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Building Welcoming Communities City Council Subcommittee meeting January 7, 2016

Meeting Summary

Attendees - see attached list.

Deputy Mayor Shaffer and Council member Kranz opened the meeting, presenting the subcommittee goals:

- Educate ourselves and community about Welcoming Communities initiative
- Identify opportunities to make Encinitas and our region as prosperous and welcoming as possible for all residents
- Develop recommendations for further action, if any.

Due to the high level of attendance and the number of organizations wishing to share their information, we only got through the first two items, and agreed that the meeting will be continued at a future date for the discussion of next steps and possible recommendations.

Deputy Mayor Shaffer gave an overview of the Welcoming Communities Campaign and different levels of participation (see below). This was followed by short presentations by participating organizations about their programs:

- Charlene Seidel & Niki Mazaroli, Leichtag Foundation
- Filipa Rios, Interfaith Community Services
- Etleva Bejko, Jewish Family Service of San Diego
- Oren Robinson, PANA (Partnership for the Advancement of New Americans)
- Robert J. Moser, Ph.D, Catholic Charities, Diocese of San Diego
- Sheila Crosby, Diana Minuzzi, San Diego County Library System
- Julian Duval, SDBG
- Jamie Hoover, San Diego County Supervisor Roberts Office
- Dana Smith, Mira Costa College
- Nicola Ranson and Kathy Anderson, Survivors of Torture
- **Alana Kalinowski, Camey Christenson, 211**
- Rebecca Palmer, Community Resource Center

Some of the key points from the various presentations:

The Subcommittee's interest includes both refugees and immigrants. "Refugee" is a term defined in the Refugee Act of 1980, which created the **Federal Refugee Resettlement Program** to provide for the effective resettlement of refugees and to assist them to achieve economic self-sufficiency as quickly as possible after arrival in the

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United States. According to the Act, “the term 'refugee' means (A) any person who is outside any country of such person’s nationality or, in the case of a person having no nationality, is outside any country in which such person last habitually resided, and who is unable or unwilling to return to, and is unable or unwilling to avail himself or herself of the protection of, that country because of persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion.” Refugees are a subset of “immigrants” who are people who come to live permanently in a different country.

There was strong interest among the attendees in joining the Welcoming Communities initiative. Helping new arrivals feel welcome can help reduce fear, and increase long-term success in integrating refugees and immigrants into the community. This can lead to higher levels of civic engagement, education, and employment.

San Diego county has been a major destination for immigrants and refugees. One speaker reported that about 78,000 refugees have settled in San Diego, with 10 new arrivals every day. The organizations at the Subcommittee meeting provide services ranging from nutrition and basic food needs; benefits; acculturation; employment; self-sufficiency; literacy; English language training; citizenship training; housing; trauma counseling; case management; research; and advocacy.

There are already coalitions of resettlement organizations, and the 211 organization exists to connect clients with a vast array of service organizations, as well as to provide specialized case coordination for specific groups. Mira Costa College offers free adult classes in collaboration with San Dieguito Adult Education, including high school equivalency and English language.

At the next meeting, the Subcommittee will consider what added value the City can provide, and how best to move forward. Among the ideas to be discussed are whether the County Live Well program could be a model for becoming a Welcoming County, and how information can be made easily available to new arrivals and service providing organizations. Some speakers emphasized the importance of having a local presence, recognizing that most refugees and immigrants may not have easy access to transportation. There was also a suggestion that having the political leadership of Encinitas visibly welcome new arrivals can send a powerful positive message to the whole community, as the Canadian Prime Minister did recently with Syrian arrivals in Canada.

The Welcome American organization, which plays a lead role in the Welcoming Communities initiative, is open to membership by nonprofit organizations as well as cities and counties.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Welcoming Cities and Counties Program

WHAT IS A WELCOMING CITY OR COUNTY?

We define a Welcoming City or County as a community that:

Plans: All relevant sectors, such as government, business, non-profit, and others, work together to create a welcoming community climate that supports long-term integration.

Commits: Municipalities commit to institutionalize strategies ensuring the ongoing inclusion and long-term economic and social integration of newcomers.

Builds Community: Newcomers and long-time residents find common ground and shared leadership.

Communicates: Messages of unity and shared values permeate the community through the media, through the voices of leaders, and among residents.

Sustains: Policies and practices are considered to ensure interactions between new and long-time residents remain positive ones and the community's economic vitality remains strong.

Joining the Welcoming Cities and Counties cohort requires enrollment forms signed by the mayor or county executive, a point of contact to work with Welcoming America, and the community must pass or be working to pass a Welcoming resolution or proclamation.

The 'New American' Fortune 500: more than 40% of Fortune 500 companies were founded by immigrants or their children. Companies founded by new Americans employ more than 10 million people worldwide

One in ten Americans now lives in a Welcoming community

Learn More

welcomingamerica.org

Building Welcoming Communities Campaign-Rachel Peric,

rachel@welcomingamerica.org

Welcoming Cities and Counties-Isha Lee, isha@welcomingamerica.org

Becoming a Welcoming Community is about recognizing the value to the whole community of creating a supportive environment for everyone who lives here, and creating new possibilities for ALL Americans

As employees

As innovators and business creators

As neighbors

As part of our quilt-work culture

The Welcoming Communities initiative is NOT about recruiting, vetting, or harboring immigrants or taking resources away from other priorities.

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Encinitas has a history of inclusiveness, welcoming and supporting immigrants and a strong, diverse faith-based community

City Council direction, Dec. 16, 2015

Form a subcommittee to work with community faith leaders, social service organizations, and residents to evaluate opportunities, impacts and potential sources of support, and report back with specific recommendations early next year (2016).