Diverse is defined as differing from one another, or composed of distant or unlike elements or qualities. Just take a casual stroll around San Diego’s City Heights neighborhood and you will understand the definition of diversity, ethnically speaking. One culture frequently seen in City Heights is Somalis, and San Diego harbors one of the largest East African populations in the United States -- an estimated 30,000 refugees and immigrants.

To help address sophisticated issues faced by youth, Somali Family Service of San Diego and San Diego Police Department’s Multicultural Community Relations Office started an East African Youth Organization (EAYO). The mentorship program helps youth ages 13-18 develop skills necessary to gain higher education and prevent crime and violence amongst East African youth.

“Over 400 youth members have benefitted from the program so far. This is one of the most successful public and private partnerships I have seen. We couldn’t have done it without the support of the community,” said Ahmed Sahid, Executive Director of Somali Family Service.

EAYO is a youth-run program under the supervision of adult mentors, including Paige Newman, Communications Director/Youth Services at Somali Family Service. Every fall EAYO holds their Board of Directors elections, voting youth peers into office. From conducting their meetings to participating in community-oriented events, the youth are in charge! Events include everything from neighborhood clean-ups to leadership development.
THE POWER OF YOUTH continued from p1

Conferences, and field trips to the Museum of Tolerance, Universal Studios, Sea World and other places. One event that has become customary for EAYO is the annual ceremony for the graduating senior class. EAYO celebrates in honor of those members whose dedication throughout high school is now propelling them to an advanced level of education in the universities and colleges they choose to attend. “I became a board member to show other girls it is possible to go to college,” said one EAYO member.

In the spring of 2008, EAYO sent a few representatives to the 19th Annual Youth Crime Prevention Conference in Miami, Florida. There the San Diego youth met with other dedicated young people engaged in crime prevention all over the USA. This May, the group enjoyed a bowling field trip. EAYO is currently working on a number of summer events: the June 27 ceremony for this year’s high school graduates, a talent show during the Somali Family Service Health Fair in Honor of World Refugee Day (see page 7), a trip to Disneyland, and more. “Our biggest accomplishments of the last five years were a lot of East African youth enrolling from high school directly into universities, and we have seen a tremendous reduction of crime among East African youth,” said Police Service Officer Muktar Hirst of San Diego Police Department.

The San Diego Police Department graciously provides a safe environment for EAYO to meet the last Thursday of every month at 3 p.m. at the Mid-City Multi-Cultural Storefront at 5348 University Ave., Ste. 100. The community is very proud of and involved with this program. Guest speakers sometimes attend, sharing information about their professions, which inspires and provides career choices for EAYO members.

There is no charge to become a member of EAYO, but youth must be ages 13-18, come to three meetings in a row and work at one event. They also must have a parent or guardian sign a waiver form. For more information about EAYO, please contact Paige Newman at Somali Family Service, 619-265-5821 or Email: pnewman@sfssd.org.

This program is generously funded and supported by Price Charities.

San Diego Refugee Forum Update Continued from p1

San Diego Refugee Forum Update Continued from p1

The Forum advocates for social and policy change on topics impacting the daily lives of refugees in San Diego. Membership includes VOLAGs (Voluntary Agencies), MAAs (Mutual Assistance Associations), employment services, government agencies, community-based groups, refugees, advocates, and supporting individuals. Active members become voting members by paying annual dues.

Successes include community education on gender and Somali culture. Last year Dr. Jesse Mills, Board Member of Somali Family Service and USD Professor, presented his work on the Somali community and ethnicity as part of our World Refugee Day Celebration 2007. Other accomplishments include developing a strong partnership with the County of San Diego Community Action Partnership to strengthen the leadership and capacity of Mutual Assistance Nonprofits in the Sudanese, Somali, and other refugee communities. This year the Forum is happy to announce strengthening our tradition of partnership through a California Endowment award to work on improving quality and access to care through dialogue. The dialogue seeks to increase the language/cultural competency of health providers.

The Forum is a welcoming environment for everyone. We encourage community participation and invite you to ask questions and attend our meetings. For more information, check out our website www.sdrefugeeforum.org.
Shoes or Sambusa? Enjoy Yourself at the Safari Market!
By Paige Newman

Whether you need a haircut, some sambusa or a new pair of shoes, you are in luck every day of the week from 9 am to 8:30 pm at the Safari Market at 4348 54th Street in San Diego. The Somali community is very proud of the market which opened in 2006 and is overseen by Horn of Africa.

A San Diego organization providing culturally and linguistically relevant services to East African refugees and immigrants, Horn of Africa focuses on the Somali refugee community. For years, Horn of Africa worked toward the goal of opening the market, which serves not only as a shopping center but a place Somalis can socialize with others from their culture, feeling a sense of belonging so far from their homeland. While 90% of the customers are from Somalia, 10% of the shoppers come from other countries.

The local Somalis were involved in everything from finding the building to spending months renovating it. Today the market has grown to about 25 small businesses, showing the typical Somali entrepreneurial spirit. All the businesses are owned by Somalis, who are at least in their mid 30s in age. About 70% of the shops are owned by women and 30% are owned by men. Abdi Mohamoud, the Executive Director of Horn of Africa, said it can be challenging retaining businesses and maintaining the premises in order. With the current economic crisis, they have had four or five vendors go out of business. However, overall the market is doing well. “We are in our third year and the future looks bright. The community is becoming well connected to the Safari Market,” said Mohamoud.

Since there are only a few Somali restaurants in San Diego, it is exciting that Safari Market includes African Spice, where people can dine in or take out sambusa and other foods.

During these tough economic times people will appreciate the stores in the market with discounts on food, school backpacks and more. There are also many clothing stores, some just for women, and some for men, and others also selling other household items and home décor.

The market provides a place for a haircut and even has a few sites for wiring money, taking care of money orders, and other related services. In addition, the Safari Market is lucky to have a group helping East Africans called Haro, an international humanitarian organization that sends clothes, blankets and donated goods to orphans in Somalia.

Fun things can be found in the market too, like music and movies from East Africa at a store that also tapes and DJs for special occasions like weddings, birthdays and showers. Those interested in leasing a space can pick up an application and speak to Manager Abdullahi Amir at the Safari Market Rental Office between 9 am and 5 pm Monday-Friday. His number is 619-817-7048. The spaces are usually about 200 square feet, and cost $600 a month, with a one year lease.
EDITORIAL

Has the Economy Hit Bottom Yet? By Ali Artan, Taxan Editor-in-Chief

Is capitalism relevant anymore? Adam Smith’s concept called the invisible hand -- the self-regulating nature of the marketplace -- is in the limelight once again. It would be helpful to have Smith’s assessment on this economic mess we find ourselves in. Nevertheless, this recent global economic meltdown is best explained by today’s economists and financial analysts. As world economies become inseparable, the collapse of huge financial institutions such as Lehman Brothers and the likes has had a global effect, and more importantly, has placed our country in a situation second to that of the Great Depression.

The dire economy has caused great anxiety, and increased the uncertainty in the marketplace, forcing consumers to emphasize savings. Noticeably such a scenario is a recipe for economic stagnation. In March alone, as many as 694,000 people in the U.S. lost their jobs, not to mention the continuing freefall of real estate and other industries. Overall, the purchasing power of the masses is shrinking while the economy is contracting. This is clearly a manifestation of a bleak situation.

Irrespective of one’s position, whether a proponent or critic, one thing is for certain -- globalization is a reality to be reckoned with. We are becoming more interconnected than ever as far as our communication and business transactions are concerned. Needless to say, the playing field has been leveled, as Thomas Friedman explained comprehensively in his book The World is Flat. He extensively describes what he termed “the ten flatteners,” including but not limited to: outsourcing, offshoring, uploading, supply-chaining, insourcing, informing and others. In a nutshell, Friedman states that the days of “their problem is not ours” are long gone and irreversibly. He proposes adapting, managing and embracing this economic evolution as the way to move forward.

Apparently, these trying times are so crucial to everyone and even worse for new immigrants who are striving day-in, day-out like everyone else to make ends meet. A few issues make new arrivals’ situation grimmer: their proficiency of the language is limited, as is their knowledge of how the system and economic principles work. Plus, many lack the professional skills that could make them more competitive in the workplace. With all that said, immigrants have the opportunity to be more creative and resilient and to harness their potential in these hard times if they only prioritize. They need to review their spending and budgeting respectively, return to schools for career advancement -- whether vocational or formal schools -- and enhance their job search strategies. Obviously the rules of the game have changed, so immigrants have to.

In particular, new immigrants must do more than the rest of us in regards to financial planning, budgeting and savings to ride smoothly through these troubled times. Being aware of purchasing power, income, and expenditures is helpful for making reasonable projections for budgeting. Also people need to minimize all extravagant expenditures and work toward going into a saving mode. People should also be better informed by regularly tuning into the public radios and national TV, and becoming avid readers of periodical economic journals. Doing so will definitely enable any individual to make rational decisions in regards to financial planning, budgeting, and saving.

Finally, the Secretary of the Treasurer Geithner hinted in a press conference held in Washington D.C. last month that the so called "bail-out" has the potential to turn things around if and only if all parties involved honor its holistic intentions. If people do not follow the guidelines set forth, they will have the prospect of déjà vu all over again. However, to the masses, in particular new immigrants, the major issue is not whether our economy has already hit bottom or not. The lingering question is how long will it take before the economy bounces back so the many unemployed in our nation go back to work so they can afford paying their bills.

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Maxamed Al-Baraawi, Maxamed Cabdulle Mayal (Berbara), Cusmaan Yusuf Kenediid (Hobyo), Sheekh Cabiiraxmaan Qaadid (Boorame), Muuse Xaaji Ismaaciil Galaal (Togdheer) iyo Dhamme J.S. King oo ahayn sarkaanka ka tirsan ciidamaddii Ingiriiska.

Raggisuu dhamaan-toood waxay markii hore isku dayeen in qooraalka af Soomaaliaga ay u adeegsadaan xarfaah af Carabiga. Laakiin haddanaan ku yimaan kuma aysan guuleysan. Arrinta farsamo ee raggaas waxay la soo deriysato waxa uu muhiimsanee ugu muhiimsan quraad kaga timi dhiinaca Shalaqalada Carabiga oo daboobi kari waayay baahida luuqada Soomaaliaga. Si arrintaas talo loogu helo ayaa Sheekh Maxamed Cabdulle Makaahill waxaa uu allifay qaab cusub oo shaqalalo ah oo ka baahan qaada shaqaladii farta Carabiga. Waxaa uu dhibco ku daray raggii aad ugu doodi jirey in af Soomaaliiga laga yarin farta Carabiga waxaa uu qorray buug la odoon yahay in farta Carabiga lagu qoray farta Soomaaliiga. Fartaas oo uu ku kordhiyey xarfaa farta Soomaaliiga wuxuu isna doodaas oo kale soo bandhigay iyo wakhtigii la soo saaray wuxuu kala ahaan si-datan:

1. Ibraahim Xaashi iyo Saaxiibadii 1960
2. Muuse Galaal 1952
3. Sheekh Axmed Cismaan 1960
4. Maxamed Cabdi Kheyreh 1960

The Latest News at Somali Family Service  

By Paige Newman

Things are blooming this spring at SFS! It is a busy time, with our main focuses being our programs in health services, youth and family, and economic development.

SFS has become an important force in the community, addressing gaps in healthcare and collaborating with other stakeholders and residents. The health services program, in its second year, is actively doing community assessments on health issues in the Somali senior community in cooperation with San Diego State University’s Graduate School of Public Health program. This program is centered on improving access to quality health care for an underserved population suffering from language barriers, while nurturing leadership development and community advocacy.

East African Youth Organization (EAYO) is a youth-run empowerment program in which SFS has collaborated with the San Diego Police Department for several years. The mission of EAYO is to direct youth toward positive activities such as leadership training, financial education, community services and many more opportunities. Being actively engaged in the community, youth are less likely to engage in drugs and alcohol, crime and other negative activities. See page 1-2 for more information on EAYO.

SFS has long worked on self-sufficiency and has implemented a number of successful projects addressing economic development, including microenterprise and employment services. Currently, our Economic Development program focuses on financial literacy, targeting underserved populations by assisting individuals and small businesses with banking, money management and savings. SFS also improves access to affordable housing among Somalis in the central region of San Diego County. Future plans include outreach and expanding the program to reach a larger audience.

Besides the three main programs mentioned and the Taxan newsletter, SFS is also well-known for partnering with private and public agencies to leverage resources and better serve the community. We regularly attend the San Diego Refugee Forum, Mid-City CAN Networking Council, San Diego City Schools’ Somali District Meeting, and serve on the East African Advisory Board.

We are excitedly planning a Health Fair in Honor of World Refugee Day on Saturday, June 20 from 1-5 p.m. See pg. 7 for more info.

We could not accomplish so much without the support of the following volunteers (and many others):

- Aden Muhumed, SFS office
- Dr. Charles Bell, grant development
- Ali Artan, Editor-in-Chief for Taxan
- Hassan Abdirahman, technical assistance
- Rahmo Abdi, health services
- Nimo Gure, health services intern
- Nathan Bauer, resource development intern

We are grateful for our generous funders: California Endowment, Price Charities and the Parker Foundation.

If you would like any information on any of our programs, please contact Somali Family Service at 619-265-5821 or see www.somalifamilyservice.org

Events Calendar

Somali Family Service Health Fair in Honor of World Refugee Day.
When: Saturday, June 20, 2009 1:00 pm to 5:00 pm.
Where: City Heights Community Park, south of the City Heights/Weingart Branch Library
3795 Fairmount Ave., San Diego, CA 92105. For more info see page 7.

The 2009 East African Youth Annual Ceremony for high school graduates is on Sat, June 27.

Somali Youth United and Jacobs Center International Outreach Team are hosting Somali Independence Day July 18 from 2-6 p.m. at Market Creek Plaza, 310 Euclid Ave., San Diego, CA 92114. They will have food, a fashion show, live entertainment and poetry.
Contact Rahmo Abdi at 619-527-6161, ext. 190 or email abdi72@yahoo.com.

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Somali Family Service Health Fair
In Honor of World Refugee Day

**When:** Saturday, June 20, 2009
1:00 pm to 5:00 pm

**Where:** City Heights Community Park
South of the City Heights/Weingart Branch Library
3795 Fairmount Ave., San Diego, CA 92105

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