

Refugee Child Welfare Advisory Committee
Quarterly Meeting Minutes
January 2, 2013

Attendees: Danita Huynh, J.D. Devros, Angelica Quintero, Oscar Herrera.
Alec Esquivel, Neeru Kanal, Kathy Prouty, Ali Abraham, Halima Mohamed

1. Welcome and Introductions
Kathy Prouty, CW Adoption Manager attended. She indicates she wanted to make a presence although will not be a regular attendee. Kathy is Angelica's manager and values the responsibility of RCWAC as well as the commitment members have made to RCWAC
2. Review & Approve meeting notes of October 2012 Quarterly meeting – Angelica sent to members on 1-3-13 to allow time for review. We will approve at April meeting. Suggestions Danita made regarding corrections were made
3. Updated Membership list was handed out
4. Voting of New Chair – Oscar and Angelica received votes from members for 2 different people. Vesna received the most votes. Angelica has talked with Vesna and she has accepted the role of Chair. **(Thank you Vesna).**
5. Diversity Conference 2013 – Oscar indicated that the conference is scheduled on September 17 and 18th and that he would like the committee to consider helping to develop a panel, or a presentation at the conference. Oscar has tentatively reserved the slots both days from 10 – 11:45 a.m. because the slots fill up quickly.

Suggestions were made such as to consider having youth on the panel who can talk about their experience coming into the U.S, and their experience with DHS, or what it is important for DHS staff to know as we work with them; having adults and youth from the various countries that can provide information about their journey and barriers.

Another suggestion made was that we consider what it is that the audience wants by asking DHS staff what countries they want to learn about. Oscar indicated that this might be something that is built into the questions the panel members are given to help guide the information provided.

The committee agreed to assist with the conference.

JD will talk to supervisors of teen units to see about youth that might be available to participate on the panel for the conference. It was also suggested that folks might be identified from Africa House and PSU

6. July 2013 Quarterly Meeting will be on July 10 as the regular meeting day falls on July 3rd, the day before a holiday.
7. Add ons – Daniel Amine, former RCWAC member, attended to present project to committee that he is working on as a graduate student at PSU. He would like to work on a “guidebook” that assists both victims of domestic violence, and refugees coming into the U.S. about things they need to know, what is acceptable or not in the U.S., etc.

A suggestions was made that Daniel connect with Cheryl Oneil, Program Analyst with Child Welfare, in the Child Protective Services Unit

Angelica also committed to getting the name of a contact person to Daniel of someone who sits on the DV Council in Multnomah County. Angelica has referred Daniel to Renee Kim.

The group agreed to review Daniel’s project/guidebook. Daniel will send a draft of his project to us by email and will present more information at the April meeting.

8. Other brief discussions occurred regarding the following:

Committee members attending permanency committees at local offices – but do not have training about processes, decisions being made or all that has been considered.

Families coming into the U.S. receive 2 classes but no specific training about domestic violence, or Child Welfare issues. There needs to be a way to get this information to families before the police or CPS is at their door.

It was indicated that there is no follow up to cases being staffed by RCWAC with respect to how issues resolve or what happens to the families.

A member from RCWAC needs to be invited to participate as part of the Child's Team at each critical juncture or planning meetings for the child throughout the life of the case. Kathy Prouty indicated that she and Angelica will work on making sure administrative rules incorporate RCWAC whenever reference is made to the "Childs Team." Additionally, this piece may need to be added to the RCWAC By Laws

Training and education needs to be provided to DHS staff about the different cultures, what is accepted in other countries but not accepted in the U.S., to work toward making progress both for staff but also the families. A suggestion was made that the training start at the supervisor quarterlies and at program manager meetings who in turn can provide the information to the rest of staff as one avenue. Or is there a way to invite RCWAC members to participate in training that already exists?

Lastly, RCWAC needs representation from other countries such as IRAQ and others. Currently, there are people/families entering the U.S. from Cuba, Iraq, Somalia and other countries and it would be great if we could have representation from these areas.

Adjourn

Next quarterly meeting scheduled for April 3, 2013.