

I N T E R N A T I O N A L I N S T I T U T E

Serving immigrants and refugees since 1921

Summer 2003

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IIRI Develops Holistic & Whole Family Programs

Keeping client needs in mind, the Institute has focused its attention on programs that operate in the context of people's lives and address obstacles to personal and family self-sufficiency. The result: The Institute continues to refine its adult education curricula, has created new multi-services programs, and in the past year, opened a whole family services center at 334 Pleasant Street in Pawtucket complete with the elementary International Charter School.

Through collaborations with state & nonprofit agencies, in-house staff, and clients, the **Education & Training Program** has developed curricular components at all levels of language learning concerning financial literacy, job readiness, family, health, computers, and community action. The curriculum builds self-reliance with direct impact on families.

Perhaps the culmination of this work has been the development of community learning projects. Some examples are a multi-class project to learn about Islam through a visit to a mosque, interviews with Muslims (including students), a guest appearance by International Institute Citizenship attorney Carl Krueger to discuss the USA PATRIOT Act, and a panel discussion; a research and community project to document rises in home heating costs and develop a plan for greater future affordability; and a research project on US Presidents to make an informative bulletin board.

Efforts to reach out more directly to our clients led to the development of new **Multi-services Programs**. Community workshops offered by the Feinstein Center for Citizenship and Immigration Services, the Minority Health Promotion Center, and Employment Services are conducted around class times to enhance curriculum and unite community and program participants. The Employment Services Center has teamed with Education to meet the language needs of its clients in the Refugee Match Grant and Family Independence programs. Finally, a unique partnership between the Minority Health Promotion Center, Brown University medical

students, and Translating & Interpreting has prepared the Brown medical students to work better in multicultural and multilingual environments. These students then volunteer at the Institute's new Wellness Center.

Our new **Second Home in Pawtucket** offers exciting opportunities to enhance outreach to children and develop family programs. In this first year of operation, the second site has enrolled 150 children at the charter school, run two adult classes in ESL and Citizenship, started a homework club for children of enrolled adult students, and run a citizenship workshop and a health fair.

Adult students in Pawtucket come from Colombia, Poland, El Salvador, and Nigeria. In characterizing her class, ESL Facilitator Elizabeth Jardine said, "We've had a little of everything. One

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One of many family moments in Pawtucket

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OF RHODE ISLAND**

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401-784-8644

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401-784-8625

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401-784-8637

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401-784-8611

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401-784-8649

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401-784-8628

Education Success

News flash: Learning is infectious! The latest demonstrations of this well-known truism can be found in the morning ESL classes at the Institute.

Jean Delva arrived from Haiti with his sister on March 4, 2002, after complet-



Hilda Baranoff & Jean Delva get together during a class break.

ing his secondary studies at an American school in Haiti. The nephew of educators, Jean and his sister had no choice but to learn Spanish from one uncle and speak English with another. Since coming to the United States, Jean enhanced his English by “reading a lot of books and . . . cartoons . . . watching cartoons.” At the Institute, Jean has already advanced through two levels of ESL and been accepted to study Pharmacy at CCRI.

Like Jean, Hilda Baranoff has advanced through two levels of ESL this year after completing a citizenship course last year.

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student has an engineering Ph.D., another was a special education teacher in El Salvador, and a former Colombian politician. So far, we’ve also experienced birth, marriage, and a baby shower.” The use of charter school classrooms and the addition of the homework club have contributed to the overall family atmosphere of evening programming at the Pawtucket site. The homework club, organized by Afshan Ajmiri and staffed by Shea High School students, provides organized

An energy-filled septuagenarian from Chepachet by way of Argentina, Hilda is a fixture in the mornings dispensing friendly advice to her classmates and running between Chepachet, Gloucester, and Scituate to play piano for elders at local senior centers. Hilda is always willing to discuss and play music. In December, she played

Argentinian folk music and Tchaikovsky at the Institute’s holiday party.

It is hard to imagine a day when Jean and Hilda do not seek new learning opportunities. Their energy, enthusiasm, and genuine concern for others are quite contagious. Upon hearing that Jean had once considered pursuing police work, Hilda interrupted, “Oh no. Not police work. Too dangerous.” Without missing a beat, she continued, “Jean, if you like music, I know a restaurant . . .” Jean and Hilda learn from each other as we do from them on a daily basis.

activities and open study time for children of adult students. On homework club nights, parents and children reunite to share their night’s adventures during class breaks.

At the Institute, self-sufficiency and community participation are needs best met through consideration of whole people and whole families. As one of Jardine’s students declared during an evaluation conference, “Everywhere I used to go, I was always afraid to speak, but now I’m not afraid of anything. I feel confident.” Enough said.

17th Annual Spring Carnival Ball

Cultural Extravaganza at Rhodes-on-the-Pawtuxet Raises \$103,000 for Rhode Island's

Right: Diane Rodriguez and a Big Nazo floutist greet guests.



Below: Afshan Ajmiri delights in the glow of the mock fires provided by WaterFire Providence.



Above: Roseangela Parsons poses with A Big Nazo performer.

Special Thanks to all our amazing volunteers & sponsors who made the 17th Annual Spring Carnival Ball a great success!



Above Middle: Bill Shuey and Conny Pestana-Bowden celebrate the 17th Annual Spring Carnival Ball in style.

Left: IIRI colleagues Firewoine Kassahun, Ntaganda Ntiziharwa, Baha Sadr, and Marlene Dehlinger celebrate Rhode Island's cultural diversity.

More thanks to the night's fabulous entertainment featuring the spectacular Honduran band La Fuerza Brava, a bevy of Big Nazo Characters, the stunning Middle Eastern dance troupe Dunya, a colorful Chinese dragon performance courtesy of Sunny Ng, and mock fires from WaterFire Providence. Also, our sincere gratitude to our Co-Chairs Neil Steinberg & Genie Shao from Fleet Bank for their creativity and guidance.

Mark your calendars for next year's ball on March 20, 2004!

IIRI's Courthouse Presence



Suzanne Janke on the job

For six years, the Institute's Renaissance woman Suzanne Janke, first floor receptionist, interior decorating consultant, emergency substitute in translating and interpreting, and overall craftswoman, has spent her mornings offering, on a daily basis, Spanish language assistance to an estimated 100-150 Spanish speaking visitors to the J. Joseph Garrahy Judicial Complex in Providence. Please say "¡Hola!" if you see her at her typical spot on the first floor by the rear entrance.

Tobacco Control Picks Up Momentum with Two New Initiatives

Tobacco Control Coordinator Baha Sadr and his program staff have become familiar faces on Capital Hill. The program is now lobbying for two bills before state legislators, spearheading the campaign for fire-safe cigarettes and joining with the Campaign for Healthy Rhode Island to eliminate workplace smoking.

Teaming with Employment Case Manager Jessica Schweiger, the Tobacco Control Program recruited and trained 20 survey administrators, who are meeting with area youngsters and distributing surveys to determine risk behaviors among youths, including use of alcohol, tobacco, and drugs. Initiative funding has come through the U.S. Center for Disease Control and the Rhode Island Department of Health.

The Institute is Sought After for its Expertise

IN REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT... In April, the International Institute was graced by the presence of Augustine Addeh from Ghana and Andrea Vercoe from Moscow. Augustine and Andrea are refugee facilitators for their respective countries and came to the United States to share and assess refugee cultural orientation programs and materials. They visited with Resettlement staff from the Institute, Catholic Charities, Jewish Family Services, and the RI Office of Refugee Resettlement. Later, the contingent toured and lunched at Hope Webbing, a prominent employer of Russian refugees. Their whirlwind visit concluded with a trip to the homes of recently arrived families from Russia and Liberia.



Andrea Vercoe and Jessica Schweiger

been honored with an invitation to present her workshop entitled "Assessment: What is it, why does it matter, and what do we do about it?" at the RI State Conference for Adult Education on May 15. In this workshop, Nazneen will present an overview of the rationale behind assessment that can inform classroom work and also translate into progress reports for funders.

IN MINORITY HEALTH... Minority Health Promotion Center Director Betty Johnson Simons has been named to serve on the Minority Health Advisory Committee for the RI Department of Health. Betty will work with the committee to advise the Health Director on matters of minority health policy and provide information about the quality of health services to minorities in the state.

IN EDUCATION... Education & Training Director Nazneen Rahman has

DRAW YOUR OWN CONCLUSIONS...

Number of UN-identified Persons of Concern in 2002: 19,783,100

Source: UNHCR Webpage on 5/1/03

2003 U.S. refugee admissions ceiling & number admitted by 3/31: 70,000 & 6,647

Source: Cultural Orientation Project, May 2003

Percentage of Allocation Admitted for Regions of Suspected Terrorist Origin: 21.5

Source: Cultural Orientation Project, May 2003

Percentage of Allocation Admitted for Africa and Latin America & Caribbean: 7 and 1

Source: Cultural Orientation Project, May 2003

Number of New England states that spend less than RI for adult education: 0

Source: May 2002 Testimony before RI House Finance Committee

Percentage of RI adults who are functionally illiterate: 46

Source: National Literacy Survey, 1997

Waiting List figures for IIRI English classes in fiscal year 2003: 1,000-2,500

Source: IIRI Education & Training Program Reports

Increased Processing Time in months for U.S. Citizenship after Sept. 11, 2001: 6-10

Source: Feinstein Center for Citizenship and Immigration Services Program Reports

Percentages of fully employed Institute clients, clients without health insurance, RI adults without insurance: 85, 37, 9.5

IIRI Program Reports & RIte Share Evaluation Studies, April 2002

Grand Openings

THE EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

CENTER now serves the broader immigrant community of Rhode Island. Located in Room 220 at our Providence site, the Center houses programs in FIP vocational & language training, Match Grant, and Refugee Employment Assistance. Employment Center programs feature vocational training, computer and English classes, and job readiness workshops for the purpose of increasing client self-sufficiency. Employment Case Managers are available by appointment. Please stop by Room 220 or call 784-8624 to talk to a case manager, make client referrals, check employment-related postings, or use the computer workstation.

“KING ZAHAK AND THE TEMPTATIONS OF TOBACCO”, a life-size puppet theater production of an Iranian folktale adapted for use in tobacco control education, will be performed on May 31 as part of the Institute’s world tobacco day festival in



King Zahak

our Providence parking lot from 11:00-3:00. Thanks to a world tobacco day grant and RIDOH funding, the public event includes theater, food, music, and crafts. Please call 784-8613 for more information.

THE WELLNESS CENTER opened in February and is located on the second floor of our Providence site. Staffed by a part-time nurse, social work intern, and volunteers, the center provides a safe place to ask health questions, receive guidance, and learn about the American health care system. Please stop by Mondays and Wednesdays from 11:30-2:00 to have your questions answered today!

Myth Vs. Fact...

New United States Immigration Policies and Regulations

MYTH 1:

“Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free.”
-Emma Lazarus, “The New Colossus”/ Inscribed on Statue of Liberty

FACTS:

- *The USA PATRIOT Act expands Justice Department surveillance powers, permits the FBI to infiltrate churches, mosques, and political groups under suspicion of terrorism, allows secret detention of foreigners, and allows government exemptions from the Freedom of Information Act.
- *New Special Registration regulations (NSEERS) require men over 16 from designated countries to register upon entry and report activities and whereabouts within 30 days.
- *INS invoked NSEERS special registration retroactively against Iranians, Lybians, Sudanese, Syrians, Afghanis, Algerians, Bahranians, Eritreans, Lebanese, Moroccans, North Koreans, Omanis, Qataris, Somalians, Tunisians, and Yemenis already in U.S.
- *Attorney General John Ashcroft reduced the Immigration Board of Appeals from 19 to 11 staff members and accelerated schedules and time limits.
- *The INS has been transferred from the Department of Justice to the Department for Homeland Security and divided into three separate federal agencies.
- *Draft of new DSEA (Patriot Act II) legislation contains provisions to authorize secret arrests, open immigration files to local police, broaden citizenship recissions, authorize summary deportations, expand expedited removals, and authorize removal to non-recognized countries.

MYTH 2:

All Americans support NSEERS, Patriot Act, and DSEA as necessary sacrifices for national security.

FACTS:

- *A coalition of 83 academic, business, professional, and cultural organizations have signed a letter addressed to secretaries of state and officials at Homeland Security protesting against exorbitant VISA delays which hinder activities abroad and have negative impacts for the national economy.
- *Simultaneous worldwide protests against Bush Administration policies have been orchestrated since January.
- *Class Action Suit filed by the Arab Anti-Defamation Committee and supporters.
- *Congressional Edward Kennedy, Russ Feingold, and Russ Conyers oppose NSEERS.

Source: International Institute of San Francisco Annual Report (2003)



The International Institute of Rhode Island, Inc.

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Our sincere appreciation to Fleet Bank and Fleet Works for their volunteer painting efforts.

Upcoming Events

- May 28:** Tobacco Control May Breakfast
Room 213
- May 29-30** Adult Ed. Graduation
- May 31:** World No Tobacco Day Festival
Institute Parking Lot 11am-3pm
- July 13:** Inter-Cultural Soccer Festival
India Point Park
- October 2:** Annual Board Meeting

Tune to 88.1 FM at 9AM every Saturday for
IIRI's Spanish language radio show

In September look for the start of the
2003-2004 Academic Year