



TAXAIN

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The Somali News Link

Lively Art Gala for Refugee Youth a Big Success

By Paige Newman, Somali Family Service

On February 27, Somali Family Service, the San Diego Police Department, Union of Pan Asian Communities (UPAC), and other local organizations took part in Past, Present, Future: ME Art and Culture Gala. The Gala was an inspirational event to raise funds for refugee youth in the East African Youth Organization (EAYO) and San Diego Asian Youth Organization (SDAYO) in the City Heights area. About 150 people attended the lively event, held at the War Memorial Building in Balboa Park, and hosted by San Diego Police Department Pan Pacific Law Enforcement Association (PAN PAC).

EAYO and SDAYO, under the guidance of adults from the organizations involved, and with assistance from San Diego Art Department and other local businesses, spent months creating works of art for the event. Through many different mediums, the participating members portrayed their life stories,

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reconciling their past, present, and future hopes. Art included a photography project, 25 identity canvases, a City Heights mural, and a group of painted letters representing the members and their cultural heritage, their organizations, City Heights and San Diego.



Youth at the Art Gala

The emcee was David Yu of PAN PAC. The guest speaker was Chief of Police Lansdowne, and Assistant Chief Solis presented plaques to the San Diego Police Department staff members involved with the youth groups. Assistant Chief Kanaski was introduced by Chief Solis.

Sergeant Patti Clayton introduced Kanaski's daughter Stephanie Kanaski Van Sloten,

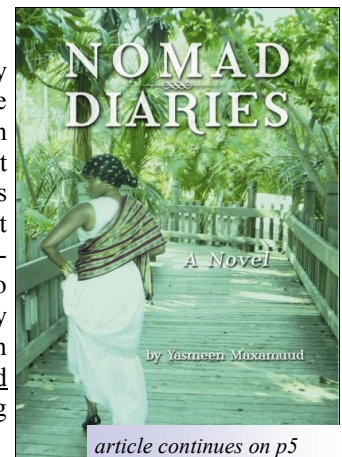
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Nomad Diaries - A Book Review

By Ali Artan, Taxan Newsletter

Yasmeen Maxamuud, the author of Nomad Diaries, is a young and rising star of Somali origin. Nomad Diaries is one -of -its -kind and a must-read novel because it tells vividly the life of a Somali immigrant in transition. The novel may mean different things to different people but there are lessons to be learned for immigrants and non-immigrants alike.

I got my copy from a recently held book reading session at the East African Cultural Center in San Diego. I stared lovingly at its cover for the first few minutes and then started reading it that same evening. The rest is history; for the following two weeks Nomad Diaries was my best friend. Apparently, given the buzz surrounding Nomad Diaries, I am not alone in having fallen under its spell.



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the event organizer, who said, "I consider myself lucky to be surrounded by so many awesome teams. EAYO and SDAYO members are diamonds in the rough and I'm so proud of them." Of her motivation to spend months volunteering her time in preparation for the event, she said, "There were so many talented youth members all with a story to tell."

There were a variety of musical performances including a dragon dance, songs by Paul Hanna, The Pan Asian Pacific Islander Association (PAPIA) doing hula and modern dance, a Laos traditional dance, and breakdancing by Forbidden Skillz. The East African Youth performed Dhaanto, a well-known Somali traditional folk dance which symbolizes joy.

For the opportunity drawing (raffle), local artist Jori Owens donated a few paintings to the cause.



Sergeant Patti Clayton and Muktar Hirsi of SDPD with Youth



Ayan Mohamed & Paige Newman of SFS with EAYO members

Morgan Run Golf Course gave a package for four people, and Monica's at the Park donated a breakfast package for two. Another gift was a tea set with an Asian doll, and Alvarado Institute of Skin Care donated a gift basket and many gift certificates. Cultural finger foods including African sambusas and Asian egg rolls were served by the youth, along with desserts and drinks.

"The successful event was a testament to what the partnership between local nonprofits and the Police Department has done for the refugee youth. Their art and cultural talents were on great display," said Ahmed Sahid, President/CEO of Somali Family Service.

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San Diego is Full of East African Restaurants

By Paige Newman

Many restaurants cater to the approximately 30,000 East Africans in San Diego who like to eat foods that are familiar from their homelands, and also to people of other cultures who like to try ethnic foods. There are several East African restaurants in the City Heights area where numerous East Africans live. Some restaurants serve a mixture of East African and



A Bundle of Sambusas

Mediterranean food. **Mim's Grill** is a newer restaurant open every day for lunch and dinner at 6513 University Avenue. They serve primarily East African food, but also Middle Eastern and Greek,

and Italian dishes like pasta with cream sauce, rice and goat meat, chicken shwarma sandwiches, gyro, salmon and other fish, and of course, sambusas. For dessert they serve a variety of cakes.

Also open daily is **Safari Grill** with Somali and Mediterranean food, at 4990 University Ave #E. They received positive reviews on the Muslim website zabihah.com and also do catering and food to go. For breakfast they have fowl mudammas (cooked garbanzo



East African Restaurants Continued from Page 2

beef chunk or chicken chunk. For lunch and dinner, Safari Grill specializes in goat meat. Other entrees are chicken kabobs and fish or spinach with rice or spaghetti, gyro, and chicken sandwiches, all served with salad.

African Spice in Safari Market at 54th and University Ave. has East African and Mediterranean food seven days a week. Breakfast includes sambusa, liver, beef, eggs, injera, and more. For lunch they serve rice, spaghetti, goat meat, beef, chicken, fish, and cooked vegetables and other things. At dinner time you will find breads, and sandwiches with chicken, beef and fish. They just started to serve gyro and have Somali sweets.

Another East African and Mediterranean restaurant is **Farida's** Bistro at 1754 Euclid Ave., which serves homemade bread, sambusas, beef and chicken kabobs, salads and other meals, and Somali traditional desserts. They are open daily for breakfast lunch, and dinner.

There are many Ethiopian restaurants in San Diego. **Red Sea** at 4717 University Avenue serves lunch and dinner daily but is not open for lunch on Mondays. Specialties include meat or vegetarian combination plates that include 3 or 4 items such as lentils, green vegetables, salad, and of course, the wonderful injera bread.

Awash Ethiopian Restaurant, at 4979 El Cajon Boulevard, is open daily for lunch and dinner. Specialties are beef, chicken, lamb, vegetarian combinations with lentils and red peas, salad, and injera. For dessert they have baklava, organic Ethiopian wine and beer.

In the University Heights area, you'll find **Harar Ethiopian Restaurant** at 2432 El Cajon Blvd., open every day except Sunday for lunch and dinner. They have an all-you-can-eat buffet every Friday from 6-10 pm. They serve the typical combo plates, but no dessert.

Nearby is **Muzita Abyssinian Bistro** (Ethiopian/Eritrean), at 4651 Park Blvd., a more upscale restaurant with good vegetarian options, homemade desserts, wine and other drinks. For Eritrean food, try **Asmara** at 4155 University Ave. with entrees similar to Ethiopian cuisine.

At the **East African Cultural Center** on Fairmount, there is a new coffee shop with a Mind Games Club every day starting at 4 pm. People can play chess, checkers, ludo and other African games, and anyone can bring African games and teach them. For more info, contact Awichu Akwanya at 942-0432 or agaawichu@yahoo.com.

There are more restaurants than those featured here, so enjoy a taste of Africa right here in San Diego while supporting local businesses! For more info about local East African businesses, contact Somali Family Service at 619-265-5821.



Somali Dishes

Language Access Conference

By Ralph Achenbach, Chairperson San Diego Refugee Forum

A conference on language access in health care will focus on the challenges refugees face in getting quality care. "Collaborating for Healthy Communication," planned by the San Diego Refugee Forum for Friday, April 9, at Cuyamaca College, will bring together stakeholders to examine the issue more closely and assess possible solutions.

For refugees resettled in the U.S., language is often the biggest barrier to accessing health care. If you don't speak the language of your doctor, and your doctor doesn't speak yours, the effectiveness of even the most advanced medical technology is compromised. It is nearly impossible to relate your health history to the doctor, and equally challenging for your doctor to make a diagnosis and recommend a treatment plan. Not to mention the difficulties when calling to make or reschedule an appointment. As a result, many refugees in San Diego, and throughout the U.S., do not access primary care or preventive measures, see treatments delayed or carried out inappropriately, and end up unsure as to how to take medications. Consequently, health for the individuals concerned and the community as a whole suffers, and when medical care has to be sought, it is mostly in an emergency setting – even for chronic complaints – hugely inflating the cost of care.

The April 9 conference will feature workshops on a variety of topics relating to linguistically and will bring together health care providers, plans and refugee patients.

Admission to the conference is free. More information and online registration is at www.SDRefugeeForum.org/conference.

Somali Family Service is proud to be part of a coalition of agencies addressing an unaccounted-for refugee population during the April 2010 census. The East African population is encouraged to fill out and return the census forms they will receive in the mail. For information, contact Mohamed A. Hassan at 619-864-5245 or Somali Family Service at 619-265-5821.

Project Refuge is a new program sponsored primarily by Somali Family Service and Dory Beatrice, LCSW, volunteer, representing various Rotary Clubs in San Diego, and other interested people. The project will be facilitating social and financial independence for East African asylees who have suffered extreme violence, torture and persecution in their homelands by providing safe housing and a network of community services.

For more info, contact Somali Family Service at 619-265-5821.



New Program Helps East African Refugees with Microenterprise Opportunities

By Ayan Mohamed, Business Counselor, SFS

I am the newest employee of Somali Family Service, serving as a Business Counselor in partnership with the Union of Pan Asian Communities (UPAC) Program for Investment in Microentrepreneurs (PRIME) program. It is estimated that there are about 30,000 East Africans in San Diego and of that, 15,000 are from Somalia. A large percentage of these families are on public assistance. Somalis are known for being entrepreneurial and thus are a good fit for this program which helps them start businesses.

The Somali Family Service Economic Development Program helps the East African refugee and immigrant community in San Diego to start a new small business, or expand or better maintain their current business. All the services we offer are free of charge to the community, and anyone interested is encouraged to contact us. The Economic Development program SFS works with is grateful for the

support of other community organizations and businesses.

We can help those who would like to start a business in two ways. We assist with opening a family/child care facility or with starting a business that is non-child care related.

With the family/child care facility, we'll guide that individual by giving step-by-step directions as to what requirements are needed to obtain their licenses.

We would first provide basic information such as: orientation info, CPR, first aid and preventive health info, and child care training info. Secondly we'll assist in filling out the application, pre-inspect the home, handle fingerprinting info, assist with business management and anything else the individual may need in maintaining their new business.

For those who are interested in starting a business not related to child care, we provide basic

information about licenses, permits, setting up a business plan and doing business development, and then move on to harder issues such as bookkeeping and taxes.

For anyone who is interested in starting a business, who has questions about their current business, or would just like some more information, please feel free to stop by the office at 6035 University Ave #6, call 619-265-5821, or email me at amohamed@sfsd.org.

Somali Family Service President/CEO Ahmed Sahid won one of two local hero awards for Black History Month in San Diego. See the short video at:

<http://www.kpbs.org/videos/2010/feb/02/4662/>



By Ali Artan

Do you like amazing Mediterranean food? Garden Fresh Grill & Smoothie is seriously the place for you. Overall the place is great, the staff is nice and I got the feeling they are as proud of the food as I was happy to eat it. Located near SDSU, inside VONS shopping center, at 6165 El Cajon Blvd.

Last night, I ate at Garden Fresh. I got chicken kabob — it was tender, juicy and tasty. The hummus and baba ghanouj (roasted eggplant) were amazing...as were the salad and lentil soup. Everything was fresh and very flavorful. I didn't have room to try the shawarma and the grape leaves, but they will be part of my next visit.

Also, Garden Fresh has a Smoothie & Juice Bar and offers a variety of premium smoothie and juice drinks to promote a healthy lifestyle.

This is an ideal place to take a friend or family for lunch or dinner, for a smoothie or juice drink, as it has a wide variety of fresh food and drinks, and great service.

More info on pg7

Taxan Newsletter will soon launch a new section for youth activities. Stay tuned.

Contributors Needed!!



Nomad Diaries Continued from pg1 *By Ali Artan*

March, 2010

Maxamuud's unique style of storytelling has already touched some nerves among its readers, as a firsthand experience of immigrant lives. Taxan Newsletter got the opportunity to sit down and interview the author.

Taxan: Yasmeen, what was the reason that you wrote Nomad Diaries?

Yasmeen: I wrote Nomad Diaries so that stories about the Somali Diaspora community are told. I started writing about seven years ago out of a desire to communicate an issue in an article format. After that I began to read and write more. At the time I was reading a lot of gloomy books about Africa. A few that come to mind are King Leopold's Ghost's About the Congo and The Graves Are Not Yet Full about Rwanda, to name a few. As I read these books I began having one-way conversations with myself and started writing responses to these questions. These responses became long accounts of what I was thinking at the time. Then September 11 happened. And my entire world was affected by that. As I emerged from my new world, I looked for books that spoke to me, and there were none. I wanted to read about the Somali Diaspora community, I wanted books that were written by people from home and in particular I wanted to read books from a Somali woman's perspective. In a nutshell it's the reason I wrote Nomad Diaries, to contribute to the Somali literature from the perspective of a Somali novelist and to give others like me a choice of books.

Taxan: Is the book based on a true story or did you create the plot?

Yasmeen: The story is fictional, and the characters are fictional. But it is based on stories that were shared with me while doing research. Although the novel is fiction, the stories in Nomad Diaries are very much similar to what has transpired when the civil war in Somalia broke. I actually receive many responses and emails of people who say some of the story lines are similar to their own lives.

Taxan: A project with such magnitude must have been difficult to accomplish. Who assisted you along the way in making Nomad Diaries a reality?

Yasmeen: Writing a book is a tall order for anyone. Nomad Diaries was a very challenging and yet rewarding project. And I had many people who had a hand in the project to see the light of day. Family, friends, colleagues and the larger Somali community have all been a huge part of this book and I am immensely grateful to many.

Taxan: The novel has been out for a relatively short time -- what kind of feedback have you been getting?

Yasmeen: The feedback has been overwhelming, and sometimes unbelievable. I think a book of this magnitude by one of their own has made the larger Somali community across the globe proud. The reaction has been positive and extremely well received. But what makes me proud is the fact that the book has created a dialogue on issues that the community sometimes shuns away from. It has also served as a historical reference for many who were too young to understand the Somali civil war and the lives of war victims before the war. From the outpouring, I find many are very nostalgic and in awe of their own culture and community as a result.

Taxan: What would you tell to those who have not had the opportunity to read the novel yet?

Yasmeen: I would encourage non Somalis to read the book so that they begin to understand the Somali community better. Nomad Diaries is a human story that touches on many human issues. In more ways than one it's an American story through the eyes of an immigrant. In some ways

Nomad Diaries transcends ownership of one community. War is a global phenomenon and its effects are global for that reason everyone should read Nomad Diaries.

Taxan: Finally, any advice to the Somali youth who may have a passion for writing but are unsure whether that is a possibility?

Yasmeen: One of the reasons I wrote Nomad Diaries is to encourage all, but in particular the Somali youth. If you don't tell your own story someone else will tell it on your behalf and that person may tell a distorted account of you. For that reason we need to tell our own stories, we need to share it with the world and remember your story matters.

Another reason to write is currently the Somalis are known as poets, the Somali literature is a rich one and we need to add to the richness by writing books on poetry, stories and even non-fictional accounts of the community. The need is massive for our own stories to be told, and with a lot of hard work and persistence, you can see your books published.



Copyright © 2009 Nomad Diaries



Save the Date: Saturday, June 19



**For the Second Annual
Somali Family Service Health Fair
in Honor of World Refugee Day
at City Heights Community Park**



More information to come!



GARDEN FRESH GRILL & SMOOTHIE

MEDITERRANEAN CUISINE – SMOOTHIE & JUICE BAR

Halal meat لحم حلال

Garden Fresh Grill & Smoothie is an authentic Mediterranean/Lebanese restaurant providing the freshest and highest quality healthy foods with the finest ingredients. It is a family owned and operated. The restaurant opened for business in September 2009. It is open daily, 8am to 9pm, and serves breakfast, lunch and dinner for dine-in or take-out. Located at Campus Plaza Shopping Center on El Cajon Blvd., near San Diego State University.



Garden Fresh Grill & Smoothie's menu offers a variety of food items and focused on fresh ingredients, including many vegetarian choices. Traditional Mediterranean foods



are featured with flavor and herbs, including Shawarma, Gyros, Kabobs, falafel, hummus, baba ghanouj, tabouli, spanakopita, kibbie and grape leaves (dolmas). There are also zaatar pie, cheese pie, meat pie and spinach fatayer baked fresh daily. Also there are several sandwich choices with pita bread and several side salad choices and full meal Mediterranean salads topped with a variety of meat items. All food items are freshly prepared and made to order.

Recently, the restaurant started daily special menu including Makloubeh مقلوبة, Baked Kafta كفته, Sayadieh صيادية سمك, Kouzi قوزي, Kabsh كبسة, Stuffed Grape Leaves, Cabbage and Squash محاشي, and Mensaf منسف. At Garden Fresh, a selection of deserts including baklava, warbat, kinafa, mamoul and harisa.



The Smoothie and Juice Bar at Garden Fresh offers a variety of high-quality, premium smoothie and juice drinks. It includes both fruit and vegetable drinks. The restaurant is comfortable and attractive setting for very good food and hospitality, with affordable prices.

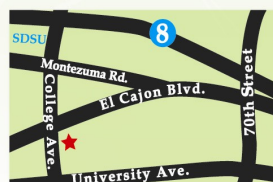


Phone: 619 287-2373

6165 El Cajon Blvd, Suite F
San Diego, CA 92115

(Vons Shopping Center, corner of
College Ave & El Cajon Blvd)

www.gardenfreshsd.com





Events Calendar

San Diego Refugee Forum presents “Collaborating for Healthy Communication— A Conference on Language Access in Health Care” on April 9, 2010 from 9:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. at Cuyamaca College. Register at sdrefugeeforum.org/conference.html

The San Diego Refugee Forum meets the third Tuesday of each month from 10:30 a.m.—noon at 5348 University Ave. For more information, the website is www.sdrefugeeforum.org.

The biweekly meeting of **Somali Student Council** (SSU) will be held every other Thursday at SDSU, location varies — contact Abdirahiin (Hawada) for updates at (619) 410-7988.

Save the Date – Saturday, June 19 is the Second Annual **Somali Family Service Health Fair** in Honor of World Refugee Day at City Heights Community Park. More information to come.

San Diego SomaliTV broadcasts every Friday @ 10:00 p.m. For further info, contact Abdisalam, the head of SD SomaliTV at sdsomalitv@hotmail.com.

Iftin Charter Board meets the first Friday of each month @ 5:00 p.m. For further info contact Dr. Mohamed at (619) 265-2411. Event is open for the public unless otherwise is announced.

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