

Rahmo Abdi

Born in Mogadishu, Somalia, Rahmo Abdi came to the United States as a refugee, and personally understands the many difficulties of adjusting to life in a new country while preserving your cultural heritage. Wanting to help others overcome those challenges, Rahmo began working with young women from the Middle East, Asia, and Africa and founded the International Refugee Girls Association. Her work there focused on keeping first generation immigrants connected with their native cultures, as well as stressing the importance of education, financial literacy, self-esteem and sexual health issues in a new environment.



Ms. Abdi has been a strong advocate for increased access to healthcare in the Somali and East African community, where disproportionate amounts of people suffer from chronic health conditions like diabetes, high-blood pressure, and high cholesterol, but often fail to receive proper treatment due to language barriers and lack of information. She has worked to promote a greater understanding of access to healthy foods in the absence of the natural foods and remedies from people's home countries, and has led diabetes workshops to further increase community knowledge of diet, medicine, and available healthcare services.

While she's always played a significant role in the work of Somali Youth United, Rahmo Abdi became its Executive Director in 2015 and is committed to ensuring more young people acquire the critical skills necessary for success in today's fast-paced, global society. One of her particular passions is promoting access and exposure to S.T.E.A.M. (science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics) for women and girls throughout the African diaspora. Rahmo's history of community service has led to numerous accolades and awards, including: "Young Woman of the Year" from the Refugee Women's Network and "Unsung Hero" during Black History Month where she was featured on television by FOX 5 San Diego. She was most recently recognized by Bank of America with their "Local Hero" award.

A long-time resident of City Heights, Rahmo and her husband Abdisalam Farah have six children – four girls and two boys.

Jeanine Erikat

As a community organizer at PANA, Jeanine Erikat is responsible for leading PANA's community listening sessions, advocacy campaigns, and on the ground organizing on policy issues that affect refugee and immigrant communities. Jeanine, as the daughter of Palestinian immigrants, understands the effects of displacement, colonization, and ongoing occupation. Jeanine strives to uplift the refugee and immigrant community in San Diego through advocacy that can help build a foundation for political power and secure a more just and dignified future for our communities.



In 2019, Jeanine received a B.S. in Public Health Sciences and B.A. in History from the University of California, Irvine. During her undergraduate career, she presented her research "Housing and Health Disparities: A Case Study of Los Angeles" at the UC Irvine History Undergraduate Conference. Since graduating Jeanine worked as a Program Assistant at the UC San Diego's Women's Center and dedicates her free time to volunteering with the Majdal Community Center in El Cajon, a grassroots, locally driven institution, committed to uplifting the Arab community in San Diego through political engagement, advocacy, and cultural programming. Jeanine is also a firm advocate in health education and volunteers with HEART, an organization that works to ensure Muslims have the resources, language, and choice to nurture sexual health and confront sexual violence. In September 2019, Jeanine presented at the California Coalition Against Sexual Assault (CALCASA) Statewide Conference on "Roadblocks to Resiliency for Muslim Survivors of Sexual Violence: Understanding the Challenges & Opportunities for Survivor Healing in an Era of Islamophobia." Jeanine is also a California State Certified Substitute Teacher.