



# Celebrating World Refugee Day

*Kristen Cox, Executive Director,  
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**D**EAR READERS:

Summertime in Utah provides many opportunities for children and their families to experience new cultures and learn about all they have to offer. On Saturday, June 16, 2012, many Utahns participated in a World Refugee Day celebration at Granite High School in South Salt Lake and were able to have a rich, cultural experience. It was a day filled with delicious foods from Iraq, the Congo and Burma. We were entertained by folk dancing performed by refugees from Bhutan and Burundi along with traditional dancing performed by refugees from Iran and the Kurdish areas of Iraq. The festival highlighted traditions from 29 countries.

Several volunteer groups provided hands-on experiences for the refugee children, including face painting, mapping games and t-shirt painting. These wonderful volunteers provided healthy snacks and lots of smiles for these budding new members of our community.

As teens answered geographic questions about their birth countries, they earned tickets to throw softballs at the dunking booth. They were particularly excited to dunk the Director of Utah's Refugee Services Program, Gerald Brown.

As we approach the end of the summer and we begin to shift our focus to the beginning of a new school year, our staff will provide support, guidance and direction to students and educational partners who teach and inspire refugees to aim for the target: graduation day and a plan for post high school education.

In October we will be hosting our Youth Refugee Conference. The theme for this year's conference is BRAVE:

**Be  
Ready to  
Achieve  
Victory through  
Education.**

Our hope is to inspire all refugee teens to understand the value of education both today and in the future. Being brave includes making decisions about their future and the impacts that their choices have on themselves and many generations to come.

On behalf of myself and my staff, I want to express my gratitude for the many hours of service that were provided to support World Refugee Day and the successful integration of Utah's refugee community.

SINCERELY,

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