

**Afghan Coalition Youth Program
Report September 2003-May 2004
May 18, 2004**

Afghan Coalition partnered with Refugee Transitions in their Bridge 2 Success, starting with training for our coordinator, Seema Faizi, on September 3-4, 2003. Recruitment and training of volunteers and assessment of needy families occurred from September through January, when volunteers and families were matched and tutoring began.

Total number of enrolled as of May 18, 2004:

Families: 10

Youth: 14

Volunteers: 13

Please note that several volunteers have chosen to match with one family as they have multiple problems.

Recruitment and Training of volunteers

September, 2003: Began recruiting volunteers through newspapers, newsletter and flyers in Dari at various community centers and recruitment is on going.

Recruitment Activities:

October 29, 2003: Afghan Coalition staff met with director of Service Learning Center at California State University, Hayward-set up a contract with the center for student volunteers to get university credit for this program.

April 7, 2004: Attended a volunteer fair at California State University, Hayward and, with Refugee Transitions, 15 potential volunteers were recruited.

May 11, 2004:

Volunteer appreciation program was held to thank those who had been volunteering. Matched families and potential families were invited along with new volunteers. Four new volunteers are matched with families and will begin tutoring by the end of May, 2004.

Training Activities:

Refugee Transition provided the formal training for volunteers and Seema Faizi and/or Rona Popal, executive director for the Afghan Coalition, provided specific cultural information for new volunteers.

Training occurs every month or every 2 months depending on the number of volunteers but mostly in San Francisco.

April 15 and 21, 2004: Training held for the first time in Fremont at the Family Resource Center.

Matching Volunteers and Families

Although Refugee Transitions was able to recruit a number of volunteers, few were willing to come to Fremont, so matching began first with assessment of families with children from age 7-17 to identify their specific needs and interest in the tutoring program. Potential families were identified through community contacts and referrals and each family was educated about this program. Additionally, as word got out about this program in the community, more families contacted the Afghan Coalition seeking to be a part of this program. From this interaction, a list of 20 families was created so that when volunteers became available they could be matched

Additionally, parent contract for the tutoring program was translated into Dari for those who did not speak English well.

Tutoring Program

In January, there were only 5 volunteers who would come to Fremont. These volunteers were matched with families from the list and tutoring began. Recruitment continues to try to find more volunteers to match with families. As more volunteers become available, volunteers and families are matched.

January 20th: Five volunteer tutors met with the families of the children and began the tutoring program. All tutoring occurs in the home as this is more comfortable for the families and currently there is no center for children to which they can come.

February-April: 8 more volunteers matched with families and are now tutoring.

Tutors are in weekly contact with Afghan Coalition staff and they are also in contact with teachers as needed.

Afghan Coalition staff involvement

Seema Faizi, is in weekly contact with families to monitor children's progress and act as a cultural/linguistic liaison between family, teacher, tutor and children. This process provides on-going family education about this program and allows for early problem identification.

Additionally, Seema Faizi provides counseling as needed for children in the program and in one instance, a child with a particularly difficult behavior problems was counseled by Dr. Younos, a part time Afghan Coalition staff member.

Accomplishments

In the weekly discussions, mothers often state that their children are doing much better and they are happy with the results of the tutoring. One woman said that her son went from getting 'F' grades to getting 'As.' Parents state that the tutors are very nice and helpful and some have gone out of their way to help the children. Families also wish that this program could be expanded from 2-4 hours per week. This program is much appreciated and there are more families calling to get on the waiting list for volunteers. There is currently a list of 15 families waiting volunteer matching.