Spring, 2006 Volume 3, Issue 7

RACCOON

Newsletter of Reconciliation and Culture Cooperative Network

Postovani/a:

Zelim da podijelim sa Vama novosti iz RACCOON-a, dogadjaje koji su se zbivali tokom zime, i o snowboard kampu odrzanom na Igmanu http://balkansnet.org/snow/igman-report.html i Sljemenu http://balkansnet.org/snow/sljeme-report.html. Ozarena lica ucesnika mladih boardera sa fotografije govore puno vise od rijeci! Osim toga susreli smo se sa velikim brojem prijatelja Raccoona u regiji, koji zele da nastavimo saradnju. Prijedorcanka, kojoj smo u akciji prije cetiri godine omogucili da se vrati u svoj stan, nazalost jos uvijek nema posla. No, ona sa velikom inspiracijom govori o njenom angazmanu jer se engleska kompanija, koja je kupila logor, saglasila da naprvi spomen obiljezje u Omarskoj. Povratnica u Sarajevu opisivala nam je stanje u skolstvu, nastavi vjeronauke. No jos vise nas je potreslo stanje u zdravstvu, narocito s kronicno oboljelima, koji nemaju pristupa ni zastiti niti tretmanu.

Zatim je Marija Senjak, direktorka Medike u Zenici predocila, da ipak svih 67 zaposlenih u organizaciji ima osigurana primanja, mada je stopa nezaposlenosti visa od 40% u Bosni. Maja, nasa saradnica iz dinamicne organizacije Krila Nade predocila je tkz. "donor driven programs," kao cinjenicu da uopste nema sredstava za rad sa djecom, mladima, ljudima rizicnih grupa, nalik na nas zimski kamp.

Uprkos ekonomskim nedacama, nada u sretniju buducnost je svugdje prisutna.

Javite mi se na 718 784 9121 ako zelite da razgovaramo o nekim od navedenih problema.

E, sada na posao, da se pobrinemo za zdravstvnu zastitu u drzavi u kojoj zivimo. Ivana Begic prilaze vise detalja o akcijama koje se organizuju u Njujorku. Pridruzite se, saznajte koja su vasa prava za medicinske usluge, koje su dostupne svakom dzepu.

Zbog Vaseg interesovanja, u rad sa RACCOON-om vraca se Shqipe Malushi sa njenim uvijek mastovitim radionicama. Obavijesti o mnogim drugim aktivnostima u Prostoru (RACCOON Space), mnogo raznih desavanja u okviru Immigrants History Week-a, mozete dobiti redovno preko raccoon-announce@yahoogroups.com

Javite se sa Vasim prijedlozima ili informacijama kada god ste u mogucnosti.

Srdacno Vasa,

Indira

In This Issue:

- **Project Nada** - Valuable information on obtaining health care coverage for all immigrants
- **Upcoming Events** - Dayton Discussion, Women's Support Groups,
- **Activities** - Winter Camps for Youths, Language Classes and more

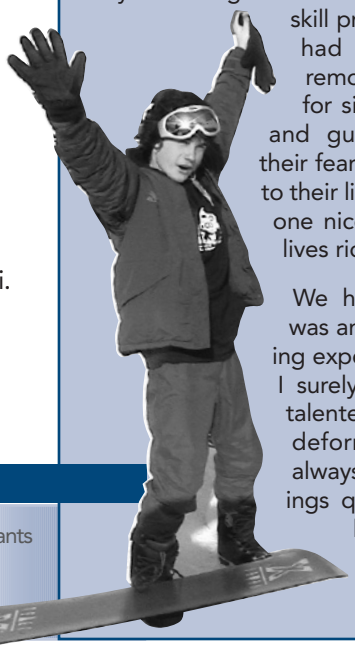
Igman Report: A View From The Slopes

By Ivo Skoric

Twenty-two years ago there were the Winter Olympic Games in Sarajevo. Today, eleven years after the war ended, Sarajevo ski resorts still bear name of the 1984 Olympics. The facilities are mostly as they were left then, if not worse due to destruction by war.

Instead of trail maps, visitors can look over the maps of minefields. And the buying power is so low that the local snowboard shop sells five decks a season.

That said, we did the impossible: We brought 28 kids from various ethnic backgrounds from families devastated by war, kids that are still looking for their missing parent(s), kids that would not have a chance to buy their lift ticket, and we let them slide sideways on Mt. Igman. Some of them learned the skill pretty well. All of them had fun. They were removed from their lives for six unforgettable days and guided in conquering their fears. Now they are back to their lives stronger and with one nice experience in their lives richer.



We had fun, too. And it was an unforgettable learning experience for us as well. I surely will never forget a talented young rider with deformed hands, who always buckled up his bindings quicker than me, and his boundless will to do run after run.

Nada Project

RACCOON has established a forum for psychiatrist, psychologist and social workers who in their work deal with immigrants from Bosnia, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Serbia & Montenegro & Slovenia. This Forum is a space for experts to share their experiences and the challenges they face in addressing the specific needs of immigrants and to better cooperate in helping our constituencies. Next meeting is going to be child specific and scheduled to take place May at the Saint Mark's Institute. Should you want to be participate please contact Indira at 718-784-9121.

Immigrant Health Care Access and Advocacy Collaborative (NYIC) *By Ivana Begic*

One in every four New Yorkers has no health insurance!! Particularly high proportions of individuals without coverage are found among foreign-born populations, young adults and low-income households.

Together with NYIC and other community-based organizations RACCOON has been working on improving and increasing access to health care for low-income uninsured individuals living in New York.

Top health issues for NYIC this year are:

1) To pass hospital billing, collections, and charity care legislation - set basic standards requiring hospitals to inform community members and patients about free and low-cost government insurance, reduced-cost care, free care ("charity care"), and payment options.

2) To Improve private hospitals' accountability for the hundreds of millions of dollars of state funds they receive every year to help offset the cost of caring for uninsured and under-insured patients.

3) To provide funding to New York's public hospital system (HHC) to expand their innovative communication assistance services for limited-English-speaking patients.

4) To fund consumer assistance programs that help newcomers and uninsured New Yorkers to know their rights and to access and pay for health care and insurance.

For more information or to find out how you can get involved call 718-784-9121.

In order to better serve the community Ivana Begic, the Health Coordinator at RACCOON, attended a Middle Management Program at the Institute For Not-For-Profit Management Executive Education, at Columbia University Graduate School of Business. Topics covered in the program ranged from strategic planning and fundraising to budgeting practices. As a participant of this program, Ivana received a solid introduction to general management concepts, developed her leadership skills and business discipline. She hopes to take some of the concepts from the program and apply them in her work at RACCOON.

HHC CHILD HEALTH CLINICS

Facilitated by Ivana Begic on every Tuesday at the RACCOON Space from 11am to 1pm and/or call to set up an appointment. Ivana will field questions and be available for consultation.

HHC operates child health clinics throughout the five boroughs of New York City. These clinics are staffed with pediatricians and nurses who provide a full range of services for infants, children and teens including: sick care, periodic physical examinations and health assessments (screening for sickle cell, lead poisoning, vision and hearing, diabetes, obesity, growth and development); childhood immunizations; health requirements for school entry, day care, and sports physical examinations; education, treatment and management of asthma and other chronic disease conditions. Child Health Clinics are available at little or no cost. Assistance for obtaining health insurance is also available.

For locations please call RACCOON or check the website. http://balkansnet.org/nada.html

New Domestic Violence Outreach Program

By Krista Minteer

The story is a familiar one, yet each person's experience is painfully unique: the woman who hides her bruises, the child who is afraid to go home, the man who cannot find a way to control his rage. Domestic violence is a serious issue that continues to pervade our society. Despite the brochures, the public service announcements, the organizations created solely to help domestic violence victims and their children it is still something that remains hidden – a slow, silent killer which people are reluctant to talk about. And yet, according to recent statistics from the National Center for Injury and Prevention Control, 5.3 million intimate partner violence incidents occur each year against women in the US and 3.2 million incidents occur against men, and experts believe that many more incidents remain unreported.

Studies show that immigrants who are victims of domestic violence are even less likely to report the abuse. This is due in large part to the victim's dependence on the abuser in terms of legal status, economic stability, and language barriers. Many women in immigrant communities, especially those who are new to the country, feel isolated and helpless, at the mercy of their husbands, and in a society that often does not understand the culture and experiences which have shaped their lives. Rather than reaching out for the help and support they need, many women remain suffering in silence.

It is often assumed that organizations dealing with domestic violence are not able to offer services in the languages of the Balkans and do not understand the cultural dimensions involved. Fortunately, this assumption is wrong. NYANA – the New York Association for New Americans – is one organization that understands these dynamics and incorporates them into the work of their Center for Women and Families (see www.nyana.org or call 1-888-242-5838). NYANA offers a hotline, individual and group counseling, crisis intervention, support groups, workshops, and assistance in accessing services such as health care and housing. Language assistance is also offered in a number of languages, including Serbo-Croatian. In addition the Mayor's Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence (http://www.nyc.gov/html/ocdv/html/links/links.shtml) offers a multitude of services and assistance for domestic violence victims ranging from counseling to help finding housing, and has set up a Language Line Program offering translation services for over 140 languages (1-800- 621-HOPE (4673)).

RACCOON staff will also be joining the fight against domestic violence. In March, consultant Krista Minteer attended an all day workshop hosted by the New York Immigration Coalition where she learned about new laws dealing with domestic violence and immigration status. In April, we will hold a workshop bringing together experienced practitioners and individuals interested in developing the skills to recognize and prevent domestic violence. We are also compiling a directory of those organizations that do have services available in the languages of the Former Yugoslavia. This directory will be available both in hard copy and on our website.

If you or someone you know is a victim of domestic violence, please contact any of the sources listed below to receive help. All calls are anonymous and any information you give is strictly confidential.

CONNECT – 212- 683- 0015, http://www.connectnyc.org/index.html
NYANA - 1-888-242-5838, http://www.nyana.org
NYC Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence - 1-800- 621-HOPE (4673), http://www.nyc.gov/html/ocdv/html/links/links.shtml
Safe Horizon - 1-800- 621-HOPE (4673), http://www.safehorizon.org

Upcoming Special Events

Bosnian-Herzegovinian Film Festival

Dear Friends of the Bosnian-Herzegovinian Film Festival (BHFF),

We are pleased to announce that the Third Annual Bosnian-Herzegovinian Film Festival (BHFF™) will take place on May 19 - 21, 2006 at Anthology Film Archives in New York City. As you may already know, BHFF™ is an annual event organized by the Voice of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Inc., and the Academy of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Inc., with a mission to showcase the prolific and award-winning tradition of filmmaking in Bosnia and Herzegovina and enable emerging filmmakers to gain international exposure.

With its repertoire of internationally-acclaimed short, feature and documentary films, BHFF™ has attracted considerable public attention from both the Bosnian-Herzegovinian expatriate community as well as international audiences since its founding in 2003. This year, the festival's organizing committee is working to make the festival a much larger event.

If you, or anyone you know, is interested in being a part of this important cultural event by volunteering or making a financial contribution, or would like to receive more information about BHFF™, please email us at info@bhffnyc.org or subscribe to the BHFF mailing list. Also, please be sure to visit our website at www.bhffnyc.org for updates about the upcoming festival.

Sincerely,
Radio Voice of Bosnia and Herzegovina

Voice of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Inc., is a not-for-profit organization under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Your contributions are tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law. Please support our work and donate by visiting our website http://www.voiceofbh.org/

Celebrate Immigrant History Week

April 17-23, 2006
Stay tuned….Cyber Yugo is coming!

RACCOON is beginning groundwork on an ambitious Internet-based project dedicated to exploring the immigrant experience, collective memory and construction of identity of people from the Western Balkans.

The Cyber Yugo website will combine "fixed" information with forums users can post to, creating a series of dynamic discussions touching on subjects as diverse as nostalgia, civil society or culture shock. Each theme will be illustrated with artworks, photographs, videos and text and will include a moderated public forum.

Learn more by joining Cyber Yugo's key players on April 20 for a panel discussion about the project:

A NIGHT OF CYBER YUGO
Thursday April 20, 2006, 6 pm
Broadway Library
40-20 Broadway
Long Island City, NY 11103
For directions, please call the library at: 718.721.2462
RSVP: 718.784.9121

RACCOON HOUSE PARTY

On February 4, Selma and Goran Avdicevic held a House Party Fundraiser for RACCOON at the beautiful Port Imperial in New Jersey. The guests had an opportunity to sample some of Selma's delicious home cooking as well as delicious California wines, donated for this event by Ana and Fadil Avdicevic. Shquipe Malushi, a long-time friend and consultant at RACCOON, was on hand to "read" the future from the coffee cups. Selma and Goran's guests also had an opportunity to meet board members, staff, consultants, and volunteers, and learn about the current and planned programs.

We would like to thank everyone who was able to attend our gathering and to thank you for your donations.

HOW TO SPONSOR A RACCOON HOUSE PARTY

House Parties are organized around the principle that friends of RACCOON are part of an ever-widening circle, and a small group is the best way for RACCOON to reach out, and for friends to "reach in". If you or someone you know is interested in organizing a House Party Fundraiser for RACCOON, please contact us at (718) 784-9121.

SUPPORT RACCOON! SUPPORT RACCOON! SUPPORT RACCOON!

☐ **Add me to your mailing list or listserv**
☐ **Enclosed is my tax-deductible contribution to support RACCOON, Inc.**

Please, send this form with your check to:
RACCOON, Inc., P.O. Box 20554, New York, NY 10021

Name_____ Amount:_____

Address:_____

City, State, Postal Code: _____

E-mail:_____

RACCOON, Inc.
43-32 22nd Street #301
Long Island City, NY 11101

NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
LIC, NY 11101
PERMIT NO. 926

Regularly Scheduled Raccoon Events

Get involved!

WEEKLY EVENTS

Language Class, level II

Time: *Tuesdays from 6:30pm-8:30pm*
First week in May to end of July
Facilitator: *Bojana Zezelj*
Small class language tutoring in Bosnian, Croatian and Serbian for intermediate level students.
Price: $35 per month ($100 per semester)

Reconciliation through Soccer
Raccoon's Soccer Club

Time: *Thursdays at 8:30pm*
Facilitator: *Amir Cekic*
Come and play soccer at Cornell University (69th St., between 1st & York). Bring running shoes. When weather improves we will play outside. Contact Amir at balkanolog@hotmail.com

Suggested donation: $1

Raccoon

43-32 22nd Street #301
Long Island City, NY 11101
718-784-9121 Fax: 718-784-1858

In the heart of Long Island City, one subway stop away from Manhattan!!

Take E, V to 23rd Street, Ely Ave. or 7, G to Court Square. Call for detailed directions!

Dayton Peace Accords and Bosnia Ten Years After:
The Foreign Journalist's Perspective

With David Rohde, of The New York Times, and guests.
Thursday, May 25, 2006, 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. at RACCOON Space. Contact RACCOON for more information.

WEEKLY EVENT

WRITING WORKSHOP: A CHANCE TO RECALL

In collaboration with the Albanian American Women's Organization (AAWO), RACCOON offers a 12-week writing workshop held by Shqipe Malushi, a poet, writer and a storyteller, to be held every Wednesday, beginning April 19, 2006, and ending June 28, 2006, from 6:00-8:00 pm. The location will be at AAWO offices 481 8th Avenue, Suite 933, (corner of 34th and 8th Avenue), New York, telephone (212) 244-8440.

The workshop will enable the participants to go back to their lives and hear the voices of the past. We will listen to the voices of our grandmothers, mothers, and those voices that we have forgotten in the course of our busy schedules. The workshop method will involve working with memories, storytelling, and reading our own writings. We will employ various formats for writing, including autobiography, journaling, the short story and poetry...the choice will be made by individuals.

The goal of this workshop is to reconnect with our abandoned parts of the self and redefine our identity and our stories in a new light. The expectation is that we all work on twelve chapters of our own book.

MONTHLY EVENT

Women's Gathering at RACCOON

With Nada Khodlova

Our monthly gatherings are a place to learn, support, share, and have fun in the great land of womanhood. Come and join us in a variety of topics for exploration, such as traditional dance, celebrating women's history month, the arts, women and children, women's crafts, body image, and more! Guest presenters and video presentation will be included.

All meetings are held at the RACCOON Space, on Thursday evenings, from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m., on the following dates: April 27th, and May 18th.