

New Jersey Statewide Network on Cultural Competency

Draft Minutes, January 12, 2006

This meeting was held at the International Institute of New Jersey in Jersey City. Abdelfettah Elkchirid, the Arabic Outreach Worker, was responsible for inviting us. There were about 12 people who attended.

Bill Gaventa welcomed participants. Then Mary Kay Jou, the Director of Training at IINJ, described a number of their programs. You can see more about the cultural competency training and work they do on their web site at <http://www.iinj.org/>. She talked about:

- Their work with refugees who come to the US through the UN refugee program, asylum seekers, and also people who have been torture survivors. When a refugee comes, a time period of about 4 months is allowed to reach self sufficiency.
- They have staff or access to interpreters that can handle 75 languages.
- There are some new school programs in which they work with refugee and immigrant parents on successful parenting in the American context to raise bilingual, bicultural children. (e.g., you can talk with the teacher in this country and should, not like in some countries where you cannot.)
- A new program has been funded by PNC bank with the Center for Family Resources in the Passaic County area to do a number of cultural competency projects and groups with teachers and parents/children.
- They have a program that trains bilingual interpreters, so that agencies and others who only recourse to a staff member or family member can send people to get some basic training on the ethics and expertise of the interpreter's role. They have three areas of focus: community, medical, and mental health.

The director of the Interpreter Workshop, Sophia Rossovsky, the Language Links Manager at IINJ, came and described the program briefly. The Coalition decided to invite her to come and do a presentation for the next meeting on March 23 at Central NJ Cares in North Brunswick. She agreed. More information on the meeting and directions will be forthcoming in February, but people are encouraged to note the date, Thursday, March 23, 2-4.

Our program speaker for this afternoon was Shakira Linzey on embedding culturally competent practices in early intervention with families with children with disabilities. She did a presentation with Powerpoint, and is willing to send the Powerpoint to those who are interested if you email her at slinzey@cnjmchc.org. She did an excellent presentation that also noted the work being done in other regional centers. Their staff is available to come to talk with any community groups on early intervention.

The participants also heard from Pramila Balasundaram who coordinates an early intervention program in the slums of New Delhi called Samadhan. She comes through New Jersey on a regular basis because of family here and is available to talk with groups in New Jersey. For more information about their organization, go to www.samadhanindia.org

We also approved the October 6 minutes for posting on the NJSNCC website.

<http://www.state.nj.us/njsncc/>. As an update, one of our key founding members, Barbara Andrews, has been ill and in the hospital, but is now back at Merwick Rehab Center in Princeton and hopes to go home soon.

Our next meeting is March 23, 2-4, at Central NJ Maternal & Child Health Consortium, Inc. 2 King Arthur Court, Suite B, North Brunswick, NJ 08902. Ph: 732-937-5437/Fx: 732-937-5540
General Info and Directions: Please visit our website at www.cnjmchc.org. We will send out directions with a meeting notice in early March. We have invitations from NAMI NJ and the Long Branch Concordance to host future meetings. We will decide a site in March. The following meeting is 6/8/06. Minutes taken by Bill Gaventa.