workshops are 4hours session/1day or 2 sessions of 2 hours each or 4 sessions of 1 hour. These classes are set up to meet the needs of different groups with different schedules.

Program Staff

The staff in the program has been formally trained in the Power of Two model for direct delivery of the modified curriculum to the refugee populations. We train and work closely with community leaders to conduct workshops in their perspective community.

Defining Program Success

The program is successful if participants are able to improve their communication skills through safe talking, listening skills: ways of listening, controlling anger, problem solving by using the shared decision-making process positively. The program objectives are also met when we train many ethnic leaders in the community as many as possible and provide technical assistance to them.

We measure success of the program through pre and post participants' test when it is possible.

Program Outcomes

- 150 refugee participants will receive training in the Power of Two adapted curriculum Improve marital and family happiness
- Increase knowledge and education on relationship skills
- Increase community awareness of the refugee populations through outreach, education and media contacts

Program Contact

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Program Dates

The Strengthening Refugee Families and Marriages Program in Oakland began in 2003; it continues to operate.