

Culturally Speaking

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Cultural Diversity Resources

is dedicated to building communities that value diversity, in partnership with the cities of Fargo, West Fargo, Moorhead, Dilworth, Cass & Clay Counties since 1994

Flood Banquet Awash with Praise

"I almost got emotional when I saw people in different dress speaking different languages sandbagging along with everyone else at the Dome,"

~ Mayor Walaker.

Mayor Dennis Walaker along with other government officials and community leaders were honored at a June 10 noon banquet hosted by the Multi-Cultural Parent-Teacher Association. Others recognized for their service were Fargo Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Rick Buresh, and Chief of Police Keith Ternes. Prior commitments kept County Sheriff Paul Laney from attending. The key people leading the flood fight, Walaker and Ternes, were presented with gifts, the former an African statue of a man in warrior pose with a spear and

shield, the latter, an African woman with a gourd for carrying life-sustaining water or honey. The two-foot tall statues, one symbolizing protection, the other support, respectively, now stand united on a credenza outside the mayor's office. "The Chief thought they should be together," noted Carol Krabbenhoft, whose City Commission Office desk is nearby. "We get a lot of comments about the pair."

The event and the choice of gifts according to master of ceremony and president of the association Pierre Atilio was to show appreciation for exercising the leadership that "saved our city from the flood." In addition to remarks by Atilio, Walaker, Ternes, and Barash, Vonnie Sanders, English Language Literacy Coordinator for Fargo Public Schools and a MCPT board member, addressed the gathering.

Following remarks, presentation of gifts, and mealtime prayers by followers of the Christian, Muslim, and Hindu faiths, officials and members of the Multi-

Cultural Parent-Teacher Association, a CDR initiative that partners with the Fargo Public Schools, feasted on dishes from around the world prepared by member families. The banquet, a potluck of foods ranging from salads to main dishes to desserts, was spread out on a table as long as the room was wide. Each of the more than 50 contributions was identified by name with a small, neat handwritten label. There were no duplicates.

While everyone hoped flood protection activity was history, all heartily agreed that the event held in a capacity-filled room at Woodrow Wilson School should be repeated next year - in a



Fargo's Mayor Walaker, Fargo Public School District Superintendent Buresh receive gifts from the ethnic communities

Rising River Lifts All

For the area's thousands of new Americans, the crises brought on by this spring's flood revived haunting memories of homeland turmoil and helplessness, feelings that were soon tempered by the intensity and magnitude of community response and by efforts on the part of government officials to keep residents informed via public meetings, radio, television, and the Internet. To bridge the language barrier (even those with basic English skills were confronted with new vocabulary), bi-lingual speakers took it upon themselves to be town criers, holding periodic meetings in homes and regularly making phone calls with updates on flood efforts, evacuations, and reporting store, workplace, school, and road closures. They acted as community counselors offering reassurance to those unnerved by the uncertainty of the situation or the sight of a caravan of military trucks speeding along a thorough fare and educators dispensing practical tips on plugging drains and checking for leakage.

The response of new Americans to the pending disaster was no different

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*“Humanness knows no color, gender, age, orientation or global border; it only knows the collective common good felt by all.”
Donna Wood*



Donna Wood, Office Manager of Cultural Diversity Resources, was honored by the Cass Clay YWCA during its Women of the Year recognition banquet, May 21, at the Fargo

Holiday Inn. Donna winner in the category of advocacy for equality, learned she won when her name was announced at the event which drew approximately 500 people.

Wood's duties at CDR are varied. In 2007, she developed the Education and Development Center which provides computer literacy, personal financial literacy, and employment readiness for immigrants, minorities, and the low-income population at large. She also facilitates workshops such as Establishing Core Values and Identifying Barriers to Community Participation. To date, over 200 individuals have utilized the services of the Center to improve their socio-economic status. In addition, Donna provides supervision and mentorship to work training positions at CDR for the Minnesota Concentrated Employment Program, Experience Works, and AmeriCorps VISTA Volunteers.

Women comprise 75% of the participants in Donna's classes and workshops. Regardless of culture and country of origin, these women continue in their role as keepers of the culture, parents, and family members. What is new to some is the role of worker in the American marketplace. What is new to all is becoming acculturated and determining what their behavior and other personal choices should be vis-a-vis background and upbringing. And what is also new to all is meeting and mingling with people of different races, ethnic background, religion, and languages.

CDR's Wood Honored

Dealing with individual and ethnic differences and issues of acceptance and self-worth takes sensitivity and skill, a challenge heightened in the multi-cultural environment of New Americans. Such a challenge requires not only a sensitive and skilled person, but one who is wise, kind, open, and compassionate, qualities that are readily applied to Donna by all who come in contact with her.

Donna also was instrumental in assisting the Fargo-Moorhead Native American Community with strategic planning for the establishment of a Native American Center. The needs assessment, research, and planning culminated in CDR submitting a multi-year federal grant application.

Other professional achievements which influenced Donna's selection by the YWCA were serving on the Fargo Forum's 2001 "Saving North Dakota Roundtable," a project to retain youth in North Dakota and bring high paying jobs to the state and membership on the Executive Bethel Council for Job's Daughters, Moorhead, a youth leadership organization for girls. Personally Donna takes satisfaction in supporting and single parenting three daughters ranging in age from 16 to 21 and knowing that they have developed into self-confident, independent, and strong young woman.

Beyond formal classroom instruction at the Education and Development Center, Donna's day is often punctuated with phone calls and drop-in requests from New Americans and others for assistance in solving personal and community-related problems.

The advocacy for equality award given to a woman "whose work or community involvement promotes respect, inclusion, and equal rights for all people," summarizes Donna's four years of work and achievements at CDR. An inscribed, modern design Lucite trophy and a parchment scroll now

graces her office.

Although this was the 36th anniversary of the Women of the Year award, it is only the tenth time the advocacy for equality category has been given.

When asked about her achievements, inspiration, and life's work, Donna cites the fact that although, not Native American herself, she grew up on the Fort Berthold Reservation in western North Dakota. Being surrounded and immersed in the culture gave her a deep respect and understanding of Native American tribal beliefs, traditions, and lifestyles. In recent years Donna's role model has been CDR's Executive Director Yoke Sim Gunaratne.

If Donna is remembered for living a life of humanness and promoting it in others, she will feel successful. "My dream is that one day, not only Cass and Clay counties, but the United States as a whole, will accomplish the vision of equality and the beauty of cultural diversity," she states.

Other categories recognized by the YWCA were arts and communication, business, education, community service, lifetime achievement, wellness, young woman of tomorrow, and youth advocacy.

CDR PARTNERS

- Cities of Fargo, Moorhead, West Fargo & Dilworth
- Cass and Clay Counties
- Fargo-Moorhead Public Schools
- MN Workforce
- Experience Works
- AmeriCorps VISTA Volunteer
- Tri-College

Rising River, continued

than that of Fargo natives and other citizens: What can I do to help? Youth and adults turned out in numbers joining the sandbag brigade at the FargoDome and at the river's edge. Those with vehicles picked up and transported non-driving neighbors. Others took city buses. In addition to refugees who blended in with the army of workers were ethnic groups numbering from 10 to 100.

After the majority of work was done and the second crest didn't materialize as projected, new Americans along with everyone else let out a sigh of relief. The many hands in the chain of labor that had filled and handed off sandbags were linked in hearts and minds, seeing officials and others as heroes, taking humble pride in their personal contributions, proving that when hands and hearts see themselves as an integral part of a whole, everyone wins.

Multi-Ethnic Picnic Planned



Come rain or shine, Lindenwood Park will be filled on August 16 with the site and sound of merriment and the smell of culinary pleasure. Area families have marked their calendar for the annual event sponsored by CDR. Planning and preparation for the picnic which runs from 4 pm to 8pm have been underway for weeks.

The picnic will be a perfect opportunity for everyone to visit with family and friends and make new acquaintances. Children can take advantage of the park's playground equipment and participate in special activities being planned. They along with adults can take part in a soccer game. Music will fill the air for listening and dancing enjoyment.

Food in quantity will be prepared by woman from various ethnic groups and brought to the grounds. The picnic is supported by Wal-Mart, Hornbacher's, Cashwise and SunMart, who donated gift cards for purchase of the food items, special ingredients, and supplies.

Begun in the early 1990s as a refugee event and enlarged in 2003 by CDR, the picnic is the only organized opportunity for inter- as well as intra-group socialization according to Yoke Sim Gunaratne. About 400 people are expected to attend.

Middle Eastern Expert Has Dakota Roots

Based on the personal and professional success of a Kurdish-Muslim refugee, the film *American Herro* follows the life of Herro Mustafa who along with her family escaped Saddam Hussein's regime in the early 1970s. Settling in Minot, North Dakota with the sponsorship of the city's Zion Lutheran Church. Herro and neighbor Kirk Roos, both three at the time, developed a friendship that continues. In a 2006 reunion, Roos, a filmmaker now living in Fargo, decided to tell Herro's story, a story that landed her a job as Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice's Special Advisor to the Middle East in the Bush administration. Mustafa consented on the condition that Roos accompany her to Iraq. What followed was 18 months of travel and filming in Iraq, Washington DC, and North Dakota.

Nezira Ahmed, an AmericCorp Vista Volunteer Community Coordinator at Cultural Diversity Resources, who also came to this country from Kurdistan as a child, worked with the Fargo-Moorhead Kurdish community coordinating interpreters for the film's footage

and subtitles. In addition, she worked on publicity activities for the screening held April 6th at the Fargo Theater and the Kurdish menu fundraising dinner that followed at Hotel Donaldson. "We were pleased to assist in this effort," noted CDR's Executive Director, Yoke Sim Gunaratne who along with Office Manager, Donna Wood, and Ahmed attended the Fargo screening and dinner. "With roots in both Kurdistan and America, Herro has chosen a career of dedicated service to both her home countries, and she has done them both proud," noted Congressman Earl Pomeroy who along with wife Mary hosted a July showing of the film at the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, DC. In addition to its own two July broadcasts, Fargo-based Prairie Public will re-air the program in upcoming months. Numerous screenings are scheduled across the US and details are being worked on for possible venues in Iraq and London.

Speaking at the Fargo premier, Herro, currently Special Advisor on Middle East Affairs to Vice President Joe Biden, noted that making the documentary was an opportunity "to say 'thank you' to the people and community that took us in and gave us wings." Working together, director/producer Roos and NDSU have set up a scholarship. A portion of the proceeds from sales of the documentary (available from Netflix) supports the scholarship. People interested in donating to the "American Herro" International Student Scholarship can contact Lisa Hauck, Office of International Programs, NDSU, 701-231-8260.



Herro Mustafa speaks at Fargo Theatre premiere of "American Herro".



Cultural Profile: Bhutanese

Bhutan is a Kingdom located on the Indian subcontinent. The Kingdom of Bhutan has been isolated from the rest of the world for centuries. It was 1959 when Bhutan established its first diplomatic relationships but visitors were not allowed into the country until 1974.

Not only were visitors physically not allowed in the Kingdom of Bhutan, but were virtually not allowed as well, since television had been banned until 1998 and the internet until 1999. Bhutan was the last nation, worldwide, to start television broadcasting and joining the World Wide Web.

The Bhutanese people are made up of four general ethnic groups:

- **Ngalop**
- **Shar chop**
- **Indigenos aboriginal peoples**
- **Nepalis**

The Ngalop and Shar chop together make the ethnic group called the Drukpas.

The Bhutanese people have features that are similar to Tibetans and related peoples to the north and east.

Resources

<http://www.geocities.com/bhutanese/refugees/refugeecampmap.html>
www.bhutanese-refugees.com
CIA World Fact Book
"Human" - A Smithsonian Project; published by DK Publishing
UNHCR

The Bhutanese Refugees:

The population in the seven refugee camps of Nepal (in the eastern lowlands) has grown from 80,000 in 1992 to 105,000 in 2007.

As of October 2008, the UNHCR reported the percentage of the population in the refugee camps under 17 as 40% and these have spent most of their lives, if not all of their lives, living as refugees.

Religion: The official religion of the Kingdom of Bhutan is: Drukpa Kagyu Buddhism

In the refugee population:

- **60% - Hindu**
- **27% - Buddhist**
- **10% (approx.) - Kirat**
- **1% - 7% - Christian (in refugee camps)**

Ethnicity: Nepalis

Language: The majority of Bhutanese refugees speak Nepali, either as their first or second language. An estimated 35% of the refugee population has a functional knowledge of English.

Refugee Camps in Nepal: There are seven camps located in eastern Nepal: Beldangi-I, Beldangi-II, Beldangi-II Extension, Sanischare, Goldhap, Timai, and Khudunabari.

Education: Camp schools are conducted in Nepali and English following a modified version of the Bhutanese school system. Children attend school in the camp through the tenth grade. After the tenth grade they may attend local schools in Nepal and some have gone on to secondary schools and universities in India.

Occupational Background: Most refugees identify themselves as farmers or students. Other occupations include teachers, social workers, tailors, weavers, and housekeepers.

Social System: Caste System—divided into different social levels which heavily determine marriage and other relationships as well as education levels.



Situated between the emerging superpowers of India and China, the isolated Buddhist kingdom of Bhutan, hailed by some as 'the last Shangri-La', has generated one of the highest numbers of refugees in the world in proportion to its population. - www.bhutanese-refugees.com

CDR Highlights

Meetings & Conferences

- New CDR board members elected in February for 2009 are Donna Norquay, chair, Christine Chapweske, vice chair, Fauzia Haider, secretary, and Johnathan Judd, treasurer. The 2008 Annual Report was distributed.
- Yoke Sim Gunaratne and AmeriCorp VISTA volunteer Nezira Ahmed attended a spring Unity conference at MSUM. A variety of sessions ranged from media coverage of Latinos/Hispanics to educational issues regarding youth.
- The development of a Seeking Educational Equity & Diversity (SEED) curriculum was the topic of a spring meeting between Yoke Sim Guaratne and at Carl Ben Eilsen Middle School teachers in Fargo.
- Yoke Sim and Donna Wood attended a supervisors training program organized and hosted by Minnesota Concentrated Employment Program (MNCEP).
- MNCEP trainee Elverna Vilas, Native American program assistant at CDR, along with community volunteer Sarah Wells and Daughters of the Earth founder/director Mary John attended a conference on sexual assault and domestic violence. The three day April session was held in Mill Lacs, Minnesota.

Grants, Grant Writing, Proposals

- CDR staff devoted considerable time to researching and writing grants. A three year \$150,000 federal grant to establish a Native American Center was submitted in March. A one year \$5,500 grant to train bilingual community connectors for the Multicultural Families Program to the FM Area Foundation and a one year \$61,720 grant to Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community Foundation to help develop a Naïve American Center were both submitted in April.
- Yoke Sim Gunaratne, Pierre Atilio, and Nezira Ahmed attended the Multicultural Parents-Teachers Association meeting on April 15 to discuss a three year grant proposal to be submitted to Otto Bremer Foundation for organizational development. Accompanying the grant was a letter of support from Yoke Sim.
- Otto Bremer Foundation's program officer, Chris Tolke, made a site visit in early January meeting with CDR's Yoke Sim Gunaratne and Pierre Atilio, Executive Director and Program Coordinator, respectively, along with CDR board chair Ron Nielsen. In late January, CDR was notified that the three year grant application for \$150,000 was approved. The first year grant of \$50,000 was received in March.
- Donna Wood and Elverna Vilas attended a three day Administration for Native American (ANA) federal grant writing workshop in Aberdeen, South Dakota in January. Yoke Sim assisted by Wood and Vilas wrote a ANA grant proposal to establish a Native American Center.

Community Work

- In addition to her duties at CDR, Elverna Vilas assisted with the writing, editing, and publishing of Four Directions, the monthly newsletter of Daughters of the Earth. She also developed programs for Native Americans and helped with fancy shawl classes, talking circle, and Fargo Indian Parents meetings.
- In addition, to chairing the Multicultural Parents-Teachers Association, and assisting New American parents register with the organization, Pierre Atilio continued to provide follow-up on school problems. In March he met with the school superintendent and about 25 principals and vice principals regarding MPTA mission and objectives. In March and April he attended the Safety Protection Committee meeting chaired by Fargo police officer, Cristie Jacobsen. MPTA established the committee to provide a source of contact and education about law enforcement issues for refugees.
- In an effort to involve New Americans in gardening and farming business opportunities, Pierre met with the representative of the local Farmers Market Association in early March.
- Pierre Atilio continued to meeting with various ethnic groups. In March he and representatives of the Sudanese community explored setting up a new organization versus working with the established Mutual Assistance Associations. In April he and Santino Ajith, director of the New Sudanese Community discussed strategies to bring Africans together through a joint project between the Sudanese, People Escaping Poverty, and CDR.
- During March and April, Pierre educated, assisted and/or referred 15 individuals on jobs, driving, and social issues.
- The CDR staff assisted and/or referred 37 individuals in March and another 48 in April with bus passes, food, clothing, computer usage, job searches, and online job applications.

Education & Development Center

- Donna Wood presented computer workshops to New Americans and other low-income people at the YMCA, three classes on internet searching for beginners and a class on Microsoft Word 7. In addition to giving one-on-one computer literacy training for a four clients, one each from Bosnia and Sudan, and three from Somali, she provided intensive training in keyboarding and Microsoft Excel to a Native American who volunteered more than 40 hours with Native American programs. One-on-one job search and online application assistance was given to four low income individuals, an Iraqi and a Bosnian plus two Hispanics. Eight other clients received assistance with resume creation and related skills.



Reasons to Support Cultural Diversity Resources

1. CDR is a regional diversity initiative serving four cities and two counties in two states.
2. CDR partners and collaborates with existing organizations to maximize our service programs.
3. CDR provides services to all low-income individuals and families including New Americans / Immigrants, Native Americans, Hispanics and the greater population.
4. CDR serves as an intercultural bridge between the ethnic and majority populations.
5. CDR serves as a diversity resource to employers, educators and community leaders in resolving issues of diversity.

To Donate to Cultural Diversity Resources:

Mail or bring your check or money order to:

Cultural Diversity Resources
303 Roberts St. N
Fargo, ND 58103

Or;

You can donate on-line through the IMPACT Foundation

Cultural Diversity Resources is a 501(c)3 tax-exempt nonprofit

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S J Hair Salon

The Chocolate Frog Gift Shop



CDR Cul tural Li brary



Resources for clients

- Pamphlets, Brochures and Organizational Materials about Small Businesses, banks, community resources, etc.
- Fargo Forum

Resources for businesses, nonprofits, service-organizations, teachers and college students

- Books about cultures, religions, leadership, women's issues, biographies, etc.
- DVDs/VHS
- Encyclopedias
- Periodicals
- Information about colleges
- Children's books
- Publications on local programs/services

www.culturaldiversityresources.org

Phone: 701-526-3000
 Fax: 701-526-3001
 E-mail: office@culturaldiversityresource.org

Stop into our office to take a look at these great resources!
 If you are interested in making a donation to CDR's Cultural Library, call (701) 526-3000.

Programs of Cultural Diversity Resources

Diversity Education and Multicultural Programs	Multi -Ethnic Leadership and Capacity Building Programs	Education and Development Center	Interagency Services and Referrals	Cultural Events
Diversity Training Cultural Presentations Diversity Clearing House Annual Conference	Technical Assistance Intercultural Civic Engagement New American Youth-at-Risk Program Professional Ethnic Mentorship Program	Computer Literacy Employment Education & Assistance Personal Financial Literacy Training	Assistance and Referrals for low-moderate income individuals to local food pantries, transportation services, clothing, housing etc.	Pangaea - Cultivate Our Cultures : A community wide event which showcases the cultural heritages of the Red River Valley. Annual Summer Picnic for New Americans.