

## **June 20<sup>th</sup> is World Refugee Day**

In December of 2000, the U.N. General Assembly passed Resolution 55/76, which declared that starting in 2001, June 20<sup>th</sup> would be celebrated as World Refugee Day. Now, every year on June 20<sup>th</sup>, thousands of organizations in dozens of countries come together to focus global attention on the plight of refugees, their determination, their will to survive, and to the contributions they make to their host communities.

On June 20<sup>th</sup>, 2007, the SAVES Program and Miami-Dade County Public Schools held various “World Refugee Day” celebrations throughout the centers where the SAVES Program is offered. Robert Morgan Educational Center prepared their first World Refugee Day celebration and titled it “A New Home, a New Life”. The program included the presentation of flags representing some of the refugees enrolled at this school, a historical look at the meaning of “World Refugee Day”, dance performances, cultural costumes, music and food from the nations represented by the students.

The English Center, a SAVES Program adult education center heavily impacted by refugees and asylees, also held a major World Refugee Day celebration. In the weeks prior to June 20<sup>th</sup>, 2007, staff prepared and posted large posters and signs throughout the school to inform the students, staff and visitors of issues affecting refugees throughout the world. On World Refugee Day, the staff at The English Center prepared and hosted an all day celebration for the school. The focus of the celebration was to inform all those who attended of the struggles of refugees and asylees throughout the world.

The staff at Hialeah-Miami Lakes Adult Center, another SAVES Program adult education center, also planned and held their first World Refugee Day celebration. Students were invited to the event to learn more about the conditions of refugees and asylees throughout the world, who are forced to leave their homelands because of war, religious or political beliefs, or cultural background. Many students were shocked at learning that there are over 14 million refugees worldwide, and discovering the living conditions of the various refugee camps throughout the world.

The SAVES Program and Miami-Dade County Public Schools will continue to observe and celebrate World Refugee Day. In a community that is heavily impacted by refugees and asylees, the importance of recognizing their struggles, obstacles and contributions is paramount in informing the general public.