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.

About Us

Survivors of Torture, International was incorporated in February 1997 in response to a need in our community to bring assistance to a segment of the population that struggles with the wounds of politically-motivated torture. It is estimated that at least 35,000 survivors of torture live in San Diego County and 1.3 million 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. To date we have served more than 1,800 clients from more than 80 different countries. 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.

Contact Information

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Fax: 619-294-9405
survivors@notorture.org

Number of Refugee Torture Survivors in the United States Rising

Based on an analysis of previous research studies, the Center for Victims of Torture (CVT), recently concluded that the number of refugee torture survivors in the United States is significantly higher than previously reported. Past estimates of refugee torture survivors in the United States were between 400,000 – 500,000. However, with the increase in number of arriving refugees, CVT estimates that refugee torture prevalence is as high as 44 percent, indicating that the number of refugee torture survivors in the United States could be as high as 1.3 million people. This estimate does not account for the number of torture survivors who arrive seeking asylum or who have been granted asylum by the United States government. It had been estimated previously that 11,000 torture survivors lived in San Diego. In accordance with the research of CVT, this number is much higher at about 35,000. Survivors of Torture, International is the only accredited torture rehabilitation center in San Diego. Comprehensive services such as therapy, psychiatry, and access to medical and social services are important to help the increasing number of torture survivors rebuild their lives and become contributing members of our community.

In the past three years San Diego received more refugees than the three other top California counties combined.1

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Women’s Group: The Story of Us

“Shared joy is a double joy; shared sorrow is half a sorrow.”
~ Swedish Proverb

Women’s Group: The Story of Us, facilitated by contracted counselor, Dawn Stary. The women collectively decide on the topics they will discuss and the activities they will do together. "It's nice to see them learning from each other and sharing their experiences to help one another out," says Dawn. She tells a story of one woman who had lived in San Diego for only a few months and was expressing her fears and concerns about the asylum process in the United States. Another woman who had lived in San Diego for several years and had been granted asylum comforted the newer client by telling her that it would get easier and that the women of the group were there for her.

Sharing concerns with a group of individuals who have had similar experiences is just one of the ways the women's group creates a safe space for self-expression and healing. The women have crafted mirrors with frames consisting of positive affirmations out of magazines, created mandalas, and participated in an Ethiopian coffee ritual, offered by an Ethiopian client who wanted to share her customs with the group. In the coming months they plan to go for walks, do other crafts, and have a multicultural potluck.

An Ethiopian client teaches a coffee ritual.

SURVIVORS began a new healing group this September called "Women’s Group: The Story of Us," facilitated by contracted counselor, Dawn Stary. The women collectively decide on the topics they will discuss and the activities they will do together. "It's nice to see them learning from each other and sharing their experiences to help one another out," says Dawn. She tells a story of one woman who had lived in San Diego for only a few months and was expressing her fears and concerns about the asylum process in the United States. Another woman who had lived in San Diego for several years and had been granted asylum comforted the newer client by telling her that it would get easier and that the women of the group were there for her.

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SURVIVORS Partners with Traveling Art Exhibition

SURVIVORS is partnering with ART WORKS Projects (artworksprojects.org) to bring Sanctuary & Sustenance: The Story of Many Journeys to San Diego after having been in Seattle, Minneapolis, and Pittsburgh. Sanctuary & Sustenance is a multimedia projection of photography, film, music, and words. To honor World Refugee Day, June 20, the projection followed the journey of a family during the catastrophic events of displacement, on a path to sanctuary, and through the long process of rebuilding life in a new community. The installation was projected on the facades of community centers, churches, mosques, synagogues, temples and other places of worship all over the world that have historically opened their doors as places of welcome and shelter. Sanctuary & Sustenance in San Diego will portray some of the possible journeys immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers make to San Diego. A preview of the San Diego project was presented at the multiday Art of Peace Symposium at the Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace & Justice at the University of San Diego. The images shown were of the possible points of entry of immigrants’ arrivals in San Diego: the border checkpoint, the airport, a ship, a lonely road, and the border fence. The rest of the project will be revealed in February, in honor of SURVIVORS’ 19th birthday and its healing services for torture survivors.

SURVIVORS and ART WORKS Projects hope to raise awareness of the challenges faced by refugees and asylum seekers as well as of their resilience, to spark conversations about our collective responsibility to welcome newcomers to our community, and to encourage policy makers to act in favor of fundamental human rights for refugees and asylum seekers.

Number of Refugee Torture Survivors in the United States Rising

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

most half of them will have experienced torture and may be experiencing post-traumatic stress disorder and/or major depressive disorder, according to CVT.

With demand for services for torture survivors increasing to record levels, it is imperative SURVIVORS serve clients with quality comprehensive services. If you would like to assist SURVIVORS as we adjust to these changes, please consider making a donation to SURVIVORS and contacting your elected officials to let them know that it is vital to support the Torture Victims Relief Reauthorization Act of 2015 (TVRRA) which authorizes $25 million to the Office of Refugee Resettlement’s Survivors of Torture Program.

SURVIVORS offers public Journey to Healing Tours twice monthly to educate the public about torture and its consequences. Private tours are also offered for groups or organizations. Recently SURVIVORS opened its doors to the San Diego Peace Corps Association, nursing students at National University, social work students from Germany, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America pastors’ group of San Diego, and public officials from local government offices.

If you have a group or class that would benefit from learning about SURVIVORS and the unique population we serve please contact us at survivors@notorture.org or 619-278-2400.

1California Department of Social Services Refugee Programs Bureau, Refugee Arrivals into California Counties; September 2014

Educating the Public About Torture

Human Rights Watch Film Festival Returns to San Diego

Balboa Park’s Museum of Photographic Arts, in partnership with SURVIVORS, is honored to host the sixth year of the Human Rights Watch Film Festival in San Diego on January 21 - 24, 2016. The film festival brings to life human rights abuses through story telling in a way that challenges each individual to empathize with and demand justice for all people. For a list of films and ticket information, please visit www.mopa.org/hrwff.

Giving Tuesday is Dec. 2!

Please consider giving to SURVIVORS by making a donation in the enclosed envelope.

Looking for More Ways to Give?

There are countless ways to donate to SURVIVORS. Options include donating your car, collecting old cell phones at your office, school, church, etc. Or, at no cost to you, Ralphs and AmazonSmile will donate a percentage of your normal purchases to SURVIVORS when you sign up for their free giving programs. (Call 619.278.2400 to find out more.)

The Survivor

3 THE SURVIVOR

Healing Society Members

Kathi Anderson & Jesse Rivera
Jeanette Barrack
Candace Carroll & Len Simon
Ann & Richard Durham
James & Denise Francis
Jean M. Greaves & Greg Olmstead
Jim Hansson
Frederick & Ann Hein
Merie & Kay Horst
Anya Morgan Rfeld
Dr. Jim Jaranson Fund of the
Minneapolis Foundation
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George & Karen Longstreth
Howard & Lianne Moseley
Pat Olafson
Kathleen Owens
Marlene Ruiz
Nancy Sweeney
David Tanner
St. Andrew’s Lutheran Church,
San Diego

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Southwest
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Charitable Organization (CECO)
San Diego City School Community
Service Association
Scarno Family Foundation
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Church, La Mesa
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Krylow Family Fund
Law Offices of Jonathan D. Montag
Law Office of Schoenleber &
Walterr

Many thanks to our donors and supporters!

Because of you, survivors are rebuilding their lives. We are grateful. We apologize for any
errors or omissions and ex-
tend our gratitude for support
that may not have been rec-
ognized. (Please contact us at
619-278-2400 with corrections.)

Gary & Patricia Remington
Carla Remondini
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Ian Riddell
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Lewis Robinson in honor of
Ken Robinson
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Nancy Scott
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Betty Wiedner
Rosemary Williams
Nancy & Stewart Witt
Steve Yagugan
Lois Yahr
Connie Zaragoza
Brigitte Zszeeler

Thank you!

November 2015 / volume 18, issue 2
Client Demographics

174 new clients and 153 ongoing clients were served during fiscal year 2015 (Oct. 1, 2014 – Sept. 30, 2015).

Our clients were tortured in their home countries due to their race, religion, nationality, social group, or political opinion.

New Clients

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Welcome 2015-2016 Social Work Interns

Every year SURVIVORS welcomes interns to its community of healing here in San Diego. This academic year we are pleased to be working with four interns from San Diego State University and, for the first time, two interns from Cal State University San Marcos.

One intern, pursuing a joint Masters of Social Work and Juris Doctor, assists with contracts and advocacy. Social work interns shadow intakes, assist with case management, facilitate group therapy, and support fundraising, outreach, and grant writing efforts.

Kathi becomes Honorary Member of Sigma Theta Tau International

Congratulations to SURVIVORS’ executive director, Kathi Anderson, who has been awarded an honorary membership in the Honor Society of Nursing, Sigma Theta Tau International (STTI). The 2015 International Awards honorees exemplify the STTI qualities of leadership, scholarship, and service. Award recipients were nominated by their nursing and health care peers and colleagues to recognize their professional excellence.