

VIETNAMESE SOCIAL SERVICES OF MINNESOTA

2009 ANNUAL REPORT

We are pleased to provide this report on the activities of Vietnamese Social Services of Minnesota (VSS) in 2009. The report highlights some of our key accomplishments over the past year. In 2009, VSS strengthened its services and developed new programs to advance its mission: “to maintain the identity of the Minnesota Vietnamese community while addressing the basic economic, educational, and health needs of refugees and immigrants statewide.”

I. PROGRAMS

In 2009, VSS provided social, employment, health, and other direct services to over 3,000 Vietnamese, Somali, and Karen refugees and immigrants. In addition, VSS reached many thousands of refugees and immigrants through its education classes, literature, and media campaigns.

Our programs consistently meet or exceed their planned objectives. The following are highlights from our most recently completed program year.

Health Education and Cancer Program

- Bi-monthly health classes on disease, prevention, public health insurance and other topics were attended by an average of 45 community members
- 130 community members participated in a mini health fair
- Health messages and information were broadcast monthly on KFAI radio’s Vietnamese Program
- 615 people were provided with assistance in obtaining cancer screening (primarily breast, cervical, colon, and prostate)



VSS participants in Susan G. Komen Cancer Walk, Mall of America

Self-Sufficiency (Employment and Job Training) Program

- 207 individuals were placed in jobs
- The average hourly wage was \$9.85
- 32 clients completed participated in regular job clubs
- 41 clients completed training in basic computers and internet job searches



Visit to clients placed in jobs in Worthington



Job orientation for VSS clients

English Learning Program

- 193 students participated in ESL classes
- 92% of students advanced at least one English level, and nearly half advanced an additional level
- The program delivered 38,569 student attendance hours



ESL/Citizenship Class



ESL Class

Youth Education and Crime Prevention Program

- 159 Vietnamese and Karen youth participated in the program
- Seventy five percent of youth maintained or improved a positive attitude towards school
- Sixty five percent of youth maintained or improved school grades

- A four-day summer camp was held at Itasca State Park with 24 youth campers.
- 59 program youth cleaned up Newell Park in St. Paul on Earth Day
- 14 youths were placed in volunteer positions at nursing homes and other places
- Youths presented traditional dance and music at the Vietnamese New Year celebrations



Sports Lesson, Kennedy High School



DNR Guide at Itasca State Park

New Refugee Support Project

- Over 100 Karen families were helped to access a mainstream service or public benefit (e.g. health care, health insurance, SSI)
- 139 Karen refugees were placed in jobs or completed a job training course
- Nearly 200 Karen students attended ESL classes



Karen clients receive services at VSS

Elder Program

- 269 elders aged 60 or over were served
- 87% of clients surveyed said that the individual services they received were very helpful in meeting their health, safety and basic needs
- 99% of 150 clients participating in the social activities such as Elder Circles and seasonal celebrations said the activities helped reduce feelings of isolation and depression

- 35 caregivers received education on resources and how to take better care of their elderly parents



Elders visit Mall of America



Elders birthday celebration

II. NEW PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

VSS has added new programs and services, and expanded others:

- Homebound Refugee Elders Project. A project to reach homebound Karen and Vietnamese elders and connect them with resources needed for daily living and health.
- An adult day care program in collaboration with Hmong American Partnership.
- Southeast Asian Children’s Health Insurance Program, a federally-funded collaborative project to enroll uninsured children in public health insurance plans.

III. COMMUNITY RELATIONS

VSS is active in community-wide organizations such as the United Way Council of Agency Executives and the Minnesota Council of Nonprofits. VSS also participates in efforts such as Census 2010.

In order to expand service options and serve the needs of refugee and immigrant families and individuals more comprehensively, VSS participates in numerous partnerships with other social service and health providers, and religious organizations. Among our partners are the St. Paul Community Literacy Consortium, Lyngblomsten Senior Services, HealthPartners International Clinic, the Center for Victims of Torture, Hmong American Partnership, Eldercare Partners, Minnesota SAGE Program, American Cancer Society, Minnesota Cancer Alliance, Lifetrack Resources, public schools, and Vietnamese churches and temples.

IV. STAFF

VSS has a staff of 28 employees – 24 full-time and 4 part-time. The staff has become increasingly diverse as VSS continues to move toward its strategic goal of serving newer refugee

groups. In addition to the Vietnamese staff, Somali and Karen employees are serving the needs of refugee communities.

VSS places a high priority on staff development and encourages participation in training. Over the past year, all program managers and direct service staff have attended workshops and trainings on topics relevant to their programs. Program management, first aide, driving safety, youth services, elder resources, tobacco and smoking policy, and cancer issues are examples of subject areas in which staff have received training.

V. VSS BUDGET

VSS is fortunate to have experienced budget growth even in today’s difficult economic environment. VSS’ income in 2009 reached nearly \$1,800,000. VSS continues to have a well-diversified base of financial support, with grants and contracts from state and federal agencies, counties, the City of St. Paul, the Minnesota Board on Aging, the United Way, and a number of corporations and foundations.

VSS Funding Sources 2009

<p style="text-align: center;">\$100,000 and Over</p> <p>Minnesota Department of Human Services Minnesota Department of Education Minnesota Department of Health U.S. Department of Health and Human Services</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">\$10,000 - \$24,999</p> <p>Hennepin County Community Services Stevens Square Foundation American Cancer Society Otto Bremer Foundation API’s in Philanthropy McNeely Foundation Bigelow Foundation UCare Fund University of Minnesota</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">\$25,000 - \$99,999</p> <p>Metropolitan Area Agency on Aging Minnesota Department of Trade and Economic Development Minnesota Department of Public Safety United Way of Greater Twin Cities Area Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota Foundation St. Paul Foundation McKnight Foundation Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation Bush Foundation Office of Refugee Resettlement</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">\$100 - \$9,999</p> <p>James R. Thorpe Foundation Kopp Family Foundation Delta Dental Foundation Beverly Foundation Wells Fargo Mardag Foundation</p>

VI. SUMMARY

In 2009, VSS grew and expanded its outreach and programs. New projects were established to meet the needs of the refugee and immigrant communities we serve. The budget has increased significantly over the past two years. VSS has developed partnerships with numerous refugee and mainstream agencies. Even in the current difficult economy, VSS is confident of its ability to continue providing relevant, effective, mission-driven programs and services.