

2001 Annual Report of the International Institute

New Americans, New Lives, Healthier Community



2001 Year In Review

A year of highs and lows is perhaps the best way to describe the activities of the Institute in 2001. On the one hand, the Institute served more new Americans than ever before, assisting more than 10,000 clients representing 88 ethnicities with English classes, job placement, counseling and other critical adjustment services.

In June, Festival of Nations, the Institute's second annual ethnic festival, expanded to its two-day format. The weather throughout the weekend was magnificent. Thus, Festival of Nations held in Tower Grove Park blossomed - attracting a crowd of 16,000 St. Louisans. Lead sponsors, Six Flags Over Mid-America and Commerce Bank, were integral to the festival's success.

Our relationships with St. Louis' many Jewish organizations also continued to grow. In May, Anna Crosslin, the Institute's President, received the Norman A. Stack Community Service Award of the Jewish Community Relations Council. In June, she visited Israel as a guest of the Belfer Foundation of the American Jewish Committee. In July, two of our long-time volunteers, Bill Tao and Southern Commercial Bank, were recognized with Most Valuable Volunteer Awards by the St. Louis Business Journal.

All these accomplishments, however, were overshadowed by the horrific events of September 11. As a result the Institute's refugee resettlement program came to a grinding halt as the US government grappled with security issues here and abroad. In the meantime, Muslims in St. Louis - refugee and immigrant alike - turned to the Institute for solace and help in overcoming their fears of backlash. Dozens of businesses, service agencies, churches and other groups also looked to the Institute for education and information.

It was also a year of personal losses for the agency as two Board members, Margie Wolcott May and Mark Wolters, passed away. The agency also lost Julia Hafner Otto, the last living member of the Institute's founding Board. Thus, the circle between our past and present tightened.

It is truly remarkable how much we've grown in the past 80+ years and yet how little we've changed. For above all, the Institute is still very much guided by the principles of its founders - the principles of promoting ethnic identity and leadership, being inclusive, and teaching democracy and self-reliance. They are just as relevant in the new century as in the last.

Administrative Services

Anna E. Crosslin - President & CEO
Cesar Figari - VP Business & Facilities
Marlene Mitchell - VP Finance
Beth Radtke - VP Development



Andrew Cutrano/St. Louis Post-Dispatch

In the wake of the September 11 tragedies and reports of anti-Muslim hostility, representatives at a press conference urged people of faith and justice to reach out to their neighbors and make the St. Louis community a "shelter of peace." Pictured here (from left): Rabbi Susan Talve of the Central Reform Congregation; The Rev. Martin Rafanan, director of the National Conference for Community and Justice; Anna Crosslin, president of the International Institute; Imam Muhammad Nur Abdullah of the Islamic Foundation; and Phillip Deitch. Also speaking was Karen Aroesty, regional director of the Anti-Defamation League.

2000 Board of Directors & Officers

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Individuals & Families

Suzanne LeLaurin, LCSW;
Sr. VP & Division Director

The Individuals and Families Division continues to focus on providing both short-term and long-term services to newcomers in our community. We also continue our work in building community capacity to ensure mainstream agencies are an important part of services to New Americans.

Increasingly, we have been called upon to provide training and consultation to others, as local agencies seek to improve their cross-cultural competency. In addition, we have been asked to provide leadership both nationally and internationally, through conference presentations and workshops. Rhonda Piazza has become a key trainer at various sites in the US in the development of employment programs for refugees. In the spring, I had the privilege of visiting Sweden as a member of the US delegation to the International Conference on the Reception and Integration of Refugees. Recognition of our work is gratifying, as we continue to emphasize the importance of quality programs and services for newcomers in St. Louis and beyond.

Social Services

P. Ariel Burgess, MSW; VP & Director

In spite of the curtailment in refugee resettlement following September 11, Social Service staff was still flooded with service requests. In all, we resettled 979 refugees and served a total of 7,316 unduplicated clients in 2001.

Included in the total were 754 secondary migrants. While many of the secondary migrants were Bosnians, we also provided services to migrants representing Afghanistan, The Congo, Cuba, Iran, Iraq, Russia, Somalia, and Vietnam.

The Benefits Outreach program provided federal and state benefit eligibility information and applications. During the year, 825 applications were completed for eligible refugee families and children. Applications included TANF, Medicaid, Medicaid for children, and energy assistance.

Finally, more than 6,500 foreign-born individuals received information and referral services for immigration matters, including photos and fingerprinting, application preparation assistance, referrals to legal representatives for ongoing representation as well as permanent residency and citizenship assistance.

After September 11, we held weekly meetings with clients from the Middle East, including Afghans, to combat their fears by sharing information from newspaper stories and providing a forum for questions and concerns. Thanksgiving Dinner was held on November 15 to avoid conflicting with *Ramadan*, the month-long Muslim religious observance. The festivities included a magnificent feast, prepared and underwritten by Adam's Mark Hotels. It provided a much-welcomed respite from the stressful aftermath of the September 11 tragedies for Institute clients, staff, and volunteers.

Program Managers

Booker Gilliam -Housing, Lany van L. Maas -Benefits

Ted Dargan/St. Louis Post-Dispatch



Dayna O'Brien (right) hugs Zohra Sabir, an Afghan refugee sponsored by the Institute. For more than a year, Dayna, along with other church members at Kirkwood Road Christian Church, has been actively working with the Institute to help refugees adjust to life in America.

Health & Mental Health

Basia Waite-Wright, LCSW; VP & Director

During the year, 442 clients were served. Clients of all ages came from Bosnia, Sierra Leone, Haiti, Somalia, Cuba, Afghanistan and several other countries. We expanded our capacity to help children through art therapy and children's groups.

Our clients struggle with many issues including adjustment difficulties, depression, family conflict, behavioral problems at school, sexual and marital abuse and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, ranging from mild to severe. About 45% of clients suffer from PTSD.

Several have been in long-term therapy, and during the year, we noted an improvement in functioning among those clients. Close to 50% of these clients were able to start working and become more financially independent.

The Afghani clients have been of special concern, and we made an effort to be more available to those clients after the September 11th tragedy. One of our caseworkers has learned to speak Farsi, which has been helpful in our effort.

Our health case management efforts continue, and we served numerous clients with serious health problems. In addition, our health caseworker has been trained to do peer counseling and has been instrumental in helping several families manage crises and adjustment difficulties.

The department has been active in attending meetings with other professionals working with the refugee population. We have also started a collaborative effort of bringing together therapists working with refugees struggling with war or torture trauma. Two other agencies are involved, and the once-a-month meetings provide an important venue to discuss cases, exchange information and provide support for one another.

Assistant Director

Lara Fallon, MSW

Education

Anita Barker, VP & Director

Last year, we served 3,077 students of limited English proficiency with a variety of ESOL (English to Speakers of Other Languages) programs. Staff included 20 teachers, 2 teacher aides, 2 registrars and 1 administrative assistant. The department and its clients also benefited from the help of 73 Volunteers-in-Education.

Educational programs included our core weekday and evening ESOL program for adults (16+ years), featuring an ESOL curriculum into which workplace and basic academic skill development has been integrated. Additional programs were the "Job Success" class offering intensive job search and computer skills training; citizenship preparation classes for the elderly; evening TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) and GED preparation classes.

Enrichment experiences such as field trips, videos and a musical concert were provided through the Saturday "Discover St. Louis" program and the Wednesday Film Series.

New programs included a weekday "Academic Success" class targeting reading, writing and computer skills; topic-based electives offering ESP (English for Special Purposes) training; evening and Saturday citizenship preparation classes; and a 10-week workplace ESOL program for employees of a local company.

Our second annual Educational Opportunity Fair for New Americans was a highlight of the year. Foreign-born attendees learned about educational opportunities in St. Louis. At the fair, they met representatives from 43 public and private elementary, secondary and post-



In 2001, more than 3,000 immigrants and refugees studied English in the Institute's morning, afternoon and evening programs.

secondary schools and programs. A special thanks to the numerous volunteers, Institute staff and school representatives who made the event such a success.

During the 2001 International TESOL Convention held in St. Louis, the Institute was featured as one of our community's exemplary Adult ESOL programs. In addition to welcoming TESOL conventioners, department staff also hosted and/or made presentations to teachers and students of local schools and universities, including Ladue Junior High and Nerinx Hall High School.

Assistant Directors

Jan Harris

Tamara Schumacher

Employment

Rhonda Piazza, VP & Director

In 2001, we worked with 3,156 refugees, making 1,206 job placements with 349 companies. The average hourly starting wage was \$8.35, an increase of 67 cents per hour compared to 2000.

Our services included job placement for newly arrived refugees and for secondary migrants, repeat placements for refugees seeking an upgrade or who had been laid off or terminated from a job, employment case management, and career planning for refugees with professional work experience.



Teak Phillips/St. Louis Post-Dispatch

Institute staff has placed several Muslim women at Vantage Custom Classics, where they operate embroidery machines.

We also developed a job readiness program. All employable refugees we sponsor now participate in 4 two-hour orientation sessions, offered in the clients' native languages. For clients with higher levels of English, staff developed a Job Success class in collaboration with the Education Department.

After a yearlong process of negotiating and planning with several area hospitals, we were finally able to expand our job placements in the health care sector. Our desire is to build on this success to develop medical career training programs for limited English speakers.

A new contract has allowed us to expand our services to immigrants and refugees who have been in the USA more than 5 years. It targets individuals who have been fired or laid off.

During February and March, several hundred newly working clients prepared their Income Tax forms at the Institute with assistance from trained volunteers.

Program Managers & Supervisors

Paul Costigan

Brenda Malone

Emina Reizovic

Kathy Tucker

Culture and Community

Ann M. Rynearson, Ph.D.; Sr. VP & Division Director

After refugees and immigrants have met their immediate survival needs, they still face a host of challenges in settling into their new land. For new Americans to successfully integrate, they must open businesses, buy homes, join neighborhood associations, overcome language barriers in official settings, and find ways to preserve and promote their culture. The Culture and Community Division now includes services for youth and elderly as well as economic development; translating and interpreting; crime prevention and safety; and the agency's ever-popular festivals.

Last year, we played a key role in helping St. Louisans understand their new neighbors. Senior staff provided dozens of public presentations to thousands of Missouri residents as well as state agencies, civic organizations, and schools.

In addition, we massively updated and expanded Culture Links, the directory of international and ethnic organizations and arts groups. The directory has become the most comprehensive ethnic information resource in our community and is utilized by public and private institutions and officials alike.

We produced the Festival of Nations in Tower Grove Park. Saluting the diverse heritages of South St. Louis, the two-day festival was a huge success, attracting more than 16,000 people who enjoyed ethnic food, entertainment, crafts and even an international petting zoo. Organized by the Institute, the Festival of Nations was presented in cooperation

with area businesses and neighborhood associations surrounding the City's thriving International District.

In October, we also presented International Folkfest, the region's premiere multicultural festival. Held at Queeny Park in West St. Louis County, Folkfest featured authentic music, food, dance and crafts from more than 70 cultures, demonstrating the amazing diversity of the St. Louis area.



Hispanic Cultural Dancers always delight the audiences at the Institute's festivals. Pictured here is a dancer from the troupe performing at Festival of Nations with a dancer from the Korean Culture and Resource Center in the background.

Economic Development

Betsy Slosar, VP & Director

Economic development services promote long-term economic security for new Americans. Our staff provides business assistance to entrepreneurs and promotes family asset building through savings and financial education.

Now in its second year, the Individual Development Account (IDA) Program provides participants with the incentive and support to set a savings goal and achieve it. Using funds provided by the Office of Refugee Resettlement, we are able to match clients' savings deposits in accounts opened with our partner Southern Commercial Bank. In addition, we help participants understand and navigate financial systems.



On Aug. 19, almost 500 refugees and immigrants attended the first-ever Financial Resources Fair hosted by the Institute in partnership with the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of Greater STL.

In 2001 the IDA program doubled in size with a total of 129 accounts opened or completed. Fifty-eight families purchased assets, such as a home, automobile or a computer, or were able to afford post-secondary education. Since its inception, the IDA program has enabled clients to save \$181,361 with a total match earned of \$352,802.

The MicroEnterprise Development (MED) Program helps entrepreneurs start new businesses and/or improve already established businesses. During the year, we provided assistance with business planning, marketing, access to capital, licensing and a host of other business concerns.

One example of a client's business success is a photo transfer business (personalizing tee shirts, mouse pads, etc.), which has increased its revenues through cost-cutting measures and market research. The owner moved from a storefront to a kiosk in a mall, where he has reduced overhead and improved visibility.

The award of an additional MED grant near the end of the year 2000 made it possible to significantly extend the reach of the program by expanding the eligible client base and adding staff. Thus, in 2001 the program helped to start, strengthen or expand 28 businesses, nearly doubling the number of outcomes achieved in 2000. More than 26 volunteer lawyers and accountants provided important planning assistance and mentoring services to these new business owners.

Language Links

Joe Poon, Program Manager

Language Links continues to be the largest and most diverse interpreter/translator corps in St. Louis, and probably in Missouri. Through it, we provide high quality interpreting and translating services, primarily to other non-profit agencies. Users include state agencies, courts, police, hospitals, mental health providers, Medicaid programs, employers of new Americans, schools and other businesses. In 2001, we provided interpreter/translator support to more than 1,100 new Americans.

The program is growing in terms of languages covered, customers requesting services, and new Americans served. Our interpreter/translator corps now includes more than 50 different languages, together with the capacity to locate new language speakers when requested. In 2001, Language Links provided interpreter services to 392 different agencies, hospitals or other institutions throughout the state. An average of five new customers a week telephoned the program to inquire about services and request an interpreter or translator.

In order to increase the professionalism in the interpreter corps, Language Links and cooperating organizations launched a series of training modules, including "Community Interpreting 101" (ethics, confidentiality, skill-building, and the role of the interpreter), and interpreting for education and the Division of Family Services. In all, we trained 99 interpreters representing 25 languages during the year.



In late October, the Institute joined with the Jewish Environmental Initiative, to honor refugees by planting 200 trees in Carondelet Park. Pictured here (right) Anna Crosslin, Institute president, plants a tree with Ronni Handelman.

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Community Links

Jane Knirr, Program Manager

The Community Links Program helps refugees build stable and secure lives by better integrating them into their local communities. In 2001, the program included elderly services, youth programming and community services.

Elderlinks provides refugees 60 years and older with socialization opportunities, social services and citizenship training. In 2001 the Elderlinks program served more than 200 clients from Bosnia, Vietnam, Iraq, Cuba, Haiti and Somalia. Some 20 of the elders passed the citizenship examination, a formidable task in a new land with a strange language, culture and history.

In 2001, youth services assisted more than 300 clients. An Immediate Response Grant from the Lutheran Charities Foundation enabled us to keep the after-school tutoring program for middle and high school students open in the fall and winter after another grant ran out. The summer camp for newly arrived refugee children ages 5-12 focused on English language, math, arts & crafts, recreation and a general introduction to St. Louis. In January, the annual Children's Holiday Party gathered refugee families to celebrate their first holiday season in America.

As part of community services, the International Institute and the St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department collaborated to help connect new Americans and the broader community. Officer Barry Lalumandier, a full-time police officer, continued to be based at the Institute and assigned as the official Liaison to New Americans.

In September and October, a grant from Boeing enabled refugees and immigrants from nine countries to take part in the first-ever Civilian Academy. The academy was an important introduction to the police department led by the Police Liaison. Community Links staff also continued to respond to emerging crises and sought to increase positive interaction between refugees and their neighbors.



Each week, elderly Bosnians gather at the Institute's senior center program where they make friends and find a place for themselves in their sometimes complex and confusing new homeland.

2001 International Institute Donors

\$5,000 or More

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of Boeing St. Louis
Commerce Bank
Lutheran Charities Foundation
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May Department Stores
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\$2,500 - \$4,999

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\$1,000 - \$2,499

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Rabbi Susan Talve
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Religious School Students
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James Voelker



During the winter holiday season, the Institute once again sponsored a Children's Holiday party. Pictured here are three Afghans, combining the old with the new. Mom, following traditional Muslim custom, has her head covered while her daughter, Fatima, wears a balloon hat from the party. Their friend's head isn't covered at all.

UP TO \$100

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Does not include New Beginnings capital campaign donors already recognized in previous Annual Reports unless the donor made an additional gift or pledge in 2001. In-kind contributions have not been listed due to space limitations.

Deceased



Financial Statement*

For Year Ending 12/31/01

TOTAL ALL FUNDS REVENUES

United Way Contributions	\$178,659
Contracts and Grants	\$4,166,058
Donated Services	\$493,143
Fees, Sales to the Public, and Other Revenue	\$246,309
Gain on Sale: 3800 Park Ave.	\$168,335
Total Revenues	\$5,407,608

TOTAL ALL FUNDS EXPENSES

Social Services	\$2,334,062
Education	\$814,275
Employment	\$687,780
Promotion of Intercultural Understanding	\$81,764
Cultural Transition	\$834,698
Youth Services	\$42,159
Support Services	\$474,828
Total Expenses	\$5,269,566

CURRENT FUND

Revenues in Excess of Expenses	\$138,042
Fund Balance on 12/31/00	\$2,550,001
Fund Balance on 12/31/01	\$2,688,043

Address questions to:

Anna Crosslin, President
(314) 773-9090, ext 119

* Based on preliminary audit results as of July 5, 2002.