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Local Refugee Students Work with High School Mentors to Close the Education Gap

*San Diego Student Tutors Provide Tutoring Support and Peer Mentorship*

*To Refugee Students from Burma*

**San Diego, CA – The Covid-19 induced move to distance learning has been challenging for all students, but its impact is particularly felt in San Diego's refugee community. To meet this challenge, ‘KidByKid.org’ and the ‘Karen Organization of San Diego’ (KOSD) have partnered to address this widening education gap.** Due to the COVID-19 crisis, many refugee community members have lost their jobs and income because many were employed in the foodservice, hospitality, retail, and transportation industries, all of which are among the economy's hardest-hit sectors by the Pandemic. "KOSD has been witnessing how this crisis situation affects youth, experiencing increased familial responsibilities and pressures," said Nao Kabashima, Executive Director, Karen Organization of San Diego. "Refugee youth are often required to adopt a more adult role in their families as they adapt to U.S. culture and learn English faster than their parents. With the COVID crisis, parents are relying on them even more, to navigate through this crisis, seek lifesaving information, and to understand the rapidly changing situations with employment and school."

Now that all students have to navigate distance learning, the need for access to ongoing and intense tutoring support, particularly within refugee communities, is realized more than ever. This is true of the refugee families from Burma, where parents’ ability to help with homework or reading books with their children is impeded due to language barriers; further compounding a difficult situation for these young learners. KOSD and KidByKid.org have been working together since August to provide this support. "These kids need support more than ever. Already well documented within under-served communities, the education gap has been magnified and made dramatically more apparent by the Pandemic and increasing social awareness of disparities and resource short-comings," said Daxton Gutekunst, Founder and President of Kid By Kid. "KidByKid.org is a student-run non-profit that pairs local Middle and High School student volunteer tutors with Elementary and Middle School student learners from under-served communities such as the Karen Organization of San Diego (KOSD). Our partnership has enabled our student tutors to provide life-changing academic opportunities and support via tutoring and mentoring to impact an individual child in our community."

"Thanks to the Kid By Kid, those refugee youth from Burma participating in the program now have ongoing tutoring support and peer mentorship. It helps them to catch up and engage with their school work," said Nao Kabashima. "At the same time, those students now have emotional support from KBK tutors. KOSD and all the parents in the KBK program really appreciate this opportunity." Kid By Kid student volunteer tutors come from schools across the County: The Bishop's School, Francis Parker School, Pacific Ridge School, Academy of Our Lady of Peace, St. Vincent de Paul, School of the Madeleine, Point Loma High School, Mission Bay High School, La Jolla High School and Coronado Middle School, to name a few.

The Kid By Kid and Karen Organization of San Diego Partnership works as follows:

* Families affiliated with KOSD are contacted by KOSD’s Youth Program Coordinator, about the opportunity of free 1-on-1 online tutoring via Kid By Kid. A KBK registration form is completed by KOSD which includes the child's grade, the subjects the child needs help with, any interests, special needs or circumstances;
* The Kid By Kid Team conducts a one-on-one pairing process to best match Learner and Tutor experience and mutual interests; Middle and High School student tutors are mainly drawn from 'Kid By Kid' Service Clubs within individual school chapters;
* Once pairings are determined, KBK coordinates with KOSD to facilitate communication;
* The KOSD Learner's parent or guardian is present during the tutoring session to facilitate the lesson / appointment.

"San Diego's Middle and High School students are keenly aware of many of the obstacles challenging their community," Said Gutekunst. "Combined with their desire to make a positive contribution to future outcomes within the world in which they live, these students represent a huge, untapped resource for change. It is this energy, motivation, and level of optimism that power 'Kid By Kid.' But there is more that can be done."

Everyone in the community can help the children of KOSD and other San Diego's refugee community members during this difficult time.

* Donating to the ethnic community-based organizations (ECBOs) directly serving the refugee communities in San Diego.
* Donating supplies and goods for the families impacted by the Pandemic, through the ECBOs. Needed supplies include: school supplies, diapers, hygiene supplies etc.

To learn more, visit these community organizations that need your support!

* Karen Organization of San Diego (KOSD) [http://karensandiego.org](http://karensandiego.org/)
* International Rescue Committee of San Diego <https://www.rescue.org/united-states/san-diego-ca>

# *About Kid By Kid*

*Kid By Kid is kids helping kids. A 501(c)3 organization founded in 2018, KBK's solution enables Middle and High School students (Tutor / Mentors) to provide life-changing academic opportunity, support, and assistance to under-served Elementary and Middle School-aged immigrant, refugee, and ESL students (Learners). Learn more at https://www.kidbykid.org/*

# *About Karen Organization of San Diego*

*Karen Organization of San Diego (KOSD) was established in 2009 to meet the needs of Karen and other ethnic minority groups from Burma who reside in San Diego. Karen Organization of San Diego is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Karen Organization of San Diego is committed to the educational and social enhancement of various ethnic minority groups from Burma who reside in San Diego. Learn more at https://karensandiego.org/*

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