



VENTURA VILLAGE NEIGHBORHOOD

JUNE '22 NEWS

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Statewide Refugee Resettlement Program includes Local Agencies

By: Steve Dreyer

Ward Westry, who is a Refugee Outreach Specialist with the YMCA of the North (all of the Metro-wide YMCA's) made a presentation at one of our neighborhood's Community Outreach Committee meetings recently. His state-wide program, called Family Assisters, helps refugees and other immigrant groups get connected to a variety of resources, including housing, employment, health care, public benefits, food, ESL courses, interpretation and more. He is currently working with new Afgan arrivals. He also told us about different agencies listed by the state called Resettlement Network Services who do similar work.

Two of these Services are located in our immediate neighborhood. **African Community Services, located on East 24th Street**, was formed in 1995 by a volunteer network of Somali refugees to help refugee families secure basic needs and resources for self-sufficiency and to acclimate to a new way of life. Today this Service does not work as much with new refugees but has developed new projects as needed. They include the Youth @ Work Program helping young adults find employment, a Parent Support Outreach Program, the Somali Autism Project, the MN Legal Kiosk Project for legal help, and other services

The second resettlement service is **African Immigrant Community Services located on Franklin Avenue** in Ventura Village. AICS was incorporated into a 501c3 non-profit in 2007 by its previous executive director, Mustafa Hassan, and other Somali refugees to meet the needs of East African refugees in the Twin Cities area. Since its inception the organization has continued to grow and develop strong working relationships with other community-based agencies, faith-based communities and government entities. AICS provides various programs to the community, including Refugee Resettlement program job readiness, Covid-19 Testing and Vaccination, Mnsure, Tobacco Awareness, Career Development, Youth Employment, and ESL courses.

The Youth Employment program at African Immigrants Community Services serves low-income and at-risk youth ages 14 to 24 who lack academic and "applied skills" considered critical for current and future workplace needs. We assist the youth with work readiness training that focuses on the basics that employers expect, such as attendance, punctuality, teamwork, communication skills, and problem-solving. Training sessions are interactive. Every year, more than 30 young adults participate in the Youth Employment program, which is a partnership with the City of Minneapolis funded through the Minneapolis Youth Works Program.

****Information on African Immigrant Community Services provided by Hayat Abdilahi**

Nonprofits aren't exempt from inflation. Here's how you can help.

By Mike Huffman and Robin Stramp

I can't name a nonprofit organization that has skated through the pandemic. For any organization – and particularly those of us delivering human services – the last several years have provided a series of ripples to navigate. Quick! We need to pivot to change the services we provide, or how we operate them. Don't forget to stay abreast of the updated public health recommendations to ensure we are doing everything we can to keep staff and participants safe, too.

While the new funding has allowed us to carry out the necessary work, there are challenges, even then. Here's a funding opportunity that will help. We need to make a plan, implement, and complete it right now! Think we've made it through the worst of it? Oh look, here comes the fiscal cliff. There is no longer funding to sustain the new or expanded services. Find new, sustainable funding quickly or ramp them back down.

All the while, our donors are in various stages of their own financial constraints.

Now, in 2022, another twist. Having made it through what are hopefully the biggest waves COVID-19, we feel the cost of inflation ever more in our world. For Our Saviour's Community Services, this means a repair project we need to complete costs more and the food we purchase for our shelter meals costs more, too. Each of these costs add up. Have you experienced sticker shock at the price of milk or eggs lately? We experience the same thing, but multiplied times three meals a day for 21 adults, except when volunteers are providing the meal. (Thank you meal groups!)

We realize this new reality means our donors have fewer dollars to share with us and in turn, fewer dollars for us to operate our programs and pay our staff. Staff who **deserve** to be paid more. And, it means our staff members' paychecks don't go as far. In "normal" times most nonprofits struggle to keep up with cost of living increases and yet, this year, any small increase will actually translate in practical terms to lost income. At OSCS we are doing everything we can to make sure this isn't the case.

I don't share this as a sob story about any one organization. Nonprofit organizations everywhere are facing this crunch. If you contribute to any nonprofit(s) and are able to consider increasing your donations, please try to do so. If you typically make a \$50 donation, that only goes as far as \$46 did in 2021. If an increase isn't an option for you right now, consider what goods or services nonprofits are asking for. Or, look for opportunities to volunteer and share them within your network. Did you know that organizations nationwide are facing a volunteer shortage? Advocate for public funding for nonprofits. And, if you are involved in a foundation or corporation, you know that nonprofits need you to step up, too. Vital programs never stopped. Together we can ensure the community services we value will continue, and flourish.

Interested to learn more? Here are some relevant articles:

Star Tribune: [Hennepin County, Minneapolis homeless shelters facing a \\$13-million-a-year fiscal cliff](#)

Nonprofit AF: [Inflation is killing nonprofits. Funders, you need to supplement your grants immediately.](#)

Star Tribune: [Twin Cities nonprofits face critical shortages of volunteers amid omicron surge](#)

Ventura Village Neighborhood News

- Our June General Membership meeting will be Wednesday June 8th at 7 PM in person at ICCM Life Center, 1812 Park Avenue, and online via Zoom. Contact our neighborhood for the link.
- Our neighborhood has tools and supplies to help with your gardens and yards, to remove graffiti and to pick up trash. Contact us by phone or email.

New Clinic to Open in July

By: Hannah Thompson

It has been nearly a year since the groundbreaking ceremony for the new building project near the intersection of Chicago Ave and Franklin Ave. What was formerly a community medical clinic over 80 years ago, and then a church, will now be home to two community focused organizations. On one side of the facility, Odam Community Clinic is a full-service non-profit medical clinic, that will offer family medical care and prenatal services. The other side of the building will house First Care and their Every Family parenting program. First Care will offer free pregnancy testing, ultrasounds and community referrals. The Every Family program offers parenting education and support, including tangible items such as diapers, formula and baby supplies. Both organizations look forward to moving into this new location and are eager to provide excellent, quality care to the Phillips community beginning mid-July 2022.



Four Sisters Market

By: Alexandra Buffalohead

Four Sisters Market will begin its 8th year serving the Ventura Village Neighborhood. The market will again be open Thursdays 11am to 3pm in the Pow Wow Grounds parking lot at 1414 E Franklin. June 2nd will be opening day and it will go through October.

Mission: The Four Sisters Farmers Market is an Indigenous focused farmers market centered on providing increased access to affordable, healthy, culturally appropriate local foods within the American Indian Cultural Corridor.

Vision: The Four Sisters Farmers Market believes in a market that simultaneously builds community health and wealth for community consumers and farmer vendors.



Southside Coalition

By: Thor Adam

Centro Cultural Chicano, Project for Pride in Living, Urban Homeworks, Norway House, Chase Bank, and Ventura Village Neighborhood Organization have worked together to form the Southside Peacekeeping Coalition. The purpose of the coalition is to help make the Franklin/Chicago and Franklin/Elliott area safer. They have contracted with Brothers EMpowered Peacekeepers to be present to help make this area safer for those using the businesses or walking through.

Their schedule is as follows: Four peacekeepers on Thursdays from 2:30pm-6:30pm, four on Fridays from 4:00pm-8:00pm and six on Saturdays from 4:00pm-8:00pm.

They will have a presence on Franklin Avenue from Chicago to 11th Avenue, north on Chicago to Centro school and south on Elliott to 22nd Street. They started their first shift with a warm meal giveaway and will continue to find ways to build community in the neighborhood.