Program Spotlight

Meeting the basic needs of torture survivors living in San Diego County

It can be hard to imagine going to a completely new country, with few or no personal contacts, with limited language ability and little money. Many of SURVIVORS’ clients have started their lives in America that way—a new beginning that is even more difficult when there is the additional challenge of coping with traumatic experiences, specifically torture.

On top of facilitating specialized health and mental health services, SURVIVORS helps survivors of torture meet their basic human needs such as food and hygiene. Beatriz Ledezma, SURVIVORS’ case manager, helps clients when they have short-term emergency needs and when they need guidance with long-term planning as they seek to stabilize.

Community screenings educate, inspire action

Thank you to everyone who came to SURVIVORS’ fall screenings of the film “The Visitor.”

SURVIVORS held several free community screenings of the film to help audiences learn more about the increasing use of detention for non-criminal asylum seekers in the United States and the failure to apply due process. SURVIVORS hosted the screenings in partnership with Participant Media and Active Voice.

The film was written and directed by Tom McCarthy. The plot focuses on Walter Vale (Richard Jenkins) a college professor who befriends a Syrian man named Tarek (Haaz Sleiman) and his Senegalese girlfriend Zainab (Danai Gurira).

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SURVIVORS launches year-end campaign

Our year-end campaign began in November. We know that this coming year will bring significant challenges. An increasing number of refugees and asylum seekers are coming to San Diego County from Iraq and other parts of the world. Asylum-seeking torture survivors are being detained for longer periods of time.

With your support, we can continue to serve survivors of torture by providing the specialized care that will help survivors sleep well, find jobs, and jump-start their lives as new Americans.

During the next few weeks, you might receive a call from one of our staff members or volunteers asking you to make a donation. We would be so grateful for anything you could give - whether it's $10, $100, or $1,000. Every bit counts.

Help parents and children during this holiday season

The holidays are just around the corner. This is a time of reflection and celebration. But unfortunately along with the holidays come other pressures, especially if you have children. Here at SURVIVORS we do our best to embrace our clients’ needs, especially around the holidays, when a family often is confronted with the pressure to provide their children with toys and other presents.

For several years, generous donors have given gift cards to SURVIVORS for distribution to clients. SURVIVORS opts to do a gift card drive instead of a toy drive because the cards empower parents to decide what their children or loved ones need the most. It might be a pair of shoes, clothes for school, or a cozy blanket for the winter.

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 from the leadership

The third sector plays an important role in today’s world

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

Recently there has been a lot of talk about the role of government in business and the role of corporate business in our society. Often what is missing from the conversation is the role of the “third sector” or what is more commonly called the nonprofit sector. What is the role of our sector in today’s world?

In a civil society, nonpolitical organizations, such as professional associations, religious groups, citizen-based organizations and social service agencies, are vital for democracy. We build trust, social capital and shared values which in turn help to hold society together.

In practice, we serve, innovate, advocate, express and guard values and build democratic communities. In even more practical terms, we feed the hungry, clothe the naked, befriend the imprisoned, heal the sick and welcome the stranger.

At Survivors of Torture, International, we facilitate healing, educate the community and seek the abolition of torture. How can we advance this work together, especially during these challenging times? There is no doubt that the landscape is dramatically changing so it takes both insight and action.

There are many opportunities for all of us to create a safe haven for torture survivors. As you read this issue of our newsletter, we encourage you to consider how you would like to be involved and what kind of action you would like to take. We also encourage you to visit our web site, www.notorture.org, as together all of us can foster a more civil society. On behalf of the clients, we thank you for your loyal support. *

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<td>their lives. For the short-term, that might mean providing a family with three days of groceries or helping an individual find a safe homeless shelter for the night. It could also mean helping with long-term adjustment by showing survivors where to find free English classes or employment opportunities.</td>
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Ongoing case management services are provided at SURVIVORS’ office and through home visits made by staff members, as well as through partnerships and collaborations that SURVIVORS maintains with a large number of faith- and community-based organizations.

Adjusting to a new country and culture takes time, but as torture survivors develop relationships with SURVIVORS and other providers, they also begin to rebuild trust, gain confidence, and become more comfortable integrating into the larger San Diego community. *

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<tr>
<th>Plan an event to raise awareness and/or funds for SURVIVORS.</th>
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<td>Contact Special Initiatives Manager Sara Vaz at <a href="mailto:svaz@notorture.org">svaz@notorture.org</a> for details or to start a personal fundraising page online at <a href="http://www.firstgiving.com">www.firstgiving.com</a>. *</td>
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<td>Last year as a result of your generous donations of gifts cards, SURVIVORS was able to bring joy and happiness to more than 100 torture survivors, many of them with families.</td>
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Please help us again this year to continue our mission of empowerment through your generous donation of a gift card from stores such as Target, Payless, Sears, K-Mart and Walgreens. Phone cards would also be helpful. If you have any questions regarding this program, please contact Beatriz Ledezma at bledezma@notorture.org or (619) 278-2402. *

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<th>Update for the Ralphs contribution program</th>
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<td>The Ralphs Community Contribution program has been an ongoing success. There is a new application for the contribution term that began on September 1.</td>
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**Current participants:** All Ralphs’ members are required to have new Ralphs Rewards Cards (formerly Ralphs Club Cards). To get a new card, members fill out a short application at their local Ralphs store and then reregister online to support SURVIVORS in the new term.

**New participants:** To have up to 4% of your grocery store purchases support SURVIVORS’ programs, you can go to your local Ralphs store and complete a short application to obtain a Rewards Card.

**Everyone:** To register your Rewards card to support SURVIVORS, visit www.ralphs.com and click “Community Contribution.” Select “Participant” and enter your card number, along with SURVIVORS’ NPO #84761.

Thank you to everyone who has supported SURVIVORS with this program! *

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<th>Survivors of Torture, International’s</th>
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<td>Board of Directors</td>
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<td>Jeanette Barrack, RPT, Chairperson</td>
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<td>David Engstrom, PhD, Vice-Chairperson</td>
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<td>Alisa Shargo, Esq., Secretary</td>
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<td>Denise Francis, CPA, Financial Officer</td>
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<td>Jorge Cabrera, MSW, ACSW,</td>
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<td>Ann Durham, MSN, FNP, Esq.,</td>
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<td>Carol Morabito, MSW, Rev. Bill Radatz</td>
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<td>Diana Rodriguez Ross</td>
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<td>Kathi Anderson, Ex-Officio</td>
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The Combined Federal Campaign

is an annual charitable drive for U.S. federal employees. Federal employees can give to SURVIVORS using a convenient payroll deduction plan. SURVIVORS is listed as one of the Human & Civil Rights Organizations of America with CFC number 24619.

To support services for survivors of torture through your CFC contributions, please contact your workplace CFC coordinator to fill out the appropriate paperwork.
Welcome to new counseling trainee Joyce Everett

Joyce Everett is a third-year graduate student in the master’s program for marriage and family counseling at San Diego State University. Joyce has a special interest in supporting SURVIVORS’ clients with chronic illness and pain management needs. She is talented in art and is able to encourage even the most hesitant to try creative expression. Also, after many years of experience in dealing with doctors, insurance companies, hospitals and all the complex systems of care that exist in this country, she is dedicated to helping newcomers negotiate their treatments and open productive dialogues with their medical providers.

Joyce works with SURVIVORS’ clients individually and in small groups. She is being supervised by AAMFT-designated supervisor and associate clinical director, Crystal Green.

“I am proud to be spending my training time at an organization that is making such a positive difference,” she says.

“I feel so incredibly privileged to witness such courage, resiliency and strength from our amazing clients. I am further humbled by the compassionate staff who devote their daily lives to supporting the cause of healing, raising public awareness and eradicating human rights violations, all while maintaining loving, gracious hearts. The beauty of the human spirit can be found in all its rich diversity residing within our clients’ challenges and triumphs.”

Diana Ross joins SURVIVORS’ Board of Directors

SURVIVORS’ board of directors is excited to welcome Diana Ross. Diana comes with nonprofit management experience as well as expertise in working with diverse populations. She works for the Center for Community Solutions, an organization that strives to end relationship and sexual violence by being a catalyst for caring communities and social justice.

Diana says she has always had an interest in civil and human rights because of her early life experiences.

“My grandmother was a migrant who was illiterate and had struggled considerably to establish our family in the United States. She lived with us and really instilled a sense of gratitude for what I have,” Diana says.

Her motivation in becoming involved with SURVIVORS is partly due to her attention to world events.

“I am saddened by the tactics used by many countries (including our own) to exercise power and control over others. More so I am compelled to act by how complicit we can be as a society in allowing leaders the right to violate the physical and psychological well-being of people. It is important to support the direct work that is making a tangible impact through action, advocacy, and volunteerism.”

This fall, SURVIVORS’ board also said farewell to a member. Gigi Srajer joined the board of directors in 2007 and was an active part of the board’s development committee. SURVIVORS wishes her the best of luck.

SURVIVORS welcomes Sara Vaz to the staff

In September, SURVIVORS welcomed Sara Vaz to the position of special initiatives manager. In this role, Sara will be responsible for initiating and maintaining relationships with individual donors, foundations, corporations, and other community organizations.

Sara comes to SURVIVORS with a master’s degree in international relations from Alliant International University and bachelor’s degrees in sociology and women’s studies from the University of Utah. She worked in refugee employment services for the International Rescue Committee for several years, and owned a staffing agency in San Diego.

“After being in the private sector for four years I was anxious to get back to working with refugees and asylees,” she says.

“Although I was very familiar with SURVIVORS, I know that we are not well-known to the general public. I have a strong belief that once people are aware of the good work that we do they will be compelled to act and help us succeed. I look forward to building relationships with our supporters and creating new support for SURVIVORS and our mission.”
SURVIVORS launches new web site

SURVIVORS is launching a new web site this winter. Digital arts student Peter Chon redesigned the site, aiming to provide improved navigation, functionality, and appearance. It also links to SURVIVORS’ pages on Facebook, Myspace, and other web 2.0 sites.

SURVIVORS paired up with Peter after winning the “Fast Pitch” competition that the American Marketing Association held at its annual cause conference at the University of San Diego. Five San Diego nonprofits sent representatives to give two-minute speeches on why they should be the recipients of the prize: design assistance from the UCSD Digital Arts Center.

Volunteer Liang Cheng also provided valuable assistance. He translated the text to Spanish, making the site more accessible to many people living in San Diego and around the world.
Thank you to all of our community supporters!

Individual Supporters

Koorosh Akhavan
Ryan Altman
Joyce Anderson
Abhi Arunachalam
Walid Baha
Bradley Bourcy
Josh Chatten-Brown
Carmen Chavez
Liang Cheng
Peter Chon
Douglas Christiansen
Sue Curley
Rahul Dangui
Kathryn Delahanthy
Van-Anh Doan
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Elisabeth Suter
Emilio Torres-Lumsden
Blake Tye
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Richard Vongsawat
Hamse Warfa
Mary Wu
Karen Yang

Companies and Organizations

Alternative Healing Network, Inc.
Corporation for National & Community Service (AmeriCorps*VISTA)
Domino’s Pizza, Pacific Beach
Easter Seals, South San Diego County
Ergonomic Evaluation and Training, San Diego
Grossmont Nutrition and Gifts, La Mesa
Latham & Watkins, LLP
Manatt, Phelps, & Phillips, LLP
Ponce’s Mexican Restaurant, San Diego
Qualcomm, Inc., San Diego
Shorago Training Services, San Diego
St. Andrew’s Lutheran Church, San Diego
St. Brigid’s Catholic Church, San Diego
Starbucks Coffee, Kensington & Bankers Hill

We are grateful for your generous support. Your donations of time and in-kind goods and services help SURVIVORS’ programs run smoothly.

The lists cover support received August 1, 2008, through October 31, 2008. We apologize for any errors or omissions and extend our gratitude for support that may not have been recognized.

One of SURVIVORS’ clinicians visits the Trauma Centre for Survivors of Violence and Torture

Nicola Ranson is a licensed clinical social worker who is one of SURVIVORS’ providers. She recently visited a South African center which, like SURVIVORS, is an accredited member of the International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims. Nicola met with Sarah Crawford-Brown, former head of service delivery for the Trauma Centre, as well as with Miriam Fredericks, the head of the Trauma Centre’s Political Violence Program.

In October, I had the privilege of visiting the Trauma Centre in Cape Town. South Africa faces enormous challenges as a high proportion of the population is dealing with the legacy of apartheid. There are also large influxes of refugees as well as a climate of violence. The Trauma Centre is one of only two in the country.

The Trauma Centre is situated in District Six, an area notorious for forced removals under apartheid. But even during that era the building served as a sanctuary, housing many of the family members who were visiting the political prisoners being held on Robben Island.

The fountain in the white stone courtyard exudes tranquility. The garden in the rear is a sacred spot where trees have been planted to honor the dead who were never given burials.

Amid the ringing phone and the bustle of harried workers I sensed the feeling of sanctuary: a place that is safe, that gives hope, where people are working together to build a better world.

This is exactly what I feel at SURVIVORS. Even though some of our computers are from the stone age and our garden consists of some potted plants in the kitchen, no one walks in without getting a warm and respectful welcome.

I’m so proud to be part of SURVIVORS and my heart is lightened to know that we are part of a string of such sanctuaries scattered around the world.

Nicola stands outside the Trauma Centre in South Africa
Thank you to all of our financial supporters!

Individual Supporters

Anonymous
Dee Aker & William Smith
Susanna Beaudieu
Philip & Kathryn Costello
Kathy & Gene Dougherty
Ann & Richard Durham
David Engstrom
George & Ethel Falk
Denise & James Francis
David Gangsei & Lindy Laub
Mariann Grasela
John Gready
Andrea Guerrero & Beston Barnett
Laura Jean Hageman & Thomas Bond
Ginger & Jim Hallerberg
John & Kaye Hambleton
Marian Hart & Wayne Liebold
Anne Hoiberg
Margaret Hollenbeck
Jennie Hollis & Dan Peterka
Rita Judd
Margaret Khazai
Arien Koorn & Mikako Tsuruoka
George & Karen Longstreth
Theresa Luginbuhl
Elizabeth Michel & Arnie Markman
Dustin Mouser
Agapito Ogaldez
Joseph Price
Alby Quinlan
William & Martha Radatz
Diana Ross
Ellye Singer
Angelique Srajer & Aron Herskowitz
Dawn Stary Sweeney
Elizabeth Taylor
Jonathan Weisman
Dolores Welty
Svend & Elisabeth Westlund

Children write poetry about shared experiences

Earlier this year, young adults from the Tucson-based Owl & Panther writing project participated in SURVIVORS’ annual Celebration of Hope & Healing event. While in San Diego, the participants also spent time at Southwest Key, a nonprofit organization that has an unaccompanied minor program in San Diego.

On February 22, youth from both of the groups collaborated to write a poem. Here is an excerpt:

The rock represents my dear country El Salvador, my family, my life, and my rock says that I have to have a lot of hope, and to keep going, so beautiful is the rock, this rock represents how I am.

This rock is so pretty to me.

To me this rock is so pretty and will always remind me of something, like when I use to go to the lake with my friends.

The rock represents the light of the world, it is so wonderful to me.

This rock reminds me of a lake.

Even though I am a rock, I also know how to love and kiss.

The color of the rock is orange and seems like it is alive and it is also pretty.

My life is so precious and it is telling me to keep going.

This rock can be harmful but it also can fill my heart with joy, with its beautiful colors.

This rock is polished and we could be like it, depends on how do we look at life.

The rock… the rock… as the time passes by, there is no mistaken; while everybody in this time are living the crazy life.

Smooth and fragile, but strong like a rock.

This rock reminds me that there is always gold in the darkness.

Help SURVIVORS save money and go green. E-mail cpena@notorture.org to sign up for the e-newsletter.
Survivors of Torture, International

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About us

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 11,000 survivors of torture live in San Diego County and 400,000 - 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, attorneys, 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. Learn more at www.notorture.org.

SURVIVORS can earn a penny every time you search the internet.

GoodSearch is a new Yahoo-powered search engine that donates half its advertising revenue, about a penny per search, to charities its users designate. Use it just as you would any search engine, get quality results from Yahoo, and see donations add up for SURVIVORS.

Just go online to www.goodsearch.com and be sure to enter Survivors of Torture, International as the nonprofit organization you want to support. Please spread the word.

This project publication was sponsored by Grant # 90ZT0070 from the Office of Refugee Resettlement. Points of view are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the position of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

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