

The Bhutanese Family Cultural Orientation in Houston

The Bhutanese Family Cultural Orientation in Houston (BFCOH) is a small ethnic community-based organization located in Houston, Texas. The mission of the BFCOH is to provide cultural and community orientation (CO) classes for newly arrived Bhutanese refugees.

The BFCOH began offering CO classes for adults in October 2010. Sessions are provided on Saturdays once a month for five hours each. Topics of discussion during the CO classes include appropriate greetings, health, job readiness, transportation, documents and paperwork, safety (in the home and outside), services available, money management, and education in the Houston area. CO classes at the BFCOH are provided in Nepali, so no interpretation is needed, although the BFCOH does offer volunteer interpretation for families who need assistance with visits to service providers or for other purposes.

The BFCOH is organized by Loaves and Fishes soup kitchen, the Bhutanese Community of Houston, and the Canaan Bhutanese Church. Loaves and Fishes soup kitchen provides food and emotional support to those in need. The Bhutanese Community of Houston plans cultural community events, provides medical assistance (e.g., finding dental support, transportation to appointments), and assists in the initial resettlement of newly arrived families. The Canaan Bhutanese Church offers services, activities, gathering, social networks, and workshops to the Bhutanese community in the Greater Houston area.

Pictures from and information shared at the CO classes can be found on the Bhutanese Family Cultural Orientation in Houston blog at <http://bfcoh.blogspot.com/>. Some information provided during the CO sessions is found on the blog, in English or Nepali. A number of key vocabulary words are also available in Nepali, such as “food stamps” and “Medicaid.”

There are approximately 1,100 Bhutanese living in the Greater Houston area, about 400 of those adults. The BFCOH is interested in partnering with other organizations in the area to enhance and expand services to this community in the future. Additional plans of the BFCOH include citizenship classes for those in the Houston area for longer than four years, ESL classes, and women’s empowerment workshops.

Links:

- Bhutanese Family Cultural Orientation in Houston (BFCOH) (<http://bfcoh.blogspot.com/>)
- Loaves and Fishes Soup Kitchen (<http://www.magnificathouse.org/LoavesFishes.htm>)
- Bhutanese Community of Houston (<http://bhutaneseofhouston.blogspot.com/2010/12/my-love-rai.html>)
- Canaan Bhutanese Church (<http://canaanbhutanese.blogspot.com/>)

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