



Upcoming Events

• 9th Annual National Conference on Health Disparities & 2016 National Environmental Justice Conference and Training Program

Dates: March 9 - 12, 2016

Location: Marriott Marquis Washington, DC

• 10th Annual NCIHC Membership Meeting: A Decade of Working Towards Social Justice

Date: April 1, 2016

Location: Bullock Texas State History Museum, 1800 Congress Ave, Austin, TX 78701

• Summit 2016 - Population Health: Leadership for Building Healthier Communities

Dates: April 6 - 8, 2016

Location: San Diego, CA

• IMIA Annual Conference Medical Interpreters: A Vital Part of Coordinated Health Care Delivery Conference

Dates: April 29 - May 1, 2016

Location: The Joseph B. Martin Conference Center at Harvard Medical School, Boston, MA

Editor's Note

The AHDCConnection is published quarterly on January 31, April 30, July 31 and October 31. We are always looking for stories and information related to efforts to reduce health disparities in Arizona.

Due to space limitations, each article submitted should not be more than 500 words. Notifications of relevant upcoming events, funding opportunities and ideas for community stories are always welcome. The deadline for submission is the 15th of the month prior to the publication date (Dec 15, May 15, June 15 and Sept 15). Please email articles or ideas to hong.chartrand@azdhs.gov.

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ARIZONA'S
LEADING
HEALTH
DISPARITIES
RESOURCE

AHDCConnection



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New Roots · New Life

Hussein Alhamka, a father of two boys and nine girls, has been in the United States since 2009. He and his wife Shreen MrZa raise many of the same crops in Arizona as they did back in Iraq, including several vegetables, melons and wheat. They want to run a 50-acre farm in the future.

Sian Liam Tluangneh came to the United States with his wife and three children in 2010. Back in Burma, Sian grew crops and raised different animals. One day, Sian wants to own a large plot of land where his whole family can work together.

Fatuma Mahat is from Somalia. She is married and has four children: three are in the United States, and one remains in Africa. In her hometown she grew coconut, papaya, mango, corn and many other crops. Her favorite Arizona crop is lettuce, which she uses to make rice salads.

Koffi Ogou is from Togo, Africa. After living in different refugee camps for 17 years, he came to the United States in 2008. He

resettled in Chicago and learned about the farming opportunity in Arizona from his friends and moved to Phoenix in 2010. His dream is to have a farm and ranch with his wife.

The stories could go on. Arizona is one of the states serving the large number of refugees every year. When refugees arrive, they need help to resettle, integrate into the local communities and sustain their lives in their new home. The New Roots Program (NRP) at International Rescue Committee in Phoenix is a farming program to help refugee farming families achieve food security, economic empowerment and self-sufficiency by providing training and technical assistance, and by connecting participants to local resources. The NRP operates four community gardens/urban farms and a farm training program in the Greater Phoenix area.

Since its inception in 2007, the NRP has helped connect over 100 refugees, including (Continued on page 4)

Arizona Sees Big Reduction in Youth Tobacco Use

The Arizona Youth Risk Behavior Survey has some good news for the tobacco prevalence rate among high school aged youth. According to the new data, there was a drop of almost 30 percent between 2013 and 2015. The percentage of youth using tobacco in Arizona dropped from 14.1 percent in 2013 to 10.1 percent in 2015, which translates to a decrease of more than 13,000 high school aged youth who use tobacco.

There are many factors that influence youth tobacco use, one of which is peer pressure. Arizona is working to combat youth tobacco use through the statewide anti-tobacco initiative [Students Taking A New Direction](#) (STAND). There are more than 30 STAND coalitions with more than 300 Arizona youth members around the state that work to educate and inform their peers and their communities about the dangers of tobacco use, and to encourage teens to be tobacco-free. STAND coalitions also work with their local governments to enact policies at the local level to protect their families and friends from secondhand smoke.

(The information is adopted from ADHS

Director Dr. Cara Christ's Weekly News and Updates.)

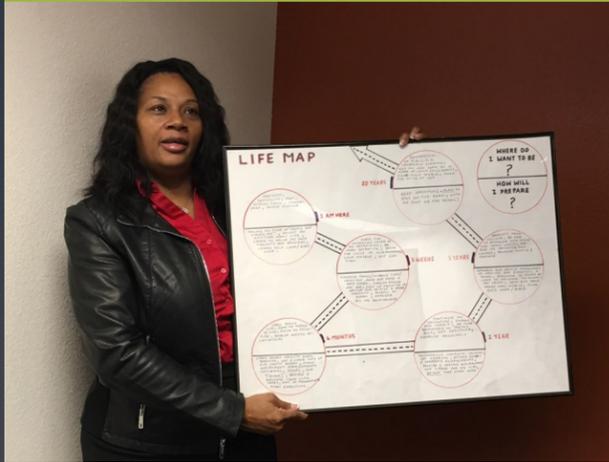
Funding Opportunities

[AstraZeneca HealthCare Foundation: Connections for Cardiovascular Health](#)

Deadline: February 25, 2016
Purpose: to support innovative, community-based cardiovascular health projects.
Eligibility: Local Government, Consortia, Non Profits, Schools/ School Districts, State Government
Range of Awards: \$150,000 - \$180,000

[Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services: Accountable Health Communities](#)

Deadline: March 31, 2016
Purpose: to test whether systematically identifying the health-related social needs of community-dwelling Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries, and address their identified needs impacts those beneficiaries' total health care costs and their inpatient and outpatient utilization of health care services.
Eligibility: City or township governments, For profit organizations other than small businesses, County governments, Nonprofits having a 501(c)(3) status with the IRS, other than institutions of higher education, Native American tribal governments (Federally recognized), Public and State controlled institutions of higher education, Nonprofits that do not have a 501(c)(3) status with the IRS, other than institutions of higher education, Private institutions of higher education
Number of Awards: 44
Total Funding: \$13,304,000
Range of Awards: \$1,000,000 - \$4,510,000



F.A.C.T.S. of Life

By Hong Chartrand

What are the facts of life? Each person may have a different interpretation. Yolanda Robinson gives her interpretation as follows:

F – Facing our fears

A – Adjusting our attitudes

C – Caring for ourselves and others

T – Truth may hurt but also help heal

S – Strengths to break mental and emotional barriers

Yolanda is Founder and CEO of Arizona Facts of Life (AZFOL), a non-profit-organization that helps youth and families grow strong and learn through personal development, academic enrichment and embracing creativity. She created her own life map, which illustrates her life path using the F.A.C.T.S. acronym to help break barriers and thrive. She uses it to set an example for youth and encourages them to create their own life maps using F.A.C.T.S.

Yolanda grew up in the Matthew Henson Housing Project, a poverty-stricken area in South Phoenix, became a teen mother when she was 16 years old and did not graduate from high school. “As a single parent, my mother had to take care of four children and was struggling to put food on the table,” Yolanda says. “My mother really didn’t have time to provide guidance to me.” In order to set an example for her son, who did not like to go to school, Yolanda earned her GED, obtained her associate degree from

South Mountain College and earned her Bachelor’s degree in Family and Human Development from Arizona State University. Although she had already established a comfortable life in a more thriving community, Yolanda decided to move back to her old neighborhood and start AZFOL in 2003 after spending 8 years in the social services field observing the needs of today’s youth while drawing from her own experiences.

“I have longed for this project for a long time, and I was inspired by a 1980’s sitcom called *The Facts of Life*. Four different girls learned how to live together in a private all-girls boarding school under the wing of the Housemother, Edna Garrett, who nurtured them and helped them mature,” says Yolanda. Having lacked guidance when she was teen, Yolanda wanted to help young girls, including her own daughter, so that they would not have to follow her path.

Yolanda convinced six families to place their daughters under her guidance. She used her past experiences in every facet of her organization in an attempt to make the young ladies understand the importance of education and that success was also possible in their lives.

“Education is not just about academics,” says Yolanda. “People can learn from disparities, commitment and real life. (Continued on page 5)



Arizona WIC Translates Client Satisfaction Survey into Somali

By Joan Agostinelli

In 2011, the Arizona WIC Program began to use an online survey in both English and Spanish to monitor its approach to nutrition education in which counseling and advice is offered while listening to and guiding the participant around nutrition-related decisions and behaviors. WIC directors at some clinics noted that they had significant numbers of Somali clients. A review of data showed that there were 540 clients who spoke Somali in 2013, so the program hired a translator. In 2015, the survey was offered in Somali. By 2015 the number of WIC clients who speak Somali had grown to 2,656.

Satisfaction levels among WIC clients tend to be fairly high on most measures, with no significant differences found among those taking

the survey in Somali in terms of wait times; counselors listening to their concerns; staff caring about them; getting to talk about what they want with counselors; feeling welcome; liking WIC foods; or believing that WIC helped them make better choices about feeding their families. However, even though wait times were similar, those who took the survey in Somali were more satisfied with the wait times than those responding in English or Spanish. They were also more likely to say that the counselor was very interested in how their family does things, and that they know how to find all of the WIC foods where they shop.

The WIC program will continue to monitor trends among its clients and seek opportunities to improve services based on client feedback.

New Publications of Interest

- [Always Use Teachback](#)
- [Addressing the Health-Related Social Needs of Low-Income Persons: Funding Sources Available to States](#)
- [Strategies to Increase Access to Dental Care](#)
- [Women's Health Research Roadmap: A Strategy for Science and Innovation to Improve the Health of Women](#)



ADHS Helps out at the Annual Dental Mission of Mercy Event

In early December 2015, the weather turned freezing and gloomy in Phoenix, Arizona, a place known for sunshine and comfortable temperatures. The annual Dental Mission of Mercy (AZMOM) event, hosted by the Central Arizona Dental Society Foundation, took place at the Arizona State Fairgrounds on December 11th and 12th. Thousands of people lined up outside of the Fairgrounds for free

dental care. Over the two-day period, volunteer dental professionals provided dental care to 1,825 patients and performed 13,716 procedures, equal to \$1,944,205 in dental care. It was the first time that some patients received dental care.

This was the fourth annual AZMOM event to help the community’s need for dental care. Arizona residents suffer from higher rates of

dental disease and benefit less from proven preventative methods than residents of other states. A recent survey revealed that 21 percent of Arizona adults and 31 percent of Arizona children have never had a dental check-up. In Arizona, 5 percent of children aged 6 months through 2 years have had tooth decay. (Continued on page 5)



New Roots · New Life (Continued from page 1)

Alhamka, Tluangneh, Mahat and Ogou, with the land in gardens and family farms and has assisted over 200 refugees to start their own businesses or find employment in agriculture. NRP participants produce for both household consumption and markets, and farm produce is sold at six different farmers' markets and multiple retail locations, such as restaurants, stores and Community Support Agriculture (CSA) in the Phoenix area. Incubated and supported by the NRP, Gila Farm Cooperative (GFC) was formed in 2011 to help local refugee farmers work together and give them a big voice. Ogou and Alhamka serve as president and vice-president, respectively. GFC has developed a 180-page color cookbook, produces a weekly newsletter, sold produce to United Healthcare for giveaways to low income community members and has more than 30 active customers getting CSA bags. They hope to open a new CSA drop site location soon.

One challenge for refugee farmers is acquiring sufficient land for farming, says Ogou. He hopes someday he can get his own land on which to grow crops and raise animals.

"The program has enjoyed funding from both private and federal funders," says Timothy Olorunfemi, New Roots Program Supervisor. "The initial funding was provided by the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) between 2007 and 2013. Other funders include the USDA, Steele Foundation and St Luke's Health Initiative (SLHI)."

Olorunfemi says "the program has enjoyed a lot of partnerships in the community." Such partnership helped in producing the Community Garden Policy for the City of Phoenix in 2013. The NRP also partners with Keep Phoenix Beautiful on the PHX Renews Initiative endorsed by the Mayor of Phoenix, Greg Stanton, and a 15-acre empty lot has been turned to a productive piece in the center of Phoenix. The Initiative and NRP jointly hosted the Clinton Global Initiative in 2014, at which President Clinton led a group of about 600 volunteers to work at the garden. The NRP also participates in the Maricopa County Food System Coalition, an initiative of food system stakeholders in Maricopa County.



Ogou (right) and his wife working in the field.

The NRP is currently involved in a corner store conversion project funded by SLHI, in which corner stores in the Phoenix area receive incentives to sell fresh, healthy vegetables. Consumers are encouraged by the match provided through the Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive (FINI) and other private donors, on any fresh vegetables they purchase.



The New Roots is also building an aquaponics funded by Steel Foundation on 1616 W. Camelback Avenue, Phoenix. The project will train refugees and members of the community on growing fish and vegetables in a greenhouse. Seedlings will also be produced to help the farmers.

Left photo: Alhamka driving the NPR tractor.
Right photo: Alhamka and his wife working in the field.

F.A.C.T. of Life, cont.

I want to bring a healthy balance to a whole person physically, emotionally, mentally and spiritually."

AZFOL provides services based on need and meets these needs in the communities. Twelve years have passed, and a total of 700 youth have received services from AZFOL. AZFOL keeps growing: from one employee to 25 employees, 60 volunteers and 2 interns; from serving girls only to serving both girls and boys; from serving youths in South Phoenix to serving youth in other parts of Phoenix and from serving African American youth to serving youth from other race and ethnic groups. Currently, AZFOL has two distinguished projects: abstinence education, serving youths aged 11-17 years old in Avondale, Tolleson and Gila River and leadership development serving youths aged 9-17 years. The latter project exposes youths to colleges and provides college tours outside of Arizona.

"The FACTS house feels like a safe house to me, like I can escape the problems of school and home, even if it's just for a weekend,"

says Andrea Glaza, who has participated in AZFOL activities since she was 11 years old. "I love how close all the girls have come over the years I have been there. I can say that the Arizona of Facts of Life feel like a second family to me."

Speaking of the future, Yolanda plans to begin building the FACTS Ranch in Tonopah in 2016-2017. This new facility will serve as a safe place for more than 150 youth during the organization's retreats and workshops.

"I have admired and respected Ms. Robinson for a number of years for her passion and dedication to youth who may not otherwise be exposed to the positive experiences and education that Arizona Facts of Life offers," says Toni Means, Office Chief of Women's Health at Arizona Department of Health Services. "Ms. Robinson is committed to ensuring that the young ladies and men she works with have access to services that increase the potential for them to have happy, healthy, and productive futures. She is always looking to expand Facts of Life and consistently develops new partnerships to accomplish that goal."

ADHS Helps out at the Annual Dental Mission of Mercy Event, cont.

By the time children reach the age of 11 to 13 years, over 65 percent have experienced tooth decay, and by the time adults reach age 45, more than 99 percent have had decay. Additionally, Arizonans report that one of their major barriers to receiving dental services relates to finances. While 24 percent of Arizonans lack medical insurance, over 44 percent of adults and 38 percent of children lack dental insurance.

The AZMOM event has been focusing on providing free access to dental care while placing a high priority on patients suffering from dental infections or pain, raising public awareness of the increasing difficulty low-income adults and children face in accessing critical dental care and creating health care advocates via the hundreds of lay volunteers participating. The Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS) Office of Oral Health has been a strong supporter of the AZMOM event since its inception in 2012. In addition, the ADHS organized a team to distribute disease-prevention and health-promotion materials at the event.

The AZMOM event provided basic dental care, such as fillings, extractions and cleanings to the patients in need. In addition, the AZMOM event offered limited lab work (i.e., stainless-steel crowns for children, treatment and partials). This year, 100 portable dental units were utilized at the event. Furthermore, 1,467 people volunteered, consisting of 249 dentists, 100 dental students, 371 dental assistants and students, 206 dental hygienists and students, 28 pharmacist and pharmacy students, 25 dental lab technicians, 20 X-ray technicians, 32 medical personnel, 27 vendors/manufacturers and 409 community volunteers. The AZMOM event is considered the largest charitable dental clinic ever held in the state of Arizona.

