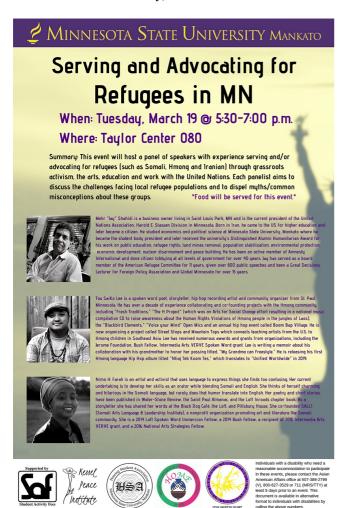
## March 19: Panel Discussion on Serving, Advocating for Refugees

Event is in Taylor Center, Room 080.

Minnesota State University, Mankato Media Relations Office News Release, 3-5-2019



Mankato, Minn. – Minnesota State University, Mankato's Kessel Peace Institute and the University's Center for Asian American Affairs are hosting a panel discussion on "Serving and Advocating for Refugees in Minnesota" Tuesday, March 19 from 5:30-7 p.m. in the University's Taylor Center, Room 080 (located on <u>building's lower level</u>).

The event, free and open to the public, will host a panel of three speakers with experience serving and/or advocating for refugees through grassroots activism, the arts, education and work with the United Nations. Each panelist will aim to discuss the challenges facing local refugee populations and to dispel myths and common misconceptions about these groups.

For more information, contact Carol Glasser, assistant director of sociology and director of the Kessel Peace Institute, by phone at 507-389-1345 or by email at <a href="mailto:peace@mnsu.edu">peace@mnsu.edu</a>.

The event organizers provided the following information about the panelists:

- Mehr "Jay" Shahidi is a business owner living in St. Louis Park, Minn., and is the current president of the United Nations Association, Harold E. Stassen Division in Minnesota. Born in Iran, he came to the U.S. for higher education and later became a citizen. He studied economics and political science at Minnesota State Mankato, where he became the student body president and later received the university's Distinguished Alumni Humanitarian Award.
- Tou SaiKo Lee is a spoken word poet, storyteller, hip hop recording artist and community organizer from St. Paul, Minn. He has over a decade of experience collaborating and co-founding projects with the Hmong community. Among those projects was "The H Project," which was an Arts for Social Change effort resulting in a national music compilation CD to raise awareness about the Human Rights Violations of Hmong people in the jungles of Laos.
- Nimo H. Farah is an artist and activist that uses language to express things she finds too confusing. Her current undertaking is to develop her skills as an orator while blending Somali and English. She co-founded SALLI (Somali Arts Language & Leadership Institute), a nonprofit organization promoting art and literature the Somali community.

The event is presented by the Kessel Peace Institute and Minnesota State Mankato's Center for Asian American Affairs. The event cosponsors are two registered student organizations – the Hmong Student Association and Hmong Opportunities Made Equal.

The <u>Kessel Institute for the Study of Peace and Change</u> is dedicated to advancing the understanding and the existence of peace at all levels, from the individual to the global community. It is named after the late Abbas Kessel, a lifelong peace activist who received a doctorate from the University of Chicago in 1956 and was a Minnesota State Mankato political science professor for 19 years. Kessel

died in 1987 of leukemia.

Kessel Institute for the Study of Peace and Change activities are coordinated by an advisory council that works through the dean of the <a href="College of Social and Behavioral Sciences">College of Social and Behavioral Sciences</a> at Minnesota State Mankato.

Minnesota State Mankato, a comprehensive university with 14,227 students, is part of the Minnesota State system, which includes 30 colleges and seven universities.