



Building Bridges Conference **passage to the american dream**

March 17-18, 2008 • Holiday Inn, Fargo, ND

The Building Bridges Conference is held annually to provide information and technical support to communities to aid in the delivery of services to refugees and other immigrants.

This conference will provide answers to many questions like:

- How does someone become a refugee?
- What is life like in a refugee camp?
- Who is allowed to come to the United States and why?
- What happens once they come to our communities?

The 2008 Building Bridges will focus on four main topics:

- Integration into the Community by New Americans
- English Language Learning programs – K-12 and Adult
- Refugee Health and Wellbeing
- The Lives of Refugees; Before, During and After

Who Should Attend?

Community leaders interested in learning about programs around the country that encourage the full potential of New Americans for civic engagement and economic development.

Educators, volunteers, and tutors wanting to know more about the individuals they work with in their English language learning programs.

Health Care professionals seeking ways to develop, fund, manage and implement programs for refugees that promote good physical health.

Mental Health professionals interested in the development and implementation of community mental health modalities of improving or maintaining good mental health in the refugee community.

Volunteers, mentors, and others wishing to learn about the resettlement program, the refugees and the services provided in our communities.

Sponsored and Hosted by:

New American Services
a program of Lutheran Social Services of North Dakota

N.D. Department of Human Services

N.D. Department of Public Instruction

City of Fargo Human Relations

For more information:

Darci Asche

New American Services
1325 11th Street S.
Fargo, ND 58103
(701) 271-1604





program

Conference Program

Monday, March 17, 2008

7:30 AM Registration

8:30 AM Plenary I

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees' representative, _____, will discuss the role of UNHCR in international refugee rescue, the process by which refugees are recommended for resettlement into another country and the current situation around the globe.

10:00 AM Break

10:30 AM Breakout Session I

Each breakout session will provide a choice of two or three workshops dealing with education, physical and mental health, or community integration

12:00 PM Lunch

1:30 PM Plenary Session II

New American Panel from Somalia, Liberia, Iraqi and Burundi communities will share their cultural backgrounds, experience and observations in the community, schools, and the workplace.

3:30 PM Break

3:45- 5:00 PM Breakout Session II

Tuesday, March 17, 2008

8:00 AM Registration

8:30 AM Breakout Session III

10:00 AM Break

10:30 AM Closing Plenary featuring [Dr. Jeffra Flaitz](#)

Continuing education units for social work, teaching, health care professionals and graduate program credits have been applied for.

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highlights

Conference Highlights

• Opening Plenary Session will feature [redacted], Deputy Regional Representative of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). In addition, presenters will offer personal stories of their lives before they were forced to flee across borders. They will explain the conflicts and dangers that disrupted their normal way of life. Former refugees will tell participants of the Building Bridges conference of the long and difficult wait for life to return to normal, as they lived in refugee camps. The legal process for resettlement by a new country will be understood following their presentation, along with their experiences as they arrived to a new country and a new life.

• [redacted], of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) will offer several workshops on The Points of Wellness Program, Partnering for Refugee Health and Well-Being. This initiative is a collaborative effort among the Office of Refugee Resettlement, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration/Refugee Mental Health Program, and the Office of Global Health Affairs. The Initiative is an approach to health and mental health that aims to increase awareness and interest in health promotion and disease prevention programs targeting refugees. This program's goal is to provide information and tools to assist organizations in related activities and services. This will be Captain Tuskan's second time to present at the Building Bridges Conference.

• Two workshops and the closing plenary session by [redacted], Director of the English Language Institute at the University of South Florida.

• Personnel from the North Dakota and South Dakota resettlement programs will provide insight into the services and philosophies of the United States refugee resettlement program, as well as the uniqueness of resettling refugees in our area.

• New Americans will present discussion of the hopes and dreams of newcomers to our communities, and the barriers to realizing their dreams. Participants will brainstorm on ways of reducing barriers. They will also hear the stories of success from refugees and immigrants who came with only questions, and are now part of the answer. Community leaders will discuss what's worked and what hasn't been tried.

• Former refugees from Liberia, Burundi, Somalia and Iraq will provide cultural understanding of people who have arrived from those countries.

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speakers

Keynote Speakers

- **Mr. Thomas Albrecht** is the Deputy Regional Representative of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) at the UNHCR Regional Representation for the United States of America and the Caribbean, located in Washington, DC.

Prior to coming to Washington in October 2005, Mr. Albrecht was the Representative of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in Ghana.

Mr. Albrecht joined the UNHCR in 1987 and worked in a range of refugee situations, predominantly in the East and Horn of Africa, West Africa as well as Eastern and Central Europe. These operations related to refugee protection, emergencies, capacity building efforts as well as the advancement of durable solutions to the plight of refugees. Mr. Albrecht was also posted at UNHCR's headquarter in Geneva, where he worked in the Department of International Protection. His assignment there included serving as the principal editor of the UNHCR Resettlement Handbook, the Organization's authoritative guide to third country resettlement policy and practice. Mr. Albrecht furthermore was involved in designing the new operations management system for the Organization. These assignments were complemented by missions around the world.

- **Dr. Jeffra Flaitz** is Director of the English Language Institute at the University of South Florida. She is Co-Director, Ph.D. program in Second Language Acquisition and Instructional Technology, and Director, M.A. in Applied Linguistics. Dr. Flaitz is author of two books, "Understanding Your International Students", and "Understanding Your Refugee and Immigrant Students". Her presence is sponsored by the North Dakota Department of Instruction. She will present at two workshops and the closing plenary session.

- **Captain John Tuskan Jr.**, RN, MSN, currently serves as the director of the Federal Refugee Mental Health Program, which provides mental health technical assistance and consultation to the Federal Office of Refugee Resettlement and the entire U.S. refugee resettlement network. He has completed field assignments in response to domestic disasters, mass immigration emergencies, and refugee crises in the Middle East and Eastern Europe. Captain Tuskan is a graduate of the Pennsylvania State University and Yale University.

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location

Accommodations

– located at I-29 and 13th Ave. S. in Fargo

A block of rooms has been reserved for the Building Bridges Conference. Please make your reservations by calling: 701-282-2700 and asking for a room for the Building Bridges Conference.

State rate of \$55.00 will apply when you show your state I.D. when registering upon arrival.



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the arrival

The Arrival

by Susan Husson

Pharmacist, cook, driver, lawyer, mechanic, housewife, engineer.

We are old.

We are toddlers and teens.

We are parents.

We are young and single.

We come out of terror and the shambles of our country wasted by war.

In weariness of soul and body, we come.

In deepest sorrow, we come.

In hope and fear, we come.

With dreams, we come.

We have no other place to go now, no other home, no other life.

Our homes, empty shells.

Our families, scattered or dead.

Our neighbors and friends, enemies.

Our country, shattered.

We struggle with our baggage, seen and unseen.

Some you carry for us; some, we will always bear alone.

The deaths.

The nightmares.

The sudden terror.

The inexplicable sadness.

One long journey is ending as our plane lands.

We pause at the steps, terrified, breathless. What now?

Someone points to a doorway.

Hesitating, we begin to move so slowly.

We enter a dim hall and walk towards the light.

Strange accents fill our ears, we see incomprehensible signs.

Suddenly, the hall widens, the light seems too bright...

A crowd of people waits. For us?

We see smiling faces, friendly eyes.

We glimpse balloons, flowers,

A sign in our language! It says we are welcome.

Strangers step forward to greet us with smiles, hugs, and tears.

We feel the love,

We sense the compassion,

Their warmth surrounds us, supports us.

Our new life is beginning.