



Press Release

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Twin Cities to celebrate World Refugee Day on June 15

St. Paul— “It is important to help others in any way; no matter what position you are in, you can always help someone, sometime.” wrote Honorary World Refugee Day Chair Susan Lien. Every year, millions of individuals and families are forced to leave their homes and build new lives.

The Twin Cities joins the thousands from around the world for World Refugee Day, who take time to recognize and applaud the lives and experiences of forcibly displaced people throughout the world.

Twin Cities World Refugee Day celebrates that Minnesota is home to more than 95,000 refugees. We honor the new traditions and histories that refugees bring to Minnesota.

Gathering at **Wellstone Center (179 Robie St. East, St. Paul) on Saturday, June 15th from 12:00-5:00pm**, World Refugee Day celebrates the diversity of Minnesota while educating and inspiring all who attend. It’s an opportunity for families and people of all ages to:

- See what home means to Minnesota refugees in their native countries, in the refugee camps, and here in their new state.
- Welcome your new neighbors by celebrating the diverse cultures, experiences, and assets they bring to the community.
- Share a fun and vibrant day with your friends and family in the beautiful Wellstone Center

The purpose of World Refugee Day is to give voice to refugee stories, honor their lives and raise awareness of the millions of refugees in the world who have been forced to flee their homes. The annual event is held each year in June by a collaboration of resettlement agencies, community based organizations, for-profit entities and ordinary citizens to recognize refugees' journeys to their new homes through celebration and education.

The 2013 Honorary Chairs of Twin Cities World Refugee Day are:



Mrs. Susan Mezum Lien

Susan came to the United States from Vietnam in 1979 with her husband Hue Van Lien and first daughter. They first came to Iowa, then moved to Minnesota in 1980. In 1983, she graduated from Saint Paul Technical Institute as a computer programmer. Since then, Susan and her husband have raised four successful daughters and become grandparents to two boys, with two more grandchildren on the way this year.

Susan has come to a position in her life where she is able to help others. In the past years, with her husband and family support, she organized many benefits and raised money for causes such as 9/11/01, Hurricane Katrina, the Szechuan Earthquake, the Vietnam Flood, the Haiti Earthquake, the Pearl of Heart, Richfield Shop With a Cop, and most recently, the Hurricane Sandy Relief in collaboration with American Red Cross-MN Chapter.

She loves volunteering for various charities in Minnesota and beyond. Susan and her husband, the owner of Modern Manufacturing & Engineering, Inc., have on-going efforts to support disadvantaged youth in Vietnam and Friends of the Poor, an organization that helps provide education, training and other resources to soon-to-be mothers. She has travelled to Vietnam with Project Health International, an organization that performs cataract surgeries for those who cannot otherwise afford to correct their vision problems.



Chay Douangphouxay

Chay Douangphouxay is an award winning Lao-Khmer American artist/activist from Minneapolis, Minnesota. She uses her art to educate and inspire others to advocate for their communities. Her work has been recognized by the Minnesota Humanities Center and Council on Asian Pacific Minnesotans. Her first solo chapbook, *Remission: Finding Light In the Midst of Social Darkness* was released as part of the 2012 Legacy Fellowship Grant and has been widely utilized as a national educational tool on issues of class, gender, and race.

Chay received her undergraduate degree in English from Metropolitan State University. She is the Co-Founder and Co-Chair of the Twin Cities Chapter of NAPAWF, a national organization working to forge a grassroots progressive movement to advance social justice and human rights for API women and girl.

Amina Saleh – An Immigrant from Somalia, Amina has been an active resident of Minnesota for over 10 Years. Currently a bi-lingual Community organizer at The Family Partnership (formerly known as the Family & Children’s Services) where she is the lead of Somali Youth Violence Prevention Committee in MOVE (Mobilizing Organizing for Victory & Empowerment, a board member of Somali Action Alliance, New American Academy, Police Multicultural Advisory Committee and Secretary at Cedar Riverside NRP Housing, Economic Development & Infrastructure Committee. She is a trained art of hosting facilitator & practitioner for events. Amina brings her knowledge of Immigrant communities, as a tenant organizer work with ACORN and education organizer with Somali Action Alliance to numerous neighborhood groups and initiatives in Twin Cities including the first ever Somali culturally specific Leadership Class in the Country. She is a co-founder of Native American Somali Friendship Committee and The Khadra Project. Amina holds a degree in Business Administration from Lafole University in Somalia & a CPA 1 from Universal Collage in Nairobi Kenya.



Khadra Abdi: An Immigrant from Somalia graduated from Mayo High School in Rochester and Rochester Community College. She is currently a Manager at Surad interpreting services and has been a community activist in Somali community for the past seven years and continues to build strong partnerships with the government, the judicial system, community police and diverse grassroots nonprofit organizations within the Somali and immigrant communities as well as the mainstream community within the Twin Cities. Also she is a co-founder of The Khadra Project.



Angelique Cooper-Liberty Angelique H. Cooper-Liberty was born in Liberia, West Africa. She is a wife, mother and human service administrator. She is also the Founder and Executive Director of Angel Eyes Foundation located in Brooklyn Park, MN. Angel Eyes Foundation is a register 501c3 organization in the state of Minnesota that seeks to create awareness on the danger of drugs and alcohol abuse within the African immigrant community. www.angeleyesfound.org

She lives in Champlin, MN with her husband of ten years Tellek E. Liberty and her Daughter Elise and son Ethan. Angelique holds an undergraduate degree in Human Resource Management and Master’s degree in Health and Human Service Administration.

Twin Cities World Refugee Day is a locally organized festival that celebrates the more than 95,000 refugees living in Minnesota and the diversity of cultures, experiences and assets they bring to our community. Since 2001, people all over the world have celebrated World Refugee Day with events that honor the world’s millions refugees and raise awareness about their continued plight. For more information about the event and refugees worldwide, visit www.tcworldrefugeeday.org.

For more information contact:
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