

## GFIII July 22 Notes

Cynthia Shabb, Sue Swanson, Sarah Coen-tuff, Terry Hanson, Reggie Tarr, Victor Lieberman, Brian Huschle, Alexander Azenkeng, Mohamed Ismail, Terry Keehr, Verdell Bontrager, Katie Dachtler, Jeremy Moe, Jessica Thorlacius, Pete Haga.

Welcome by co-chair Cynthia Shabb and introductions of those attending.

Received an update on refugee resettlement by LSS. Projections for fiscal year Oct 1, 2015 to Sep 30, 2016 is 85-100. At this time, 86 refugees have been resettled in Grand Forks: Somali = 38; Bhutan= 42; Iraqi = 3; Congolese = 3.

There was discussion about the refugee screening process and a link was provided to show details: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2015/infographic-screening-process-refugee-entry-united-states>

There were reports on participation with Welcoming America. Haga shared an award received from the White House Task Force on New Americans for Grand Forks' 'dedication and commitment to the principles of the Building Welcoming Communities campaign'. There was also discussion about a recent webinar on economic development related to new Americans and possible actions steps of working with the Chamber and other business interests to convene a 'new American entrepreneurship' roundtable. Shabb reported on a webinar that she gave with Welcoming America staff for Germans about Global Friends Coalition's community picnic.

21 of 24 people enrolled in the recent Global Friends Coalition Drivers Education course completed the program and was ready to take the standard driver's license test.

There was a report on the Manufacturing training at Northland Community Technical College. The 2nd Cohort is beginning now and 4 of 5 participants successfully completed the first Cohort. There is a \$150 cost to participants but much of the cost is covered by grants.

Cynthia reported on the Youth Sports Task force formed at the last meeting. The intent is to help encourage participation in existing youth sports and to promote the sustainability of existing new American-focused leagues like the soccer leagues. A special information session was held on July 21 at Red River High School with interpreters to provide information on the steps needed for youth to participate in middle and high school sports. 12 Somali and 8 Bhutanese youth and their families attended the session.

There was discussion on a potential soccer grant that could help improve the equipment used in the current soccer leagues.

There was also discussion on a Homeland Security grant. For information visit <https://www.dhs.gov/cvegrants>

Several attendees were informed by Senator Heitkamp about this grant related to countering homegrown terrorism. There was discussion about the grant focus areas of developing resiliency, training and engaging, managing relationships and building capacity. The group discussed forming a subcommittee to explore grant opportunities and to focus on prevention/engagement efforts. A copy of the grant would be sent to members.

Terry Hanson discussed the basic English classes being hosted at the Kvasager Center, using Rosetta Stone and the recent hiring of staff with Somali language proficiency to assist. Citizenship classes are planned to begin on August 3 at the Red Pine Library.

There was discussion about the National Day of Naturalization on Sep. 17 (also the first day of Welcoming Week) and how the committee could assist with promoting/optimizing.

There was an update on the July 26 Global Friends barbecue and a presentation about improving integration in Grand Forks by a U of MN graduate class. All are invited to attend. A brief of their report will be available at a later date.

There was discussion about the Community Picnic planned for Sept. 24 and the group discussed how to ensure a community wide awareness and attendance at the event. There will be further discussion about marketing and promotion at later meetings.

There were discussions about questions that have been raised to GF members. There was an opportunity to 'myth bust' with personal communication. Also there was a discussion about how to get facts and data that can provide an even better factual basis to work with questions or concerns. This includes number of new Americans actually residing in the area, number on housing, number on other programs. There was also discussion about concerns about safety and welfare in apartment complexes and whether the community could find resources or capacity to provide further checks and orientation on equipment and standard practices. It was acknowledged that LSS does have case workers that have regular contact with clients. These workers and Global Friends Coalition members have regular follow up regarding cleaning and home safety.

There was also discussion about how to help people find jobs (about 1000 open in the GF area) and keep them with a discussion on this group discussion employer/supervisor training or education while at the same time providing new employees training on workplace practices and language.

The next III meeting was set for September 15 in room A101 of City Hall at 4:00 p.m.