Ahmed Sahid Wins Local Hero Award for Black History Month

By Paige Newman, Somali Family Service

Ahmed Sahid, President/CEO of Somali Family Service (SFS), was recognized at the 12th Annual Local Heroes Awards sponsored by KPBS and Union Bank. Ahmed Sahid and Randy Jones from the Office of the US Attorney received awards for Black History month at an event on Nov. 16 at the Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego in La Jolla. Ten other leaders were also honored for Women’s History Month, Asian Pacific American Heritage Month, Jewish Heritage Month, Hispanic Heritage Month, and American Indian Heritage Month. The event featured an awards ceremony with live music by Orchestra Nova, and a reception followed.


Sahid, President of SFS, addressing the crowd

Ha I Ga’doomin Gabadhyahay, Qaybtii Koowaad

WQ: Axmed Ismaaciil Maxamuud “Axmed Deeq”
Local Hero Award continued from p1

“I am incredibly honored to be among the heroes nominated for such important work in the San Diego community. I am proud to be part of the solution of helping the underserved community become productive members of our society,” said Sahid.

When he began volunteering in 1990 and then in 2000 founded Somali Family Service, Sahid’s goal was to bridge a gap between the community of approximately 30,000 East Africans in San Diego and the larger community and to be a voice for the underserved. He has accomplished this by collaborating extensively with law enforcement, schools and other organizations with similar missions. With programs in leadership development, health services, economic development, youth mentorship, and a new program helping asylees with housing and other social services, Sahid has made great strides in increasing self-sufficiency, serving over 1500 families annually.

Through leadership development, Sahid helps newcomers navigate the school system and find housing, employment and other social services. This program works with the San Diego Refugee Forum and other local organizations to build capacity among the refugee population, teaching them how to advocate for themselves and improve their communication skills.

Partnering with community leaders, residents, healthcare providers and other agencies, Sahid addresses access to healthcare issues in the East African community, as well as producing the annual SFS Health Fair in Honor of World Refugee Day. SFS also gives mental and physical health trainings, home visits and social service referrals for Somali seniors.

In order to address difficulties including cultural barriers, lack of transportation, large households with limited income, and more, SFS created an economic development program to help people start businesses, find employment and learn about money management, credit and savings.

SFS has helped about 850 youth since Sahid started the East African Youth Organization (EAYO) in partnership with the San Diego Police Department years ago. EAYO focuses on preventing gang and problems with drugs and alcohol by directing youth toward positive educational and recreational activities and increasing parent and school involvement and career opportunities.

Project Refuge brings much needed assistance to the growing San Diego East African asylee population -- who suffered from extreme violence, torture and persecution in their homelands -- by providing safe housing and a network of community services.

With language barrier challenges and the community lacking printed material, Sahid spearheaded Taxan, the only bilingual publication for the East African community in Southern California. He meets with elected officials in San Diego and has advocated with a member of Congress and the Office of Refugee Resettlement in Washington DC on local and national issues such as human rights and integrating refugees into the larger community. Sahid has also served on numerous boards and committees with organizations and foundations such as the State Advisory Council and The San Diego Refugee Forum. Currently, in order to expand beyond the East African community, he is a Board member of The MAAC Project and the San Diego Police Department African Advisory Board. See somalifamilyservice.org for a video of Sahid’s KPBS interview.

Ha I Ga’doomin Gabadhyahay continued from p1

Ha I Ga’doomin Gabadhyahay continued from p2

Baridiyada ayaan macno tiri jiray, oo ahan shan jeer ku celin jiray, aniga oo marba marka la danbaysa si ka sii macno daran u dhigaya. Hadal aad nuxur badan xambaarsanayn iyo kha-jilaad korkagya oo dhan ka muuqata ayaa la shir tagaa.


Waxay ugu daran tahay marka uu damac kaa galo hablaha kuwoodo afka ugu saahlan tahay, waxa uu shiikhay kii aad laynimo. Oo hadalnaaga ma dumar baannu ku ahaan. Waxaad diibka midka ugu saahlan tahay ahayn waxa uu xigaya oo aad la geysay. Haddii aadan ay haddii la xigaya, laakiin fulay nineed ma ihiye.


Kala soocaynt labaad cadodka kowaad 2011-da ee Waraygsa Taxan
Where are YOU Headed? A Look at Today’s Youth

By Mohamed Sahid, Tenth Grade

Many youth in modern society are plagued with multiple distractions that make it difficult to focus on items of utmost importance. Whether it be school, family-related activities, or other responsibilities, the fact is that many of today’s youth lose sight of their goals. For example, CNN reported that approximately 6.2 million students in the United States between the ages of 16 and 24 dropped out of high school during the year 2007. The total represents 16 percent of all people in the United States in that age range in 2007. These statistics show the intensity of the problem, which is rising since then.

With the innovations and advancements made in technology, social networking is particularly at fault. With the growth of such fields, I speak from experience when I say it develops into a distraction, particularly when doing homework or any other tasks that involve a computer.

Another area that is dissuading students from their learning is association with peers whose ambition has never existed, or if it ever did, has left them entirely. These individuals negatively influence you, whether skipping class or school entirely, becoming involved in gang activity, narcotics, etc. Another unfortunate fact is that the majority of these students are minorities. Minorities are the majority in this case, which is a bit ironic. The neighborhood they are raised in usually has a negative effect that lasts a lifetime.

I believe no matter what environment they grow up in, students who have drive and ambition will succeed in their endeavors. This is absolutely relevant -- with statistics periodically collected, we often see students in the worst neighborhoods and schools graduate and achieve their dreams. Fighting social, cultural, and any other obstacles placed before them, they achieve. This works in the opposite direction as well, we also hear of the number of students in rich and advanced schools failing or dropping out. Which really poses the question, where are YOU headed? No matter the lectures, advice monologues, and interactive discussions given to you throughout your life, in the end the decision-making is left to you. You hear of the statistics, numerous graduates in prestigious positions, who against all odds overcame their distractions and challenges, and have become significant, contributing members of society. Which poses the question: where are YOU headed? The choice is yours, so decide well.

Somali Community Starts Dialogue with Law Enforcement

By Abdi Mohamoud, Executive Director, Horn of Africa

On December 1, the Somali community in San Diego met with government law enforcement officials to begin a dialogue of constructive engagement that both sides hoped would break down barriers and increase a collaborative working relationship. San Diego is believed to have the second largest Somali community in the United States, behind only the Twin Cities of Minnesota. The meeting was held at the San Diego Police Department’s Multi-Cultural Community Relations office in City Heights.

Ms. Laura Duffy, U.S. Attorney for Southern Division and her team were present to explain to the community the procedures in place to safeguard civil liberties and that the government does not simply pick on individuals because of their political views. Duffy also talked about her belief that it’s important to have a dialogue with the communities.

Keith Slotter, FBI Special Agent in Charge of the San Diego office, and other FBI officials talked about the different types of terrorist groups the FBI considers a threat to the National Security of United States. The meeting was attended by roughly 60 Somali community members representing different segments of the community, of all ages and differing professional levels. Many representatives were very positive about this type of approach as it helps to build bridges.

Several questions from the community members focused on how and when authorities can file charges, and what is considered legal or illegal under the law. Some questioned whether the FBI was creating these cases by volunteering to assist suspects in carrying out attacks when the suspects do not have the means or knowledge to carry out attacks.

Along with me, Ahmed Sahid of Somali Family Service and Asad Mohamed of the San Diego Police Department introduced guests and took questions from the audience.

@ 4348 54th Street in San Diego.
Asylees Find Warm Welcome Through Project Refuge
By Paige Newman

The growing East African asylee population is being welcomed to San Diego by Project Refuge, a partnership between Somali Family Service (SFS) and the La Jolla Golden Triangle Rotary Club, with much support from other local Rotary Clubs. Project Refuge provides for newly-arrived refugees from Somalia and other parts of East Africa who have fled war-torn areas of intense conflict, and who have been victims of violence and persecution. East African refugees who have been granted political asylum and newly released from detention centers in Southern California are given priority. Approximately 32 clients will be served annually; 11 people have been served so far.

"After working with this population for several years, and witnessing their struggles, the daunting obstacles they face, and their resilience, it is deeply satisfying to help build a 'network of caring' around them, providing not only a safe and welcoming home for awhile, and connections to community services, but also many forms of personal support by many caring people," said Dory Beatrice, LCSW and President of La Jolla Golden Triangle Rotary Club. Volunteers from SFS and different Rotary Clubs in San Diego assist with case management and legal documents, interpretation, and transportation, and help the asylees find ESL classes and employment. Other local organizations contribute as well. Casa Cornelia assists with the process of being granted asylum. Survivors of Torture International does mental health evaluations, and International Rescue Committee helps with case management, cash assistance, food stamps, and such. Catholic Charities provide health assessments.

Project Refuge has a pair of two-bedroom apartments, one for four men and one for four women (without children), who stay up to three months while working towards self-sufficiency. The apartments are close to bus lines and support services.

"The program is a well-needed service to the community and the asylees. Everyone benefits by having the asylees productive and independent as soon as possible, rather than a burden on the community," said Ayan Mohamed, the Program Manager for Project Refuge at SFS.

For more info, see www.projectrefuge.org or contact Ayan Mohamed at 619-265-5821 or Dory Beatrice at 858-449-0558

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Taxan Team Wishes
HAPPY NEW YEAR!
to All
GARDEN FRESH GRILL & SMOOTHIE

MEDITERRANEAN CUISINE – SMOOTHIE & JUICE BAR

Garden Fresh Grill & Smoothie is an authentic Mediterranean/Lebanese restaurant providing the freshest and highest quality healthy foods with the finest ingredients. It is a family owned and operated. The restaurant opened for business in September 2009. It is open daily, 8am to 9pm, and serves breakfast, lunch and dinner for dine-in or take-out. Located at Campus Plaza Shopping Center on El Cajon Blvd., near San Diego State University.

Garden Fresh Grill & Smoothie’s menu offers a variety of food items and focused on fresh ingredients, including many vegetarian choices. Traditional Mediterranean foods are featured with flavor and herbs, including Shawarma, Gyros, Kabobs, falafel, hummus, baba ghanouj, tabouli, spanakopita, kibbie and grape leaves (dolmas). There are also zaatar pie, cheese pie, meat pie and spinach fatayer baked fresh daily. Also there are several sandwich choices with pita bread and several side salad choices and full meal Mediterranean salads topped with a variety of meat items. All food items are freshly prepared and made to order.

Recently, the restaurant started daily special menu including Makloubeh، مقلوبة، Baked Kafta، كفتة، Sayadieh، صيادي، Kouzi، كوزي، Kabsh، كبشه، Stuffed Grape Leaves، Cabbage and Squash، محنق، and Mensaf، مشتفي. At Garden Fresh, a selection of deserts including baklava, warbat, kinafa, mamoul and harisa.

The Smoothie and Juice Bar at Garden Fresh offers a variety of high-quality, premium smoothie and juice drinks. It includes both fruit and vegetable drinks. The restaurant is comfortable and attractive setting for very good food and hospitality, with affordable prices.

Phone: 619 287-2373
6165 El Cajon Blvd, Suite F
San Diego, CA 92115
(Vons Shopping Center, corner of College Ave & El Cajon Blvd)
www.gardenfreshsd.com
Looking for a little extra income and cultural exchange? Newly-arrived asylees from East Africa are seeking a shared housing situation in the City Heights area. Please contact Ayan Mohamed at 619-265-5821 or amohamed@sfssd.org.

Southern Sudanese Community Center of San Diego offers free Arabic classes for all ages, both beginner and intermediate levels. For the schedule see www.ssccsd.org.

Somali Family Service offers interpretation and translation services as well as cultural presentations to help those working with Somalis and experiencing language or cultural barriers. Please contact Paige Newman at 619-265-5821 or pnewman@sfssd.org.

The San Diego Refugee Forum meets the third Tuesday of each month from 10:30 a.m.—noon at 5348 University Ave. For more information, the website is www.sdrefugeeforum.org.

The biweekly meeting of Somali Student Council will be held every other Thursday at SDSU. Location varies — contact Abdirahiin (Hawada) for updates at (619) 410-7988.

San Diego SomaliTV broadcasts every Friday @ 10:00 p.m. For further info, contact Abdisalam, the head of SD SomaliTV, at sdsomaliTV@hotmail.com.

Iftin Charter Board meets the first Friday of each month @ 5:00 p.m. For further info, contact Dr. Mohamed at (619) 265-2411. The event is open to the public unless otherwise announced.

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