Tuesday Presenters

Fatuma Hussein, Immigrant Resource Center of Maine

Fatuma Hussein is the founder of the United Somali Women of Maine which, in 2016, morphed into the Immigrant Resource Center of Maine. Their mission is "to support refugee and immigrant communities by offering culturally and linguistically sensitive services to promote a healthy and equitable Maine." Fatuma was 12 years old when war broke out in Somalia, East Africa, where she was living with her family. Forced to flee, she arrived in a refugee camp in neighboring Kenya. From there she began the long arduous journey of a refugee seeking resettlement. Fatuma initially landed in Georgia but moved to Lewiston, Maine in 2001. She loves the small city feeling of Lewiston and she quickly became an activist in the refugee community. She has been featured as one of the Portland Press Herald's Mainers to Be Thankful For and included in Maine Magazine's list of 50 Mainers Who Make a Difference.

Hamet Ly, Catholic Charities Maine

Hamet Ly is the on-site supervisor of Refugee and Immigration services in Portland, Maine. Hamet Ly is the Portland On-site Supervisor of CCMaine Refugee and Immigration Services. Prior to joining CCMaine, Hamet worked in diverse professional settings in multiple different countries including the U.S. Embassy in Mauritania---the country where he is originally from. Hamet has lived in the U.S. for more than three years. Since immigrating to the U.S. Hamet has been deeply involved in supporting immigrant communities. He has volunteered for non-profits and public schools to support immigrants' cultural, social and economic integration. From June 2014 to present he has volunteered as an English/French interpreter and facilitator at JFON (Justice For Our Neighbors) taught ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) students at LearningWorks' English Language Program, volunteered at Portland High School. In Mauritania, Hamet worked at the U.S. Embassy in Mauritania as the Economic and Commercial Assistant for four and half years. During that time, he was awarded the Meritorious Honor Awards in 2010 and 2011 and the Mission Honor Award in 2012 for his exceptional performance. Prior to that position, he worked as the Procurement and Supply Officer for the Coca-Cola Company in Mauritania for two years. Before he started his professional career, Hamet earned a Master's degree in Food Sciences and Technology at the University of Nouakchott in Mauritania in 2005. He spent the last year of his education in France, where he earned another Master's degree in Management of Quality, Safety and Environment in 2007.

Sandra Warren, Community Development Coordinator, Cumberland County

Sandra is the Community Development Coordinator for Cumberland County, which includes managing the City of South Portland's Community Development program. She began this new position on July 24, 2017. Prior to that Sandra was an Occupancy Specialist II with the South Portland Housing Authority. In this role Sandra coordinated and managed residents' participation in the public housing, section 8 and tax credit programs. Sandra has many years of experience serving low-income populations using a compassionate individualized approach to meet client's needs. Sandra has an associate's degree from Southern Maine Community College and holds certifications in multi-family property management and C3P.

Abigail Smith, Housing Navigator, Hope House Health & Living Center

Abby Smith is a Housing Navigator at the Hope House Health & Living Center at PCHC's low-barrier homeless shelter in Bangor, Maine. She is a Recovery Coach and tenant education facilitator for the organization's Rent Smart program. Abby is credited with successfully joining landlord and property manager's business objectives with housing opportunities for the homeless. Abby facilitates Services Connect, a weekly collaborative, which brings providers together to ensure continuity of service to the most transient and vulnerable homeless population. She is well known for her ability to build bridges, connect agencies, and provide services to populations who fall through the cracks. Abby is currently studying substance use addiction at Beal College.

Leanna Bruce, South Portland Housing Authority

Leanna Bruce is employed as an Occupancy Specialist II with the South Portland Housing Authority and is the Centralized Waiting List (CWL) Software Specialist for Housing Data Link of Maine, LLC. She has more than 10 years of experience administering and managing housing programs including Section 8, Public Housing, LIHTC, BRAP, Shelter Plus Care, and HOPWA. Leanna graduated from Husson University with a Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration and currently holds COS, HCV, HQS, and C3P certifications.

Mark Adelson, Executive Director, Portland Housing Authority

Mark joined the staff of the Portland Housing Authority in June 2004 and became Executive Director in February 2010. He has administered housing and community development programs for more than 35 years at all levels of government within the State of Maine. After graduating from the University of Maine at Farmington with a BA in Geography and Land Use Planning, his career began as a Community Development Planner with the Androscoggin Valley Regional Planning Commission (now AVCOG). He was Community Development Director in Farmington from 1978 to 1982. He joined the Maine State Planning Office as a Community Development Specialist and Program Manager from 1982 to 1986. Prior to the Portland Housing Authority, Mark was the Director of Housing and Neighborhood Services for the City of Portland for 17 years, where he was responsible for affordable housing policy development, implementation of HUD Housing and Community Development programs, affordable housing finance programs and code enforcement. Mark and his family have lived in Portland since 1986.

Anne Charles, Maine Municipal Employees Health Trust

Anne Charles is the Health Promotion Manager with the Maine Municipal Employees Health Trust (MMEHT). She has worked for the MMEHT for 17 years, working to improve the lifestyle status of MMEHT members and their families by developing and providing quality health education and wellness programs. Anne has a Bachelor of Science in Community Health Education from the University of Maine at Farmington. She holds certificates from The Cooper Institute for Health Promotion Management and Wellness Coaching. Anne practices what she preaches by living a healthy lifestyle. On her downtime you will find her hiking with her family, running a road race and enjoying a nice nutritious meal. She resides in Farmington with her husband and two daughters.

Ruth Mewa, Old Town Housing Authority

Ruth Mewa is the Office Assistant at the Housing Authority of the City of Old Town and is currently the Chair of their Wellness Program. Prior to working for the Housing Authority, she worked in the Human Resource field and assisted in developing a Wellness Program for a local credit union.

John Bohm, NAHRO Senior Director of Congressional Relations

John Bohm is NAHRO's Senior Director, Congressional Relations. NAHRO represents over 17,000 individual members and over 3,000 Housing authorities nationwide. He also serves as NAHRO's Senior Director for Congressional Relations, Public Affairs and Field Operations. He joined the NAHRO staff in February of 2004. In his current capacity Bohm is the association's principle spokesperson. He also advances NAHRO program and policy recommendations on behalf of the membership. He also oversees NAHRO efforts to improve public understanding and increase public support for the provision of affordable housing in quality communities. He leads NAHRO's Housing America Campaign and the associations "What Home Means to Me" poster calendar contest now entering its eighth year. He also oversees the association's media efforts and is involved in the creation of and supports various other NAHRO coalition efforts. He serves on the Steering Committee of the Campaign for Housing and Community Development Funding (CHCDF) and the A.C.T.I.O.N. Coalition. Bohm came to NAHRO from the National Housing Conference (NHC) where he served for four and one-half years as its Director of Public Policy. Prior to that, he served in the Clinton Administration as a Deputy Assistant Secretary for Congressional and Intergovernmental Relations at HUD. From 1990-1997 Bohm served as the Executive Director of the National Affordable Housing Management Association (NAHMA). John has spent over 30 years fighting for decent safe and affordable housing both inside and out of federal government service and for a time during that period served at the state level as the Deputy Director of the Main State Housing Authority in Augusta, Maine. Bohm is a cum laude graduate of Northeastern University located in Boston Massachusetts. Born and raised in New York he now resides in Alexandria, Virginia. He is married to Eileen Grey and has two sons.

Stephen Merritt, PHM - NAHRO President

Steve Merritt is the Executive Director of the Norwood Housing Authority in Massachusetts. He began his career in public housing in 1983 as an elected Commissioner of the Needham Housing Authority, also in Massachusetts. Prior to his appointment in Norwood he was a Senior Manager for the Cambridge Housing Authority serving for over 15 years. He is Past President of the New England Regional Council of NAHRO and a Past President of the Massachusetts Chapter. He has served multiple terms as the chair of the Massachusetts NAHRO Legislative committee and serves on the Mass Housing Committee. Steve served on the Massachusetts Governor's Special Commission on Public Housing Sustainability and Reform in 2012. He is a strong advocate for Local housing authorities of all sizes maintaining local control. Steve was elected as President of NAHRO in October 2015 and will serve his term until November 1, 2017.

Jason Champlin, Sergeant, Sanford Police Department

Jason Champlin is a 22-year police veteran and currently serves the citizens of Sanford as a Patrol Sergeant. Jason served four years in the U.S. Marines prior to entering law enforcement. During his career with the Sanford Police Department, Jason served in many special assignments, such as Gang and Graffiti Officer, Field Training Officer, and Swat team leader and Assistant Team Commander. Jason served 9 ½ years as a K-9 Handler, is a certified Maine Criminal Justice Academy Instructor where he taught Gangs and Associated Activities for 15 years. Jason also serves as the Safety and Security Officer for the Sanford Police department by providing security training, evaluations, and planning assistance for schools and businesses in Sanford. For the last 5 ½ years Jason has been certified or trained in the various components of physical security, threat assessments, active shooter preparation and prevention measures, school security, after school and special event security, and instructs the Civilian Response to Active Shooter Events to the public.