

**Of PLANO MULTICULTURAL OUTREACH ROUNDTABLE (MCOR)
November 13, 2018**

MCOR Co-Chairs Present:

Mary Alice Garza

Shaheen Salam

Graciela Katzer

Co-chair Garza convened the meeting to order at 7:00 pm, Tuesday, November 13, 2018 in Training Room A at Municipal Center, 1520 K Avenue. A quorum was present.

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

Co-chair Garza announced that on November 15 the League of Women Voters will have a public information forum on school finance. They will have Plano ISD school board president Missy Bender, the CFO from Frisco ISD and Senator Royce West speaking at Haggard Library at 6:30 pm.

Co-chair Garza announced that some children who came in at the border and were separated from their parents are now students in Plano ISD and the schools are looking for Spanish-speaking counselors. If you know of anyone who is retired or would fit this category please have them contact Plano ISD administration to find out more details.

Co-chair Katzer reminded everyone that the Salvation Army on 14th Street in Plano would have a warming station for anyone who needed a place to stay overnight out of the freezing weather.

READING, AMENDMENT AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes from the September 11, 2018 meeting were reviewed. Co-chair Katzer moved the minutes be approved and Co-chair Salam seconded the motion. The minutes were approved by all present.

GOVERNMENT PARTICIPATION COMMITTEE

Report on 2018 Student Visa Workshop

Co-chair Salam announced that attendance was very low for this year's event and she is considering not having it next year. She said that there is a lot of work put into the event and she feels that interest is dwindling for reasons that are beyond her control. While she is hoping that a solution can be found she is considering all options and will make a decision soon. She said perhaps it can go to being held every other year. The first few years of the workshop were packed but recent attendance has been disappointing. Hopefully a solution can be found. Meeting attendees suggested the Collin College International Student Association become involved and perhaps that would help.

Discussion of 2019 Citizenship Workshop

Co-chair Salam reminded everyone that this workshop had been going on for nearly 13 years and that it's for the immigrant community and beyond for them to come and receive free legal assistance, counseling and guidance as they pursue U.S. citizenship. They can learn all the steps about the process, which can be complicated, and they can ask questions about what is next for them. It is always well-attended and will be on Saturday,

February 9, 2019 at the Sockwell Center on Chapel Hill in Plano. The first hour is a presentation and the second hour will be breakout sessions. They recently had their first committee meeting and decided that they will request a uniformed officer to work security for the event. The attorneys have been notified and the poster and flyer design has been finalized. Please contact Co-chair Salam if you are interested in volunteering.

Youth Committee report

Co-chair Katzer spoke on behalf of the Youth Committee. The group met recently and 6 students were there representing Plano Senior High and Vines High, Plano West Senior High and Jasper High. They discussed updating the goals of the committee and ways to have more visibility. They will be promoting the Citizenship Workshop among their peers and will be looking to organize an "Election Matters" event, possibly ahead of the May 2019 elections. The PWSHS club has changed sponsors so Co-chair Katzer will be meeting with him again soon. Currently, for security reasons, there will no longer be evening meetings of the MCOR Youth Committee on campus, so the community event they are planning is looking for a venue. Co-chair Garza will be checking with Collin College to see if it can be held there. The committee is very excited to learn that the MCOR website will have a spot for the youth information.

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

Update on Friendship Circles

Denise Hamilton reported that she will be trying something different regarding the planning part of the events. She is going to plan it all out ahead of time and will be looking to schedule in January, April, July and October soon. The events are at people's houses and the January event will be at Denise's house. They usually have a theme or topic and it is a potluck so everyone gathers, eats and visits and gets to know each other on a more personal level.

Discussion of MCOR Holiday Party

Co-chair Garza reported that she reserved First Methodist Church for Monday, December 10 at 6 pm. This holiday party will take the place of the December MCOR meeting and notice of cancelation for the regular Tuesday night meeting will be posted.

CULTURAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

Report on 2018 Business Leadership Reception

Co-chair Garza reported that the meeting went well and that the presentation from the Federal Reserve was excellent. She said they showed what Collin County would look like in the future and it was very interesting. The panel of educators talked about the issues related to getting into the workforce. She estimates that there were about 130 attendees. There are several different opinions on whether the time allotted to the networking ahead of the panel is perhaps too long, causing some to get restless and possibly leave before the presentation. The committee will discuss that in the future and decide if the timing should be changed for the next event.

Discussion of Cultural Movies

Denise Hamilton said that Bayan Noori had challenges finding a venue to show a movie he had suggested and finally had located a place in Denton to show it but it would not necessarily be convenient for Plano MCOR attendees to go. There were no more movies that were suggested at this time.

Discussion of MCOR Speakers

Co-chair Salam discussed the possibility of having Lekan Oguntoyinbo, author of "I Too, Am America: Stories of 50 Amazing American Muslims", speak at a future MCOR-sponsored event. All agreed this would be a good fit so Co-chair Salam is going to follow up to see if a separate event can be scheduled at an area library where there would be room for an extended audience to see and hear this author. In addition to this, Co-chair Katzer said that the Youth Committee is interested in choosing a speaker to bring to a future MCOR meeting.

Report of 2018 Plano International Festival (PIF)

Co-chair Katzer reported that, due to weather, the festival had been canceled. Although the festival was canceled, the Health and Wellness Fair and the Naturalization Ceremony still went on and were conducted inside the Courtyard Theater. She said the decision was made to cancel the festival before all the booths were set up in an effort to avoid the damage that took place at another festival due to flooding several weeks prior. All indoor activities remained the same and anything that could be moved indoors was moved. There was some initial confusion about what parts of the festival were canceled but they worked through that and through social media there were several posts made by the City that let the community know what was going on. Co-chair Katzer said that in the future they hope to have just one main point of contact to communicate any changes in schedules to the City. She said that there was a very nice turnout for the Wellness Fair and that it is obvious there is a need in the community for these services. She said that even in the pouring rain there were about the same number of visitors as in the past, about 4,500-5,000. Only one mammogram appointment did not show up and that person called to say they had car trouble. 18 new voters were registered through the League of Women Voters, and the 72 new U.S. citizens sworn in represented 25 different countries. The Courtyard Theater was fully utilized. At 2 pm the international movie screening took place as scheduled but attendance was very light so they will reevaluate that for next year. The 2019 Plano International Festival will take place on October 12, 2019 and she is concerned that the canceled activities this year may impact the festival sponsors' response next year even though it is the 15th anniversary. She said the vendors had been very understanding and she hopes their response minimizes the loss this year. She further reported that the International Art Exhibit went well and was well-attended. She also reported first that the festival had recently won an award for their green initiatives and that she had won an individual award during the same event.

RECREATION COMMITTEE

Discussion/Report on Table Tennis Tournaments

Recreation Chair Jon Liu reported that the tournament this year is a little later than usual and will be held on December 1, 2019 at 8:30 am at the Tom Muehlenbeck Center. They expect about 100 players and about 300-400 spectators. All are welcome to attend.

PRESENTATION ON REFUGEE CARE INITIATIVE

Presented by Harshika Jha, Varshini Ganesh and Shambhavi Badi

The Refugee Care Initiative (RCI) is a registered non-profit organization that provides a voice for refugees in the DFW, Houston and San Antonio areas. They provide career counseling, educational assistance and food distribution as well as other services. They sponsor families and help provide school and domestic supplies for those in need and who may not be covered by other organizations. They check up on families to monitor their long-term needs. They also have technological platforms where refugee families can connect and communicate and share their experiences. These writings are then collected into books and edited as needed and help make others aware of what is going on in the refugee community. RCI has ESL classes, women empowerment programs and also teaches basics in finance management. The group is hoping to provide long-term solutions and not just temporary fixes and was borne out of the group's volunteer efforts with other refugee programs and the needs they saw there. RCI feels that empowering and educating the community will help individual refugees be able to sustain themselves in their new communities. By reaching out to the refugees they hope to empower these families and to follow their motto of "We rise by lifting others". By providing financial assistance RCI hopes to educate refugees in how to effectively move forward and to give them a platform to be heard. Some of RCI's activities and fundraising efforts include a toy drive during the Eid celebration, bake sales, workshops and sponsorship events. During the summer they had a school backpack project and broke into groups to purchase and distribute backpacks to those in need. Because Dallas and Houston populations have the highest number of refugees RCI has focused their efforts in those areas and also in San Antonio. They also have an app call "Food Start" that works to notify the organization when anyone is running short on food supplies so they can be evaluated and helped. They are currently working in tandem with a number of non-profit organizations and are looking to expand and hope that MCOR can assist them in reaching out to more people and sponsors. Their next event is a documentary that is scheduled to be screened at the Davis Library on November 24 from 2-4 pm. The film is called "Miss Representation" and discusses how women are portrayed in the media. The event is free but asks for donations. More info is at www.youngmindswithpurpose.org.

ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDA

Update on MCOR website

Update on MCOR Facebook page changes

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:25 pm.