



Tutoring Program Helps Immigrant Teens Trying to Transition from War or Religions Prosecution

*Gina Baleria for KCBS-740 AM
Posted on cbs5.com*

(KCBS) - Many teens who come to the Bay Area after fleeing war or religious persecution often face a rocky transition as they deal with a new language, different cultural mores and traditions and conflicts between family and society.

KCBS reporter Patti Reising says a new program helps young people adjust to American life by focusing on academic tutoring and human connection.

San Francisco-based Refugee Transitions has been helping immigrant and refugee families since 1990, and it has just started a tutoring program for teens.

"The adults are often traumatized. The youth are concerned for the parents, and that affects them attending school," said Laura Vaudreuil, executive director of Refugee Transitions.

"They're trying to bridge two cultures and each have different values. They want to be like other kids, but their parents want them to follow their tradition."

"A lot of the youth will come to the US and will have missed out on a year or two of school, or their school was interrupted by the war," she said. "This just gives them the opportunity to get the support that they need and that they're maybe not getting in large classrooms at school."

Tutors go into the home and offer one-on-one help to teens.

"It's a great experience for volunteers, because they oftentimes become part of the family. They go into the student's home and learn about a new culture," said Vaudreuil. "With the tutoring, the youth [and parents] are able to develop a trusting relationship with somebody in this new culture."

There's already a waiting list for the services of Refugee Transitions. Volunteers are asked to commit to two hours a week for six months.

For more information go to <http://www.reftrans.org> or call 415-989-2151.