



- + Building relationships
- + Boosting academic achievement
- + Opening doors
- + Inspiring success

PAIR Update

Issue 01
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PAIR's Mission

PAIR empowers refugee youth to reach their highest potential by connecting them with college students and community volunteers who provide supportive mentoring relationships, academic and cultural enrichment, and the resources and motivation to pursue higher education and other opportunities.

About PAIR Update

The *PAIR Update* is a periodic newsletter intended to keep interested individuals "in the know" about PAIR's latest activities. We hope you enjoy it! Please let us know if you'd like us to add any of your friends or family to the distribution list.

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*PAIR is a non-profit
501(c)(3) corporation*



PAIR continues to grow

PAIR started as a group of ambitious college students and recent graduates eager to create positive, lasting change in the Houston community. What began as an information-gathering exercise quickly became a nascent organization offering a variety of services to refugees who had been resettled in Houston from all over the world, excited to start a new life free from persecution and full of opportunity.

I remember our first Saturday Session, held at Rice nearly two years ago. The day was a whirlwind of excitement and confusion, as we realized the perils of an unplanned curriculum! Today, PAIR employs three full-time staff, serves over 100 refugees per year, and offers programs four days a week to students between 11 and 19 years old.

PAIR has been able to grow and thrive because of our committed volunteers, generous donors, tireless staff and, most importantly, the inspiring youth that we serve. On behalf of all of us at PAIR, thank you for your support.

Alex Triantaphyllis, PAIR Founder

Program Focus: M&T

PAIR is proud to announce its newest program, Mentoring & Tutoring (M&T). PAIR has partnered with Fondren Middle School to launch an after-school program that provides tutoring and mentoring to the school's refugee students.

PAIR visits Fondren three times a week, and volunteers work closely with refugee students to provide homework help, English-language practice and supportive mentoring. PAIR's goals are not only to help students succeed in school but also to ease their adjustment to the social and cultural aspects of living in the U.S.

M&T relies on a dedicated base of Rice volunteers and a strong partnership with Sharpstown International High School, which now offers M&T as a volunteering opportunity for its students. Our Sharpstown volunteers have added a great dynamic to the M&T program.

Many thanks to the Fondren Middle School staff, who have provided a wealth of support and have helped to make the program a great success.

How PAIR makes an impact



PAIR currently provides three core programs to refugee youth:

Saturday Sessions: More than 25 newly-arrived refugees, ages 12 to 14, spend Saturday afternoons in activities that provide cultural orientation, mentoring, English language practice, and enrichment.

Mentoring & Tutoring: More than 30 refugee youth ages 12 to 14 receive homework help, tutoring, English practice and mentoring after school (see page 1 for more information).

College Counseling: Over 30 high school refugee students are guided through the college application process and motivated to pursue higher education and to reach their full potential.

In addition, PAIR hosts College Orientation Day, a bi-annual event held at Rice University to introduce students to PAIR and the benefits of college. Other activities include field trips and assistance for students who wish to change schools.

Did you know?

This school year, PAIR is working with refugees from the following countries: Afghanistan, Bhutan, Burma, Burundi, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eritrea, Iraq and Vietnam

Introducing PAIR's Staff



Kirstin Doyle – Executive Director

Kirstin joined PAIR as its first executive director in August 2009. Prior to joining PAIR, Kirstin was a financial analyst in the Global Natural Resources investment banking division at Goldman Sachs. Kirstin first became involved with PAIR as a volunteer and French interpreter.

Kirstin graduated from Rice University in 2007 with a double major in French and mathematical economic analysis. She competed for the varsity swimming and cross country teams and also spent time volunteering with the Rice Career Services Center and Amnesty International. We are excited to welcome Kirstin's energy, enthusiasm and varied experiences to PAIR.

Amanda Moualeu – AmeriCorps*VISTA



Amanda joined PAIR in September 2009. Born in Cameroon, Amanda immigrated to the U.S. and dealt with the challenges of adjusting to a new country firsthand.

Amanda has volunteered as a mentor in a middle school Big Sis program and for CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) for abused children.

Amanda graduated with a B.A. in public administration from the University of Texas, Dallas, and plans to attend graduate school in public health. We are excited by the passion, drive and diverse experiences that Amanda brings to our programs.

Maria Burke – AmeriCorps*VISTA



Maria joined the PAIR team in September 2009. Her experiences span various areas, from monitoring and evaluation of programs to teaching. Maria's

international experiences include managing a child learning center in Egypt and teaching English at an elementary school in Sudan.

Maria is currently pursuing a Master's in intercultural service, leadership, and management from SIT Graduate Institute. Her educational and professional experiences coupled with her proven team and youth management skills make her a great fit for PAIR.