



# 2010 annual report

JULY 2009 – JUNE 2010



## A Message from the Executive Director

As IIRI approaches its 90th anniversary in 2011, it is gratifying to know that the agency, perhaps now more than ever, continues to be both a relevant and essential resource within the Rhode Island non-profit landscape. With a foreign born population in Rhode Island of 15%, IIRI continues to be the leader in providing innovative and high quality programs and services that enable immigrants and refugees to become self-reliant, contributing members of our community. Today's newcomers, like our ancestors who arrived here in generations past, are highly motivated to participate in language and skills development learning opportunities, to work hard and long hours, and to become contributing and productive members of our community as quickly as possible.

In order to effectively serve today's immigrant and refugee clients, we are pleased to be part of an important trend which has seen volunteerism and collaborations expand to provide programs and services effectively and efficiently. This past year, our students and clients benefited from the assistance of over 250 volunteers and the partnerships of over 170 organizations, including faith-based groups, schools, universities, corporations, hospitals and other non-profits. We are grateful to all of the volunteers and organizations who choose to contribute their time and talents to our mission.

This past year IIRI served 16,000 individuals and families on their paths to the American Dream. In these tough economic times, we have had to make do with less, but I am happy to report that we have not sacrificed any essential programs or services that our clients need and want. In fact, we have continued to innovate and in some cases expand our programs to meet the ever changing needs of

the community. In response to a growing demand for factual information about immigration law, IIRI hosted a conference for the community called *Beyond Borders*, which brought together local experts in the field to share their knowledge and promote rational dialogue around policy issues. We partnered with the U.S. Census Bureau to promote participation in the Census, encouraging all community members to be counted. As a member of the Rhode Island Citizenship Consortium, we helped to educate area residents about the citizenship process and local resources available to help them on the path to citizenship. We are pleased that our efforts to secure funding for a new Low Literacy Initiative were successful and we are now able to provide needed classes to a previously underserved population. IIRI made a new program commitment this year to provide holistic case management to Victims of Human Trafficking, and we have already successfully served several victims of labor trafficking. IIRI is also extremely fortunate, though the efforts of Senator Jack Reed, to secure building renovation funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, which has allowed us to upgrade and modernize our building, providing a safer, more inviting setting for our staff, clients, and visitors.

I look forward to the coming year—our 90th anniversary—as a time for reflection on the contributions and successes of immigrants and refugees in our community, and as a time for celebration of our staff, Board of Directors, funders, volunteers, community partners, clients, and community members who continue to be dedicated to our mission. We thank you for the part you have played in helping us continue to keep the American dream alive and well for thousands of newcomers.

**IIRI continues to be the leader in providing innovative and high quality programs and services that enable immigrants and refugees to become self-reliant, contributing members of our community.**



*Bill Shuey*  
Bill Shuey,  
Executive Director

# Fiscal Year 2010

## Serving Newcomers Strengthening Rhode Island

As the state's largest and longest-running immigrant and refugee service provider, IIRI opens a new world of possibilities for newcomers by providing a holistic approach to their education, resettlement, skills development, legal immigration, citizenship, and interpreting needs. Programs are built on a strong foundation of research, past experience, and best practices, ensuring that we meet direct client needs and empower newcomers to positively contribute to society. Since 1921, IIRI has been a vital part of the community and has been recognized as *the* place where immigrants and refugees receive the help they need as they begin their journey towards attaining the American Dream.

In FY 2010, we provided over 23,000 direct services to over 5,800 clients. We touched the lives of over 11,000 community members with advice, referrals, and workshops. With an open and welcoming environment, we served newcomers from 106 different countries across the globe who have chosen to make Rhode Island their new home.

## Improving Skills and Knowledge For a Better Future

**536** motivated adult learners improved their English language skills in reading, writing, and speaking

**134** future citizens gained in-depth knowledge of U.S. Civics to pass the Citizenship exam

**230** immigrants and refugees enhanced their job skills and prospects through intensive work training programs

**1,866** community members learned about immigrants rights and proposed legislation impacting immigrant communities

**1,800** community members attended free health workshops, clinics and events to improve or maintain healthy lifestyles

## Making Their Way Towards the American Dream

**1,789** clients worked with IIRI caseworkers to apply for green cards, citizenship, and to reunify their families here in the US

Over **7,000** community members received free legal immigration advice and referrals from an experienced attorney and federally accredited caseworkers

**217** newly arriving refugees were warmly welcomed and assisted with obtaining a first apartment, medical checkups, school registration and educational opportunities and referrals

**108** refugees worked with IIRI job developers and obtained full or part time employment

## Receiving Help Along the Way

**436** refugees received assistance with heating & utilities, health issues, and other critical needs

**306** low income families benefited from free, high quality income tax preparation

Over **2,600** community members benefited from high quality interpreting and translating services in healthcare, education, and legal settings

## Statement of Revenue

Public Grants and Contracts	\$1,778,605
Private Grants	\$661,863
Contributions, Special Events and Donated Services	\$254,010
Earned Income	\$786,928
Assets Released from Restrictions and Other Misc.	\$78,702
Net Investment return	\$92,985
<b>Total Unrestricted Support, Revenues and Other</b>	<b>\$3,653,093</b>

## Statement of Expenses

<b>Program Services:</b>	
Social	\$2,228,244
Educational	\$799,988
Total Program Services	\$3,028,232
<b>Supporting Services</b>	
General Overhead and Administration	\$342,182
Fundraising	\$198,102
Total Supporting Services	\$540,284
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$3,568,516</b>

**Net Increase in unrestricted net assets** **\$84,577**

## Statement of Assets

<b>Current Assets</b>	
Cash	\$327,281
Grants, Pledges and Other Accounts Receivable	\$187,011
Prepaid Expenses and Other Assets	\$53,878
Investments	\$1,019,920
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,588,090</b>
Property and Equipment	\$1,286,954
Total Assets	\$2,875,044

## Statement of Liabilities

Total Current Liabilities	\$245,525
Total Long Term Liabilities	\$0
Total Liabilities	\$245,525
Total Unrestricted Assets	\$2,257,191
Total Restricted Assets	\$372,328
<b>Total Net Assets</b>	<b>\$2,629,519</b>
<b>Total Liabilities and Net Assets</b>	<b>\$2,875,044</b>

Based on audited statement issued September 28, 2010 for Fiscal Year ended June 30, 2010.

# Achieving the... American Dream

My name is Andres Flores; I was born in 1991 in the city of Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. I am the first born of two children and the only son in our family. We received residency in May of 2001 and arrived to Providence, Rhode Island a year later in 2002. I was 11 at the time so my transition into the public school system was easy despite the change. It is only now when I look back at the past 9 years that I realize how far we have gotten.



My transition into the community of Providence started in the 7th grade when I joined the ESL students at Roger Williams Middle school. I risk sounding cliché when I say that the school and my classmates seemed foreign in those first few months. It was in this school where I was introduced to the subjects that would shape where I stand now. In my history class for example we spent almost a year focusing on International Relations stating with geography, going over U.S. history and the immigration exam, and then ending with relations between nations.

By this time I had already tested out of the ESL program and had adopted the tendency to speak English with my sister at home. The four years that followed saw our family move 3 times. We also went from walking in the snow all winter to getting the first family car. During this period I was not only a student but a mediator between my parents and the English speaking community. This role served as a crash course into future independency. By the time I applied for college I was well aware of what this meant to my family. For my parents it meant that their sacrifice was going to pay off. For my sister it meant that she would have support every step of the way.

In the spring of 2008 I graduated from high school and in the fall of that same year started as a student of Providence College. Despite entering as an Engineering Major I changed my degree to Global Studies since it was the major which provided me with the knowledge and the tools to explore language, culture, and international relations. This major introduced me to the

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**Over 250 interns and volunteers assisted IIRI clients and students this year.** Andres is one of over 50 interns in the Citizenship and Immigration department from local colleges, universities, and high schools. Daily they assist clients and staff answering client's immigration questions, helping process paperwork, and doing vital advocacy research and community outreach. We are honored to participate in their education, and thrilled that our clients and students can receive even more quality services because of this volunteer workforce.



## Achieving the **American Dream** (Continued)

International Institute Rhode Island. As an Intern there I was able to experience and understand myself as an immigrant from an outside perspective. My interactions with the staff and the clients helped me develop a new philosophy of what it meant to be a member of the community of Providence, the U.S. and the world. I became a citizen of the U.S. in February of 2010 and my experiences have made me reconsider what it meant to be a citizen in the global community.

When I graduate in 2012 I will have completed the first step of many towards working with the international community. I am grateful for the aid that my family and mentors provided me. Thanks to this I can use the knowledge and the relationships I have gained in order to keep on growing.

## A Learning Community Takes to the **Soccer Field**

Edwin, an ESL student, and Aristido, a refugee client, are the co-coaches for a team of 20 young immigrant and refugee soccer players who all met at International Institute. On a wet and chilly day last April the “International All-Stars” took third place in the English For Action (EFA) Soccer Tournament. Not bad for a group that had only been able to practice on Saturdays due to their busy work and school schedules.

All of the International All-Stars are students at IIRI in ESL and Refugee Life Skills classes. Players hail from across the globe – Brazil, Nepal, Guatemala, Equatorial Guinea. They speak a multitude of languages. They all share the common threads of making a new life in a new homeland AND their love of soccer. One of the key values at IIRI is creating community, and without much ado, a group of IIRI students and staff rallied a team for this year’s EFA Tournament.

“The emotional support and friendships that students find in our classrooms are so important,” says Nazneen Rahman, Director of Education & Training at IIRI.



*“Creating a sense of community across cultures and bringing people together to share common interests and goals outside the classroom setting contributes greatly to their overall success. It is especially gratifying to see these students, who have so many day to day struggles in their lives, coming together as a team with such energy and enthusiasm. In our classroom programs, we always encourage students to find ways to build community and support each others efforts.”*



Edwin came to Providence seven years ago and has been taking ESL classes at IIRI for the past three years. He’s 21 now and working in a restaurant full-time. In June he graduated

from IIRI’s highest level ESL class. “I knew I had to get better English to get a better job,” Edwin said at his graduation. In addition to his improved English, IIRI has taught him how to work with others to learn, to problem solve, and to find pathways to success.

Aristido’s story is a little different. He and his family came to Providence as refugees – victims of a corrupt government in Equatorial Guinea in West Africa. At age 19, Aristido had mastered several languages spoken in his homeland and now, with the help of IIRI’s Refugee Skill classes, he has added English to his list. A hardworking and ambitious individual, he is studying at Rhode Island Community College to prepare for a career in the medical field.

This was the second year that the IIRI All-Stars played in the EFA Tournament. Many returning students are looking

# One Family’s Journey

## From Iranian Refugees, to RI Small Business Owners

Parviz, Farede, and their baby daughter arrived in Providence in February 2009. Originally from the Eastern Azarbayjan (Uremia), Iran, they fled their country in 2005 and waited in Turkey for four years before being resettled in their new home in Providence. Now through hard work and entrepreneurship, they are about to help Rhode Island’s faltering economy by becoming new business owners.

Parviz was a Track and Field champion in Iran in the Iranian Youth Championships. He received a degree in Physical Education from the University of Urumia in 2002. Shortly after graduation, he opened a health club specializing in sports medicine and sport injuries. Farede, with a degree in Public Health and Nutrition, worked at the Iranian Social Security Office and in the health club. They successfully managed the 150-member club for two years before the political conflict in Iran forced them to gather their belongings in the night and run to Turkey. During their last years in Iran, Parviz was imprisoned three times because of his family’s political views. They knew the

Iranian government was watching them and they were not safe. Their best – perhaps only – option was to leave their relatives, friends, and business behind and head for Turkey.

They lived in limbo in Turkey for four years. The Turkish government would not allow them citizenship or any benefits including health insurance. They could not plan for the future. Parviz made the best of this transition time and pursued a career in the culinary arts. He started as a cook and was soon managing a successful chain restaurant in Istanbul. Farede was unable to find work outside the home. They patiently waited for a permanent resettlement situation. Their daughter was only a few weeks old when they received news that they would be resettled in the United States. Shortly before they were to leave Turkey, Farede became ill. They spent their hard earned savings on her healthcare. The family arrived in Providence with \$300.

Along with IIRI Caseworkers, the small Iranian community in Providence greeted the young family upon arrival. Parviz and Farede could finally



start their lives over. First things first – language skills: Parviz and Farede immediately enrolled in ESL classes at IIRI. After several weeks of study and armed with some basic English, Parviz asked for a ride to some local restaurants to look for work. His first stop was Effendi’s in Cranston where he

**Parviz has been working hard to open his own restaurant in Cranston.**

walked out with a job. He quickly adapted his cooking style to meet U.S. tastes and learned U.S. restaurant standards. Within a year, Parviz was promoted to “Chef” – the top person at the restaurant for daily operations.

On the home front, Farede and Parviz welcomed their second child into the

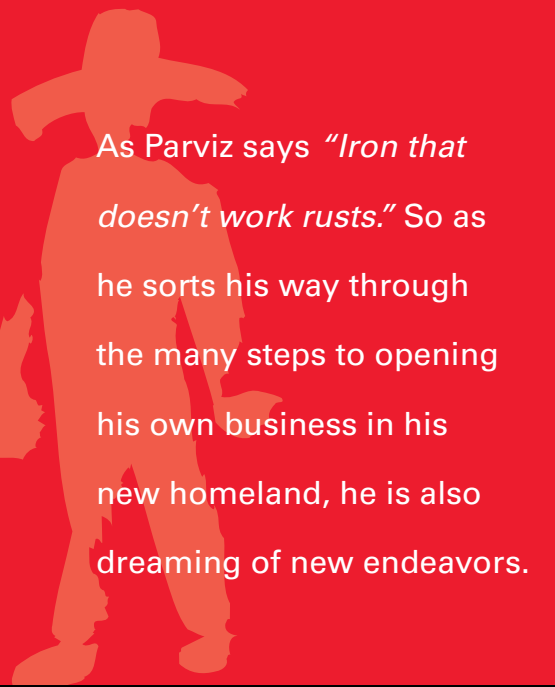
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## “Iron That Does Not Work Will Rust”

forward to next year’s matches, and our graduates are hoping they can come back and play too. The spirit of IIRI’s learning community has spilled out of the classroom and is flourishing on playgrounds and fields all across Providence.

Edwin and Aristido are not sure they will coach again next year – but they both hope to keep playing for the International All-Stars – because next year they plan to win the cup!





As Parviz says *“Iron that doesn’t work rusts.”* So as he sorts his way through the many steps to opening his own business in his new homeland, he is also dreaming of new endeavors.

### One Family’s Journey (Continued)

family – a little boy. With the help of the Good News Garage, they purchased a car. Their English improved, their family grew, and they put down new roots in a new homeland. But Parviz could not stop dreaming of owning his own business again.

This fall Parviz began working to open his own restaurant in Cranston. His new endeavor, yet to be named, will feature Mediterranean and American food. There will be a dining room, separate take-out section, as well as a small market. He is busy sorting out permits, hiring staff, meeting with investors, and securing suppliers. As Parviz says *“Iron that doesn’t work rusts.”* He misses teaching and coaching. So, as soon as the restaurant is up and running, he is going to volunteer to coach volleyball. Maybe an adult recreation league, maybe kids, as long as he can work with people and give something back to his community.

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to the donors to our Annual Campaign, Spring Carnival Ball, and special Refugee Resettlement appeals.

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Because of support from the following individuals and organizations, International Institute Rhode Island continues to make a critical difference for thousands of the state's newest arrivals each year. This support helps us keep our doors open to some of our community's most vulnerable people.

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## **Our Mission**

**International Institute**  
Rhode Island's mission is  
to enable all area residents,  
especially immigrants and  
refugees, to become self-  
reliant, invested participants  
in our communities, while  
fostering respect and under-  
standing among all people.



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