

WELCOME DINNER

2019

The Welcome Dinner 2019 was a community event intended to welcome newcomers to Contra Costa County over a shared meal and enriching conversations. The Welcome Dinner took place on June 11th, 2019 at the Pleasant Hill Community Center.

This event was hosted by the Family Justice Center, Stand Together Contra Costa, East Bay Refugee Forum, Catholic Charities, International Rescue Committee and Jewish Family and Community Services.



ABOUT THE EVENT

GUESTS

A total of 82 individuals from the community attended this event. This ranged from newcomers, residents, elected officials, and social service providers. Upon their arrive, guests were asked to participate in an activity that asks where they were born and what languages they speak.



WHERE WERE YOU BORN?

Korea • Mexico • New York • Iran • Ghana
California • Afghanistan • Guatemala
Central America • Bogota Colombia
South America • Puebla • France • El Salvador
Massachusetts • Ecuador • Pennsylvania • Jalisco
Arizona • Oregon • Thailand • Paraguay
Michigan • Illinois • Khmu Laos • Granada
Nicaragua • South Carolina • Mexico City

LANGUAGES

Korean • Spanish • French • Fanti • Persian
Chinese • Pashto • Dari • ASL
Vietnamese • Hebrew • Romanian
Portuguese • Thao • Lao • German
Cantonese • Loong Doo

FOOD



Food was provided by Oakland Bloom. Oakland Bloom nurtures and supports refugee chefs by training and giving instructions on how to run a food business. This includes marketing, recipe creation and testing, operating a commercial kitchen, and showcasing their work. The welcome dinner menu included Halal Chicken Skewers, Samosas, and Afghan Bolani with sauces and compostable utensils.



PERFORMANCES

Lao Khmu Dancers (Alida and Ashley Phuthama) danced to two Lao songs, Dok Champ and Lao Phaen. Dok Champ is a song in honor of the Lao national flower which is also known as plumeria alba. Lao Phaen is a song that honors beauty and the delicate qualities of a Laos female.

Ballet Folklorico Netzahualcoyotl is a group of dancers that performs Mexican Folkloric dance. Ballet Folklorico Netzahualcoyotl is a group of people from many different cultures of all different ages including those as young as five.



ACTIVITIES



After dinner, guests were encouraged to interact with each other through activities centered around community, culture, and acceptance. Guests shared narratives about where they were from based on items listed on a prompt. Other activities included getting to know each other at the table by sharing memories from sensory triggers such as smells, touch, and sounds that are associated with individual experiences.

Guest participated in a big group activity that inquired what a welcoming community means to them. Groups were encouraged to interact with each other to come up with answers which included, “safe”, “share”, “inviting”, “respect”, “culture”, “hello”, “unidos”, “love” and “time”. Responses were written on butterfly cut-outs and added to the butterfly garden as pictured to the right.



Guests were invited to participate in a final activity which involved every individual in the room. Everyone gathered into a circle with held together as pictured below. This allowed everyone to be present and connected to each other. We were encouraged to squeeze each other's hands and appreciate each other's presence.

