



# THE SURVIVOR

## Walking Tall: A SURVIVORS' Client Makes Great Strides

\*Abraham is a bright and serious young man from East Africa who requested asylum at the border. He has been in the United States for less than a year. In his home country, Abraham suffered torture that left him with muscle problems and back pain. He doesn't want to say more about it. Once in the United States, though he was safe for the moment and hopeful about the asylum process, he was left with many problems and worries. Abraham soon realized that with his status as an asylum seeker, he did not have access to the services that asylees (those who have already been granted asylum) and refugees have. What could he do in this new country, where English is not his native language? Then his attorney referred him to SURVIVORS, the only organization in San Diego that provides social services to asylum seekers. "I got hopes of life when I got here," he says. He has used just about all of SURVIVORS' services, including medical and psychological evaluations for his legal case and medical diagnostics and treatment for his health. He has also re-

*This is my only family here. I belong here. - \*Abraham*

ceived therapy and participated in healing club activities. In addition, physical therapy through Sharp Rehabilitation has helped his muscle problems greatly although he still suffers from back pain. "They give me an exercise to strengthen my muscles. If I have to pay from my pocket, it is thousands of dollars that

I am unable to pay." For now, he concentrates on healing and waits to see what decisions will be made about his future.

He is also one of the lucky few who has received a work permit, so he's trying to get a job through SURVIVORS' partnership with the Department of Rehabilitation. When asked what he would have done if he hadn't heard about SURVIVORS, he says, "It could have been difficult for me without SURVIVORS. I get everything here: medical, recreational, vocational." Abraham has now referred other survivors to our office. He knows he is not alone in his situation and appreciates the help. "I know how valued it is to me and how it matters to me. It's not just me. It is to all people."

*\*Name changed to protect client's privacy*

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## United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture Visits SURVIVORS



*Kathi Anderson, Executive Director of SURVIVORS (left) and Laurence Andre, UNVFVT Officer*

United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture (UNVFVT) Officer Laurence Andre conducted a courtesy visit at SURVIVORS on October 1, 2010. Ms. Andre spent half the day touring our facilities, hearing from staff and clients about the services we provide, and reviewing finances and procedures. SURVIVORS has been a grantee of these funds for over ten years.

The UN General Assembly created this fund in 1982 with the purpose of receiving and distrib-

*UNVFVT, continued on page 3*

## SURVIVORS and the California Consortium Take Case to Sacramento

In commemoration of the United Nations' International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, members of the California Consortium of Torture Treatment Centers (CCTTC) traveled to Sacramento June 24 for a day of advocacy efforts on behalf of torture survivors and torture treatment in the state. Executive Director Kathi Anderson and Government Affairs Director Timothy Griffiths represented SURVIVORS at the events.

The day began with a policy briefing for legislators and legislative staff at the State Capitol. Through a series of short presentations, CCTTC members emphasized the prevalence

of torture survivors in California, explained the concepts behind torture treatment, pointed out California's particular strength in the torture treatment field and a number of areas in which state policies impact the ability of torture survivors to heal and thrive in the Golden State.

Without a doubt, however, the star panelist was a North African torture survivor and former client of SURVIVORS who testified about the challenges and rewards of seeking refuge in California. The client described fleeing to San Diego and finding herself utterly alone, terrified of being returned to her home country and haunted by flashbacks of what had been done to her. She dialed 411, asked for

*CCTTC, continued on page 4*

## Mission Statement

### Survivors of Torture, International:

- Facilitates the healing of torture survivors and their families;
- Educates professionals and the public about torture and its consequences;
- Advocates for the abolition of torture.



## Reflections on Resiliency

By Jeanette Barrack, board chairperson, and Kathi Anderson, executive director

All of our clients have suffered serious losses, with trust in their fellow human beings being one of the most damaging. How can people recover from the cruelty they have endured? What makes possible the resiliency we see in our clients?

Many call on their faith in God, their love of their children and their desire to carry on the legacy of their family and friends. But most need help on their journey. They need to believe that there are other people in the world who do care about them.

Survivors of Torture, International was founded with the mission of facili-

tating the healing of torture survivors and their families. We provide a safe place for torture survivors, many of whom are asylum seekers in this country. We provide essential, practical help through which clients can navigate the legal system and get their basic needs met.

Our caring, professional staff members, contractors, and volunteers provide the human, emotional support and caring that is just as essential. We all are honored to be companions who walk with our clients as they move toward a brighter, more hopeful future. •

*Survivors of Torture, International's*

### Board of Directors

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## About Us

### Survivors of Torture, International

Survivors of Torture, International was incorporated in February 1997 in response to a need in our community to bring assistance to the segment of the population that struggles with the wounds of politically motivated torture. It is estimated that at least 11,000 survivors of torture live in San Diego County and 500,000 live in the United States. Torture survivors may be left with lifelong physical and mental health problems if not treated by trained professionals.

Since 1997, SURVIVORS has engaged a caring network of professionals — board members, interpreters, therapists, physicians, dentists — and all of you in the community who give support and encouragement in many ways. Your support enables us to help torture survivors rebuild their lives. Treatment helps survivors heal, reconnect with their families, go back to school, and find employment.

**Ninety-one cents of every dollar raised goes directly to SURVIVORS' programs.** Our Federal Tax ID Number is 33-0743869. Learn more at [www.notorture.org](http://www.notorture.org). •

## Contact Information

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UNVFVT, from page 1

uting voluntary contributions to nongovernmental organizations and treatment centers that serve victims of torture whose human rights have been severely violated as a result of torture, as well as for the funding of projects that train healthcare professionals specializing in the treatment of victims of torture.

At SURVIVORS, these funds are vital to allowing us to provide critical healing services for victims of torture, such as psychiatric services, medical care and treatment, and dental care. It also supports our work in providing psychological evaluations, which are critical to the client's asylum application. •

## ~Relax~

Would you like to feel more relaxed? At times we can all feel stress or anxiety that makes it hard to concentrate or sleep. Here in The Healing Corner we offer one method that you can try. This is not meant to be in place of therapy or a way to deal with serious trauma, but rather a way to take a break and try to relax.

Our clinical staff recommends this simple technique: sit or stand in a comfortable position with one hand on your chest and one hand on your stomach. Breathe in and out and feel your stomach and chest rise and fall with each breath. Concentrate on your breath and try to make each exhalation or breath out last longer than your breath in. See if you can count higher when you're breathing out than when you're breathing in. Try using a word like 'calm' or 'relax' silently while you exhale. If you have other thoughts in your head besides your relaxing word, try to picture them floating away with every breath as you exhale. Continue to concentrate on your breath for several minutes until you feel calmer and more relaxed.

What ways do you like to relax? Let us know (619-278-2421 or survivors@notorture.org) and we will share some responses in an upcoming edition of our newsletter. •

*...breathe in... breathe out...*

## The Healing Corner

### SURVIVORS Welcomes 2010-2011 Clinical Interns



Katherine Gemmell (left) and Lucila Jasso, Clinical Interns for 2010-2011.

SURVIVORS welcomes Lucila (Lucy) Jasso and Katherine Gemmell as clinical interns for the 2010-2011 school year. Lucy and Katherine are Masters in Social Work candidates at San Diego State University. Katherine is simultaneously pursuing a Masters in Public Health.

Lucy is engaging in direct individual and group therapy with an emphasis on working with children, youth and families under the supervision of SURVIVORS' senior mental health clinician, Trish Hilliard. Prior to pursuing her MSW degree, Lucy worked with victims of domestic violence and youth in the foster care and juvenile justice system. "I'm really enjoying my experience at SURVIVORS. It is teaching me a great deal about the resiliency

### Stay Up-to-Date and In-Touch with SURVIVORS Online

You probably know about SURVIVORS' website ([www.notorture.org](http://www.notorture.org)), but did you know that you can also find us other places online? For example on Facebook, on Twitter, on LinkedIn, and on Youtube (see sidebar). We update these online communities on an ongoing basis to let people know what is going on with our organization and our community, and we also keep people informed about torture and survivor news in the world.

In keeping with our online presence, we also have a monthly e-newsletter (in addition to our regular paper newsletter) in which we mention upcoming events and current news about SURVIVORS. If you are not receiving the e-newsletter and would like to, please sign up at [www.notorture.org](http://www.notorture.org) or contact Suzanne (619-278-2421 or [sbacon@notorture.org](mailto:sbacon@notorture.org)) to make sure that your e-mail address is up-to-date.

In the near future, to save on printing costs and paper, SURVIVORS will give supporters the option of receiving the paper newsletter via email or regular mail or both. If you would like to receive only an electronic copy of this newsletter, please let Suzanne know.

We really appreciate your support and your interest in SURVIVORS. Please be sure to let us know if your address changes so you can continue to receive our updates and news. •

of the human spirit and the healing power in connecting with others and building relationships," says Lucy.

Katherine is undertaking medical case management and patient advocacy under the supervision of SURVIVORS' medical services coordinator, Ramsey Salem. "Working at SURVIVORS has been one of the most challenging and rewarding experiences of my life. Each client brings his or her own unique set of concerns, but also each person brings a unique perspective from their experiences that help me to grow personally." Katherine has previous experience working with at-risk youth in group homes and completed a four-year tour in the U.S. Navy.

SURVIVORS' staff greatly appreciates all their efforts and dedication to our organization. •

#### SURVIVORS Online

[www.notorture.org](http://www.notorture.org)

[www.facebook.com/notorture](http://www.facebook.com/notorture)

[www.twitter.com/notorture](http://www.twitter.com/notorture)

## Client Demographics

**74** new clients were served  
May 1, 2010 - Sept. 30, 2010

### Geographic Origins

Africa	51
Asia	2
Eastern Europe	1
Latin America	7
Middle East	13

Ages	Gender	
0-20	9	Males 46
21-30	47	Females 28
31-40	12	
41-50	4	
51-60	2	
61 +	0	
Detained	38	
Non-detained	36	

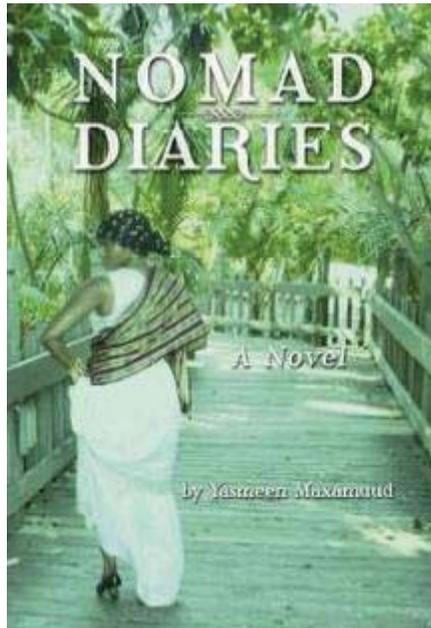
CCTTC, from page 1 help, and wound up with a referral to SURVIVORS. Here she found a friendly, caring, and understanding community as well as counseling that enabled her to manage the lingering impact of the torture she had endured. The client has gone on to study nursing, a field she hopes will allow her to help others.

Among the audience were Assembly Members Lori Saldaña and Ira Ruskin, as well as key staffers for Senator Christine Kehoe and Senate President Pro Tem Darrell Steinberg.

Following the briefing, CCTTC members went to individual legislators' offices. Anderson and Griffiths met with staff of legislators in the San Diego area: Assembly Members Saldaña, Mary Salas, Marty Block, and Joel Anderson, as well as Senator Kehoe. Other CCTTC members met with Los Angeles and Bay Area representatives.

The CCTTC is an informal network of eight torture treatment programs active in California: Survivors of Torture, International (San Diego); the Program for Torture Victims (Los Angeles); the Torture Survivors Project at the Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles (Los Angeles); the Institute for Redress and Recovery at Santa Clara University School of Law (Santa Clara); the Center

## Book Review of *Nomad Diaries: A Novel* by Yasmeeen Maxamuud



If you're looking to gain a deeper appreciation of the genuine Somali experience, we recommend picking up *Nomad Diaries: A Novel* by Yasmeeen Maxamuud. Herself Somali and now living just north of San Diego, Maxamuud's book is fiction, but the narrative clearly draws its inspiration from people, places and events that the author knows well.

The story begins in Somalia in the late 1980s, a spectacularly beautiful country blessed with a rich, multi-faceted culture derived from its location at the tip of the Horn of Africa, a hub for many trading routes. But bitter resentment and tension born of tribal prejudice, corruption and huge disparities in wealth seethe just below the surface and suddenly explode in a frenzy of killing, looting, and yes, torture. As

a result, the book's surviving main characters flee, making the perilous jour-

ney to refugee camps and from there eventually to the United States. It's a harrowing experience, and it's only the beginning. The bulk of *Nomad Diaries* chronicles the protagonists' struggles to find success and happiness here.

This is no Hollywood refugee fairy tale and there are no heroes. Refugee camp volunteers, resettlement workers, social workers, ESL teachers—all range from negligently naive to outright malicious in Maxamuud's rendering. And, perhaps surprisingly, Maxamuud saves some of her harshest judgments for her compatriots. Confronted with exceptionally tragic and challenging lives, Maxamuud's Somali characters respond just as any human beings would: with goodness, strength and resilience to be sure, but also with prejudice, recrimination, selfishness and shame.

It is this unvarnished tone that makes Maxamuud's book particularly powerful. This book is a great way to understand the experience that refugees may go through, and in particular, torture survivors. The Somali community deserves all the fascinating nuance that an insider's portrait like *Nomad Diaries* delivers. •

*"This is no Hollywood refugee fairy tale... The Somali community deserves all the fascinating nuance that an insider's portrait like Nomad Diaries delivers."*

for Survivors of Torture at Asian-Americans for Community Involvement (San Jose); the Institute for the Study of Psychosocial Trauma (Menlo Park); Survivors International (San Francisco); and the Center for Justice and Accountability (San Francisco). •



Yasmeeen Maxamuud, author of *Nomad Diaries: A Novel*

## State Boycott of Energy Sector Will Help Promote Iranian Human Rights Reforms

A new California law, co-authored by San Diego area Assembly Members Marty Block (D-San Diego) and Joel Anderson (R-La Mesa) adds California's economic clout to calls for human rights reforms in Iran.

To be known as the "Iran Contracting Act of 2010," the new law prohibits individuals and

companies with more than \$20 million invested in the Iranian energy sector from bidding on public contracts worth more than \$1 million in the state of California.

"There are moral and reputational reasons for this state and local governments to not engage in business with

foreign companies that have business activities benefiting foreign states, such as Iran, that commit egregious violations of human rights, proliferate nuclear weapons

capabilities, and support terrorism," the act states. "The human rights situation in Iran has steadily deteriorated in 2009, as punctuated by transparently fraudulent elections

and the brutal repression and murder, arbitrary arrests, and show trials of peaceful dissidents."

While the law does not mention the practice explicitly, there are widespread reports, including from within the Iranian government itself, that the post-election crackdown has included

the use of torture. SURVIVORS is hopeful that California's new law will help to end this practice.

"Because we witness the human consequences of torture firsthand, it is incumbent upon us to stand up against the use of torture wherever and whenever it takes place," SURVIVORS' Government Affairs Director Timothy Griffiths said during testimony to the legislature in support of the law. "SURVIVORS supports this legislation as an important moral and economic stand by the people of California against the abuse of human rights, including torture, in Iran."

SURVIVORS thanks Assembly Members Anderson and Block for their key roles in helping to enact the new law. •

*It is incumbent upon us to stand up against the use of torture wherever and whenever it takes place.*

## SURVIVORS and "Better Giving" Through The San Diego Foundation

Survivors of Torture, International and other nonprofits were honored at a reception in September for being "early adopters" of The San Diego Foundation's new BetterGiving program. SURVIVORS was one of the first nonprofits to complete a profile in giving for this new donor-centered program which allows members of the community and granting agencies the chance to get an in depth look at nonprofits.

Each profile includes information about a nonprofit's program goals, finances, and governance. Bob Kelly, the CEO of the foundation, reported that more granting agencies will be requiring nonprofits to have a profile as part of the grant application process. This will save

nonprofits the time of filling out the same information for multiple agencies. It will save paper, too.

It also serves an important role by providing an easy way for individuals to investigate nonprofits they may be considering supporting.

"As one of Survivors of Torture, International's values is transparency for both donors and the community-at-large, we jumped at the chance to be involved in the San Diego Foundation's BetterGiving Program. We believe it has the potential to improve philanthropic giving for not only SURVIVORS but also for the greater nonprofit sector," said SURVIVORS' executive director, Kathi Anderson. •

Check out our profile at <http://bettergivingsd.guidestar.org>

### SURVIVORS' Wish List

- Financial donations to support our programs
- Pro bono dentists
- Pro bono female doctors to do medical evaluations
- East County clinicians (therapists, psychologists, LCSWs and MFTs)
- Grocery store gift cards to help our clients and their families meet their basic needs
- Monthly bus passes
- Blank note cards that we can use to send encouraging words to detained asylum seekers
- Tickets to outings or events for clients
- Volunteer drivers to take clients to appointments.

Please contact Suzanne if you can help (619-278-2421 or [sbacon@notorture.org](mailto:sbacon@notorture.org)). Thank you for any contribution you can make.



# BetterGiving

*The more you know, the better the gift.*

The San Diego Foundation

*Thank you to all of our community supporters who donate their time, skills, and goods*

## Individual Supporters

Anonymous	Lydia Grympa	George Longstreth	Preetha	Mark & Tracey
Joyce Anderson	Nancy Hoover	Jan & John McKeel	Ramakrishnan	Tatch
Mark Berger	Gordon Hunt	Roxane Morid	Cecily Resnick	Jessica Vallejo
Bradley D. Bourey	David Irwin	Phillip Musser	Zachary Rivera	Matt Villaluz
Dennis Bucko	Christian Kastner	Pat Olafson	Holly Salzman	Stefanie Yan
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Virginia Dunn	Svjetlana Lazic	Deanna Price	Susan Silver	
Timothy S. Griffiths	Natasha Lee	Homa Rafii	Hema Singh	
			Ashley Spong-Reitzin	



## Companies and Organizations

Ben & Jerry's, Seaport Village	Museum of Photographic Arts, San Diego
Birch Aquarium, San Diego	Presbyterian Urban Ministries, San Diego
Chinaberry, Inc.	Qualcomm Incorporated, San Diego
City Heights Wellness Center	SeaWorld
Easter Seals of South San Diego County	Starbucks Coffee Store 6716
Google, Incorporated	USD Institute for Nonprofit Education & Research
Henry's Farmers Market- Pacific Beach, Santee	Von's Grocery Store- Mission Hills, Point Loma
Ignatian Volunteer Corps	
Latham & Watkins, LLP	

Raise Money for SURVIVORS at No Cost to You! When you use your Ralphs card, a percentage of your purchase can be donated to SURVIVORS. To enroll go to [www.ralphs.com](http://www.ralphs.com) and click on "Community Contribution." Select "Participant" and enter #84761. Note: You must re-enroll each September or later.

We are grateful for your generous support. The lists cover support received **May 1, 2010 - September 30, 2010**. We apologize for any errors or omissions and extend our gratitude for support that may not have been recognized. •

### The Torturer in the Mirror

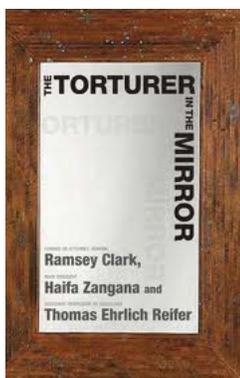


On October 7, Co-author Professor Thomas Reifer of the University of San Diego gave a talk about his new book, *The Torturer in the Mirror*. The event was held at The Book Works in Del Mar, a local independent bookstore owned by Lisa Stafanacchi and was co-sponsored by SURVIVORS. Many thanks to The Book Works for donating a portion of the sales to SURVIVORS.

Reifer of the University of San Diego gave a talk about his new book, *The Torturer in the Mirror*. The event was held at The Book Works in Del Mar, a local independent

About 30 people gathered to listen as Reifer discussed the unfortunate ways in which torture has become more accepted in our society and cited examples, like the TV show "24," that promote the use of torture when lives are at stake or when people are perceived as "deserving it." Reifer said individuals need to look at how their actions can promote or help abolish the practice of torture.

SURVIVORS' staff members were honored to hear that Dr. Reifer will be donating his portion of the profits from the book sales to SURVIVORS. •



### All-Around Intern Sarah Kränzlin

Sarah Kränzlin started helping others early. Growing up in a small village in the Alps in Switzerland, she took part in the tradition of gathering holiday presents to give to all the children in the village. She recently came to San Diego to study English at Intrax International Institute and decided to take part in their 3-month internship program. She was the first student ever to request an internship at a nonprofit. "I googled all the nonprofits in San Diego and was interested in SURVIVORS.

It seemed to be very holistic and not so big, so I thought I could have a great inside view of how it works." Sarah has done many different things, including being the volunteer coordinator, helping with office tasks, and representing SURVIVORS at local events. "I like the variety. I learn about a lot of different topics, such as human rights, asylum, and legal issues, so it's like viewing another world." She has also written cards to clients who are in the detention facility. "Before, I didn't know about the detention centers. I wasn't aware that people who are new to the country can be in a kind of prison and for such a long time. We use colorful cards to give some hope and make them feel they are not alone. I like that a lot."

Many thanks to Sarah, and we wish her the best of luck when she leaves in December. •

*Thank you to all of our financial supporters!*

## Individual Supporters

Anonymous	Virginia Dunn	Annette Lo	Alby Quinlan & Alan Schmidt
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John Cooper	Denise H. Johnson		
Francis Doyle	Melvin & Jane Kieschnick		
Penny Dublin			

## Companies and Organizations

Alliance Healthcare Foundation	Price Family Charitable Fund	Because of you, survivors are rebuilding their lives. We are grateful. <b>These lists cover the period of May 1, 2010, through September 30, 2010.</b> We apologize for any errors or omissions and extend our gratitude for support that may not have been recognized. •
American Immigration Lawyers Association	Qualcomm Incorporated, San Diego	
Change A Life Foundation	Qualcomm Matching Gift Program	
Christ Presbyterian Church	San Diego County Employees Charitable Organization (CECO)	
County of San Diego, Health and Human Services	St. Andrews Lutheran Church, San Diego	
Grossmont Healthcare District	Summit Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, Santee	
Human & Civil Rights Organizations of America, a federation in the Combined Federal Campaign	The Kroger Company	
Intuit Foundation Matching Program	The California Endowment	
	The Mitchell Kapor Foundation, San Francisco	
	The William H. Donner Foundation	
	United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture	
	U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Refugee Resettlement	
	Wellpoint Associate Giving Campaign	

## SURVIVORS' Clients: Healing Inside and Outside

The idea behind the Healing Club is to highlight different activities that can be therapeutic as well as a way to connect to other people who are in a similar situation. In the last few months, SURVIVORS has held many different Healing Club activities including writing, hiking, and playing soccer.

The writing workshop has been led



*SURVIVORS' clients and staff enjoyed hiking at Cabrillo National Monnument.*

by Judy Bernstein, published author, serves as an outlet for creative expression. "I made it clear that they could write about anything," Bernstein said, "but everyone wanted to tell their personal stories. Some read what they'd written aloud and others chose not to, but everyone was really supportive of one another."

The Healing Club also visited Cabrillo National Monument, a national park in San Diego. Clients and staff received an educational tour of the park and were able to enjoy the beautiful ocean views. Clients also enjoyed an impromptu photo session to share with friends and family later. "It is great to see everyone smiling and relaxed," said one

client.

SURVIVORS held its initial meeting for a men's soccer group in November. Clients were excited about the idea of getting together for some comraderie and physical activity in a relaxed and fun setting. The clinical staff would like to create a group that focuses on the importance of exercise for one's health and allows clients the chance to connect with one another.

Another group that is forming in collaboration with Project Refuge is a women's group. Its fundamental goal is to provide support and ideas on how to feel safe and more stable in a new culture and country. "Some of the women got to know each other in detention or along the way to the United States. It's great for them to reconnect in their healing," said SURVIVORS' clinical director, Dee Dee Gullo. •

## Healing Herself and Others- A SURVIVORS' Client Follows her Dreams

As a child growing up in the Middle East, Yasmeen couldn't stand to see people suffering. She remembers thinking that she would either have to have a lot of money to help people or become a doctor. Through hard work and dedication, she was able to achieve her dream and have a fulfilling career as a doctor.

Her life was turned upside down, however, the day that opposing forces took over her country. Her family was targeted and threatened, and it wasn't safe for her. She moved to a neighboring country, but still the situation was dangerous. Finally, she had to leave her home country behind, along with her career as a doctor. Once she came to the United States and found asylum, she was able to complete schooling and get her RN to be a nurse. But she still found herself crying when she would see the doctors in their white coats. "My eyes would fill with tears." A family member

referred her to SURVIVORS and she started seeing a therapist and mentioned her dream of being a doctor again. "I was sharing my stories and sorrow from my past with my psychologist at SURVIVORS. I didn't know if I could do it, if it would be too much to take care of my family and go to school." Her therapist at SURVIVORS urged her to follow her dream and now she is on her way to becoming a family nurse practitioner.

Through services she received at SURVIVORS, she feels confident in the decisions she is making in her life. She's taking some of the things she appreciates from her culture and mixing them with American customs. Most importantly, she feels safe in her new country. "In my country if you disagree they will cut off your head or kill you with guns, but I am blessed to be here. I am safe. I tell my children how blessed we are to be in this country."

### The Strength to Survive. The Power to Heal

Did you know that SURVIVORS is the only accredited torture treatment center in San Diego County? Your support enables us to help survivors rebuild their lives.

Learn more at [www.notorture.org](http://www.notorture.org). •

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