

Children, Youth & Family Consortium

CYFC Monthly

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CYFC Graduate Assistant Writes About Experience at U of M's Global Health Case Competition

By Maks Luthra, Graduate Assistant — CYFC

While browsing the Academic Health Center's webpage in November 2015, I noticed information about the [University of Minnesota's Global Health Case Competition](#). This is a unique opportunity for graduate and undergraduate students across disciplines to come together to imagine innovative solutions for 21st century global health issues. And because I'm a graduate student in the School of Public Health, I thought this was a perfect fit for me.

After entering the 2016 competition, I was selected to be a part of a randomly assigned team of six students. My team members were from the University's Medical School, School of Nursing, School of Pharmacy, and School of Public Health. And while I didn't know the coach or any of my fellow team members, I assured myself this would be an amazing experience. Ours was one of 14 teams participating in the competition.

The teams' challenge was a big one — to research and choose one or more locations outside Syria for relocating 4 million Syrian refugees and create sustainable interventions for improving the health and well-being of current and new refugee populations, all within an allocated budget of \$25 million. A major challenge was the five-day time limit to design and prepare our presentation.

For a week in January, after classes or work, we met in a tiny, quiet room in Moos Tower on the Minneapolis campus. There, we spent hours analyzing the case, identifying resources, and developing a sustainable strategy. Coming from different disciplines, we offered different, yet complementary viewpoints for addressing the case.

Because the challenges that refugee Syrian families face are complex, we realized that we needed a solution that integrates promising interventions and diverse perspectives, and that is culturally-sensitive. We did some research and found that the average length of displacement for refugees is 17 years, almost one-third of their lifetime. Therefore, we reached a consensus that our goal must be more than just addressing their immediate food, water, shelter, economic and education needs.

We looked into a policy by United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees that came into force in July 2014 but is still not implemented. It aims to pursue alternatives for refugee camps to remove restrictions so that occupants have the possibility to live with greater dignity, independence and normality as members of the community, either from the beginning of displacement or as soon as possible thereafter. We found the policy very interesting and logical, and thinking along those lines, we proposed establishment of Turkish-Syrian Cooperative, based on community partnerships with local stakeholders that would assist refugees in seamlessly integrating into a host culture and society.

Our team also strongly emphasized providing mental and emotional support services, all of which is in close alignment with the mission and initiatives of the Children, Youth & Family Consortium (CYFC). We presented our recommendations and budget allocation to a panel of judges on January 30. The winning team's strategy included moving the Syrian refugees into camps within Turkey and Jordan, and growing Moringa trees around camps. Moringa is a miracle tree that grows rapidly and has been a successful source for boosting nutritional intake in impoverished areas of Malawi, Senegal and India.

While our team didn't win the competition, this experience taught me that I can work under pressure, use my knowledge and experience to research new challenges, and work collaboratively with team members from disciplines different from my own public health perspective. Sometimes new colleagues bring out the best in you!

Consortium News

CPN Meeting to Explore Implications of Historical Trauma and Microaggressions

Sponsor: Children, Youth, & Family Consortium (CYFC)

Date: April 14, 2016

Location: Minneapolis, MN

CYFC's videos about historical trauma and microaggressions will serve as a starting point for discussion of those topics at the next Cultural Provider Network (CPN) meeting. The two-hour session will feature conversations and brainstorming on ways clinicians can incorporate understanding of historical trauma and microaggressions into their daily work. The session also will feature discussion of ways clinicians can share this understanding with colleagues and clients and work to craft policies that better account for the realities of those who have experienced historical trauma. This promises to be a useful session, whether you have been aware of historical trauma and microaggressions for years or have never heard of these concepts before. All are welcome! Learn more about CPN and the session on the [meeting calendar page of the CPN website](#), and contact [Cari Michaels](#) or [Hanna Getachew-Kreusser](#) to RSVP.

CYFC Releases Video on Promoting the Health of Incarcerated Mothers

In partnership with the [Center for Leadership Education in Maternal and Child Public Health \(MCH\)](#), CYFC has produced a video entitled "[Incarcerated and Pregnant: Promoting the Health of Mothers and Babies](#)." This seven-minute video looks at the effects that prison and jail environments have on pregnant women, as well as innovative efforts supporting the health of incarcerated women and their babies. The video also shares research and practice insights from previous MCH and CYFC events on supporting the health and wellbeing of mothers and their children affected by incarceration. This video is the first in a series about families and children affected by incarceration; [subscribe to CYFC's YouTube channel](#) for future videos.

Why Mental Health and Mental Illness Are Not the Same Thing

Extension Educator [Sara Langworthy, Ph.D.](#) recently presented at a training session for educators sponsored by the Cooperative Educational Service Agency (CESA #11) in Turtle Lake, WI. There, she shared insights from her book, "[Bridging the Relationship Gap: Connecting with Children Facing Adversity](#)," about how stress and trauma affect children and what educators can do to support the mental health of students. Find practical suggestions from educators about promoting mental health in schools in [Dr. Langworthy's blog post](#) about her day with CESA.

To Plant a Garden Is to Believe in Tomorrow

Extension Educator [Judy Myers, M.S., R.N.](#) recently attended the Schoolyard Gardens Conference hosted by the [Minnesota Landscape Arboretum](#), and she shares her thoughts on the valuable lessons shared there

in her recent [blog post](#). Subscribe to the [Healthy Bodies. Healthy Minds. Healthy Learners blog](#) for updates on CYFC's partnership with [Bruce Vento Elementary School](#).

Center for Family Development Announcements

Series of Podcasts Follows Military Family Through Transitions

Sponsor: University of Minnesota Extension Center for Family Development (FD) and Military Families Learning Network

Location: Online

Listen to a conversation with Todd, a lieutenant commander in the United States Navy Nurse Corps, and his wife Peggy, an elementary school teacher, as they share experiences of a military family. This podcast series seeks to help those who serve military families understand the challenges they face. A blog post further exploring each topic accompanies each podcast. Listen to the podcasts on the [Military Families Learning Network website](#).

Podcast on Building Good 'Financial Parenting' Skills

Sponsor: MomEnough

[Marti Erickson, Ph.D.](#), founding director of CYFC, and her daughter, Erin Erickson, recently interviewed [Joyce Serido, Ph.D.](#), associate professor with the U of M Department of Family Social Science and faculty advisor to FD, about ways to help parents build good financial parenting skills and raise kids who are financially competent. Listen to the podcast on the [MomEnough website](#).

Market Bucks Program Benefits Increased

Participants in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) can now get up to \$10 of SNAP benefits matched at participating farmers markets, up from \$5. In addition, [Hunger Solutions Minnesota](#) will be distributing \$10 vouchers that SNAP participants can use at participating markets. Use of the vouchers is being piloted at several winter farmers markets throughout the state. The Center for Family Development has updated its "Find Your Local Farmers Market" maps with locations of winter markets. Learn more about Market Bucks on [FD's Live Healthy. Live Well website](#).

University & Community Announcements

Events to Focus on Social Emotional Learning

Sponsor: University of Minnesota Extension Center for Youth Development

Date: April 6-7, 2016

Cost: Speakers: Free; Training: \$25

Location: Minneapolis, MN and online

Hear Guest Speakers

On April 6, Gina McGovern, product design and innovation specialist at the David P. Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality in Ypsilanti, MI, and [Haviland Rummel](#), executive director at the Susan Crown Exchange in Chicago, will discuss their collaboration, which resulted in the development of a subset of social emotional learning (SEL) skills, practical measures and practice standards, and a theory to support their practices. Learn more and register on the [Center for Youth Development website](#).

Attend Training

On April 7, join Gina McGovern and Haviland Rummel from the preceding day's event (described above) for

an in-depth training on SEL. Participants will acquire information and skills to launch their own SEL initiative. Learn more and register on the [Center for Youth Development website](#).

Final Event Offered in Attachment and Trauma-Informed Practice Series

Sponsor: Wilder Foundation

Date: April 15, 2016

Cost: \$75

Location: St. Paul, MN

Credits: Three continuing education hours

This morning workshop conducted by a team of mental health practitioners will provide supervisors ways of coaching practitioners in skills to involve family members in children's services. Instructors will discuss teaching strategies, coaching strategies, and mentoring strategies. Learn more about the workshop, "[Supervising Trauma-Informed Relational Practice](#)," on the Wilder website.

Conference to Promote Nature's Role in Children and Youth Health, Education, and Development

Sponsor: Children & Nature Network and Minnesota Children & Nature Connection

Dates: May 24-27, 2016

Cost: \$195-425

Location: St. Paul, MN

Join [Dr. Gail Christopher](#), St. Paul Mayor Chris Coleman, and [Richard Louv](#) to hear about the benefits that nature can have on children's physical, mental, and emotional health. Studies also show that hands-on, experiential learning opportunities in nature help improve children's grades, as well as their attitudes and behaviors in school. In addition, meaningful experiences in nature create a foundation for inspiring the next generation of scientists and environmental stewards. Learn more and register on the [Children & Nature Network website](#).

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