

2002
Annual Report
of the
International Institute

New Americans, New Lives, Healthier Community



2002 Year In Review

In 2002, we saw a decline in the total number of clients served, returning to the 1999 service level of 8,600 annually. The drop was largely due to fewer refugee arrivals, a result of increased screening measures abroad.

In April, the Popal family did finally arrive in St. Louis. These Afghan refugees had originally been scheduled to depart Pakistan on September 11, 2001, the day of the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center. They were among the lucky few refugees who eventually still got to the US. St. Louisans followed the story of their flight to freedom daily in the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*. The outpouring of sympathy and support for their plight re-enforced our belief that most Americans can distinguish between our country's enemies and the refugees that we are welcoming.

The smaller number of clients did not, by any means, translate to less work. Instead, we explored unmet needs and implemented new programs. As a result, we established a program in career exploration and academic remediation for refugee and immigrant teens as well as dislocated worker services for non-native English speakers in St. Louis city and county.

During the year, the work of the Institute, its staff and volunteers was further recognized. In March, we presented our International Institute Award to Anne and Bill Tao, agency volunteers "extraordinaire." In May, I received the Brotherhood-Sisterhood Award of the National Conference for Community and Justice (NCCJ), a wonderful honor. In June, FOCUS St. Louis recognized our Community Links Program, by presenting its staff with a "What's Right with the Region" Award.

At the administrative and Board levels, many of the Institute's undertakings focused on strengthening the agency internally. The Board launched a new annual giving program, nearly doubling its unrestricted gifts. Board members also began planning the Institute's first gala/auction, slated for May 30, 2003.

Our in-house computerized accounting services were transferred to a new Windows-friendly database. The personnel handbook was re-written as were the agency's By-laws.

In May, we launched a redesigned and massively expanded website at www.intlnst.org.

By year's end, the Board of Directors had begun strategic planning to identify future direction for the agency to ensure that our vitally important services remain as strong in the new century as in the last.

Administrative Services

Anna E. Crosslin - President & CEO
Cesar Figari - VP Finance & Operations
Beth Radtke - VP Development & Communications



At the Institute's Annual Meeting in March, the 2002 International Institute Award was presented to Anne and Bill Tao in recognition of their long-time volunteer efforts on behalf of the agency. (From left): Anna Crosslin, Institute President; Linda Morice, Immediate Past Chair of the Board; and the Taos.

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Individuals & Families

Suzanne LeLaurin, LCSW;
Sr. VP & Division Director

Our division continues to focus on providing both short-term and long-term services to newcomers. Although refugee arrivals have decreased in the wake of the September 11 terrorist attacks, we have been able to expand our services to existing refugee and immigrant communities through new government and private grants. Thus, while the total number of clients served in 2002 declined, the number of services available to each client increased dramatically.

Increasingly, we are engaging in community collaborations to coordinate and expand services. We have also supported research efforts at St. Louis University and at the University of Missouri-St. Louis.

In May, we reorganized our youth services program into a department of its own, reflecting its growth in services and clients and its prominence in the agency's ever-increasing array of services.

Employment

Glenda Sullentrup; VP & Director

Despite the negative impact of September 11, the employment department developed more than 900 job openings and made 682 placements with 238 companies in 2002. In all, we provided career planning and other counseling services and job success classes as well as placement services to 1,431 refugees and immigrants. The average hourly starting wage was \$7.86.

We were excited to add another Workforce Investment Act (WIA)-funded program to our services. In the summer, St. Louis County awarded us an Adult Services contract to provide job search services. We are also now able to provide services to fired or laid off refugees and immigrants with WIA funds through our contract with the St. Louis Agency on Training and Employment (SLATE).

As in the past, we helped several hundred newly working clients prepare their Income Tax forms with assistance from trained volunteers.

Transportation to and from work has always been an issue for newly arrived refugees. We have been informed that the boards of East-West Gateway and St. John's Hospital have approved a CHET grant to provide a van to transport refugee employees to and from the hospital for three work shifts. This program is due to begin in early 2003.

Program Managers & Supervisors

Paul Costigan
Brenda Malone
Emina Reizovic
Kathy Tucker

Thanksgiving: American Style

Gabriel B. Tait/STL Post Dispatch



An Afghan refugee girl gets help carving an 18-pound turkey at the Institute's annual Thanksgiving Feast. The feast has been provided by Adam's Mark Hotels annually since 2000. This year, the hotel also prepared special box lunches for guests who were observing Ramadan.

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Health & Mental Health

Basia Waite-Wright, LCSW; VP & Clinical Director

In 2002, we saw a surge of referrals for mental health services. Through special funding, we were able to increase our staff by hiring a Farsi-speaking therapist.

In addition to individual therapy and emergency intervention services, we now operate two Bosnian women grief groups and one Afghan women support group established this year with the support of the Norman J. Stupp Foundation-Commerce Bank Trustee. We are in the planning stages of organizing a group for elder Afghan women who are struggling with isolation and depression.

One exciting development was the introduction of a biofeedback method of healing called "the healing touch." This method has been widely used by hospital nurses to assist patients in recovery. We have found it to be very effective in treating symptoms of post traumatic stress syndrome, depression, anxiety and chronic pain.

The department continued and increased collaboration with two other mental health agencies treating war and torture survivors. The therapists regularly meet for case presentations and mutual support, and we have seen an increase in inter-agency referrals. We have also been active in the city schools and are providing staff training for MO Division of Family Services.

As the department celebrated its fifth anniversary this year we looked with pride on its accomplishments. Its capacity to serve the mental health needs of our clients has tripled, and we continue to develop and improve our treatment modes. We have seven languages we can access within the department, enabling us to provide immediate service more broadly than ever before.

Assistant Director

Lara Fallon, MSW

Education

Anita Barker, MEd; VP & Director

In 2002, the Education Department served 2,100 students from 80 different countries through a variety of ESOL (English to Speakers of Other Languages) programs.

Programs included core weekday and evening ESOL program for adults (16+ years), featuring an ESOL curriculum into which workplace and basic academic skills development has been integrated. Afternoon programs offered advanced level students the option of studying in the Job Success (intensive job search and computer skill training) or Academic Success (academic reading and writing) classes. Other programs included citizenship preparation classes (one for the elderly; the other for intermediate-level students), TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) and GED (General Education Development) test preparation classes.

Field trip experiences were provided to families through the Saturday "Discover St. Louis" program and topic-based afternoon electives. Additional enrichment experiences consisted of guest speakers on community-related topics.

In September, a new Literacy Tutorial program was launched to provide pre- and low-literate ESOL students with individualized and small group literacy instruction that is specially tailored to meet their unique needs. The program is being offered as a supplement to the morning literacy instruction.



Annually, more than 2,000 immigrants and refugees learn English and receive other important educational support services at the Institute.

In October, the department hosted the agency's third annual Educational Opportunity Fair for New Americans. At the fair, foreign-born attendees met representatives from 43 public and private elementary, secondary and post-secondary schools and programs.

Education Department programs were funded through federal and state grants and in collaboration with the St. Louis Public Schools' Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) Program. The department and its clients also benefited from the assistance of 84 Volunteers-in-Education who contributed a total of 3,563 hours.

Assistant Directors

Jan (Harris) Rodriguez, Tamara Schumacher

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Dennis Caldwell/Journal Newspapers

Anh Nguyen of Vietnam gets help donning a New Year's hat during the Institute's annual Children's Holiday Party in January. The nondenominational celebration features clowns, craft activities, face painting and more.

Youth Services

Jane Knirr MFA; VP & Director of Youth Services

In all, the Youth Services Department worked with more than 350 clients. In the spring, the Youth Career Services program was introduced to enable immigrant and refugee youth, ages 14-18, to improve their academic performance, enhance job readiness, and learn about career opportunities. Components of the program include the After School tutoring program, skills building workshops, internships, mentoring, support services, career exploration, Friday Night Peer events, and Saturday Night Family events. By year's end, more than 60 youth had enrolled in the program.

Also, 62 children participated in the Summer Youth Program for newly arrived refugees, which was generously underwritten by the Employees Community Fund of Boeing St. Louis. The program focused on English language, math, recreation, arts & crafts and a general introduction to St. Louis. Held at Messiah Lutheran Church School, the program also offered weekly swimming lessons and field trips.

In January, the Institute held its annual Children's Holiday Party for refugee families to celebrate their first holiday season in the US. More than 230 clients enjoyed the event which included art activities, refreshments, clowns, a family photo, refreshments, games, and holiday gifts.

Social Services

P. Ariel Burgess, MSW; VP and Director

The department was severely impacted by the federal government's decision to slow down refugee resettlement while reviewing security measures. As a result, refugee sponsorships dropped by two-thirds, resulting in only 352 arrivals. Services were also provided to 474 secondary migrants, asylees and trafficking victims.

More than 3,500 refugees and immigrants received information and referral services for immigration matters, as well as photos and application preparation assistance and review.

The Benefits Outreach program provided federal and state benefit eligibility information and applications to refugees. During the year, 737 applications were completed for eligible refugee families and children. Applications included TANF, Medicaid, Medicaid for children and energy assistance.

New programs included HHH: Healthy Women, Healthy Families, Healthy Communities and the Tenet Health Fair, held in November. Several more translated health wellness booklets, funded by the STL Community Foundation, were produced.

HHH, funded by the Daughters of Charity Healthcare Foundation of STL, provides health wellness and prevention information to women and families in their homes. Bosnian and Afghan women are recruited to host health wellness "parties" with topics ranging from annual health



Andrew Cuirano/STL Post Dispatch

Here, the Popals, newly arrived Afghan refugees, are pictured with their Institute caseworker who is demonstrating the use of a kitchen stove.

exams to requesting interpreters for medical care. Registered nurses who provide preventative health information, blood pressure checks, and medication compliance lead the house parties.

Once again, in November, we hosted a magnificent Thanksgiving Dinner feast provided by the Adam's Mark Hotels. Special box lunches were provided for Muslim clients who were observing Ramadan and could not, therefore, eat until after sundown.

Program Managers

Booker Gilliam, Lany van L. Maas

Culture & Community

Ann M. Rynearson, PhD; 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 integrate successfully, 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 the elderly as well as economic development; translating and interpreting; crime prevention and safety; and the agency's ever-popular festivals.

Last year, we continued to play 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.

Requests continued to pour in for *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 third annual 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 20,000 people who enjoyed ethnic food, entertainment, crafts and even an international petting zoo.

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.



Trisha L. Siddens/STL Post Dispatch

In September, the Institute hosted the first Festival of Citizenship honoring 28 program graduates who had passed the examination and become US citizens during the previous year. With assistance of staff and volunteers, the honorees proceeded to register to vote and practice the process of voting on machines provided by the St. Louis County Board of Election Commissioners.

Community Links

Swapna Kommidi, MSW; Program Manager

Jamie Rector/STL Post Dispatch



In May, Sanela Konjevic became a city police officer. The International Institute resettled Sanela and her mother, former refugees from Bosnia, in St. Louis in 1995.

Community Links helps refugees build stable and secure lives by better integrating them into their local communities. This year, the program included elderly and community services.

Elderlinks aims to help older refugees become active players in their own lives and to link them to mainstream senior services. The program provides refugees 60 years and older with socialization opportunities, social services and citizenship training. In 2002 we served more than 200 clients from Bosnia, Albania, Vietnam, Iraq, Cuba, Haiti, Colombia and Somalia. Besides operating weekly meetings for Bosnian, Vietnamese and Somali seniors, we hosted special events, including celebrations at the time of Vietnamese New Year and Bosnian *Eid*.

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 in his police assignment as the South Patrol Liaison to New Americans.

A grant from the Employees Community Fund of Boeing STL enabled 28 refugees and immigrants from nine countries to participate in a specially developed community orientation program, similar to the Police Department's Citizens' Academy. The academy, led by Officer Lalumandier, served as an important introduction to the procedures and regulations of the police department.

Also, in collaboration with the St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department, the St. Louis Association of Community Organizations (SLACO), and the American Red Cross, we updated and re-published *Neighbors Helping Neighbors*, our community directory for newcomers. State Representative Toby Paone was able to secure state funding, so that thousands of copies could be printed in Bosnian, Vietnamese, Spanish, and English.

Economic Development

Betsy Slosar, MSW; VP & Director

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

Now in its third year, the Individual Development Account (IDA) Program offers participants incentives and support to set a savings goal and achieve it. Through a grant from the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR), the Institute matches clients' savings deposits and provides education to help participants understand and navigate financial systems in the US.

The IDA program continued to expand in 2002. With a supplementary grant from ORR, we were able to eliminate our waiting list and increase our participation. Since the program's inception in 2000, 232 participants have saved \$305,734 with a total match earned of \$611,468. Of the more than 100 participants who are saving to buy a home, 31 have reached their savings goals and completed education requirements to achieve the American dream of homeownership.

The MicroEnterprise Development (MED) Program helps refugee entrepreneurs start new businesses and/or improve existing businesses. During the year, a variety of clients received assistance including business planning, marketing, referral to lenders, licensing and a host of other business needs.

Nicholas Krug



Istar's part-time business is applying henna, a temporary body art, using traditional Somali designs. MED staff helped her with marketing at local festivals and in developing plans to open a kiosk.

One success story is Forum Home Health Services and its Russian refugee owner. She faced many challenges and obstacles inherent in Missouri's certification process. However, with our help, this new business owner has now fulfilled her ambition of providing high quality, language accessible home health care to the refugee community.

Since its beginning in 1998, the MED Program has provided assistance to more than 300 entrepreneurs. Eighty-two businesses have been started, strengthened or expanded, generating more than \$9 million in revenue. The dedicated work of staff and program volunteers has resulted in an astonishing business success rate of 85%.

Language Links

Marcia Wilderman, Program Manager

Language Links is the largest and most diverse interpreter bureau in St. Louis. While our corporate business is growing, we still most often serve other non-profit agencies. Our customer base includes courts, police, hospitals, state agencies, mental health providers, Medicaid programs, employers of new Americans, schools and other businesses. In 2002, we provided expert interpreter/ translator support to more than 1,100 individuals through 292 agencies located throughout the state.

Also, we increased interpreter professionalism by expanding our training program. New this year was *Interpreting in the Courtroom-An Orientation*, a 12-hour workshop that addresses topics including courtroom protocol, terminology, and ethics. This workshop is in addition to the existing module courses: *Community Interpreting 101*, *Interpreting in the Educational Setting*, and *Interpreting for the Division of Family Services-Child Abuse and Neglect Unit*.

As a result of our training modules, our interpreters are now the most professionally trained local interpreters. In all, we trained 115 community interpreters representing more than 25 languages during the 2002 year.

Language Links continues to offer dedicated and professional language services in nearly 50 languages 24-hours a day, seven days a week.

Financial Statement*

For Year Ending 12/31/02

TOTAL ALL FUNDS REVENUES		TOTAL ALL FUNDS EXPENSES	
United Way	\$178,453	Social Services	1,339,954
Contributions	\$162,742	Education	\$575,201
Contracts		Employment	\$761,232
and Grants	\$3,431,669	Promotion of Intercultural	
Donated Services	\$447,996	Understanding	\$80,117
Fees, Sales to		Cultural Transition	\$959,415
the Public, and		Youth Services	\$247,555
Other Revenue	\$287,297	Support Services	\$538,774
Total Revenues	\$4,508,157	Total Expenses	\$4,502,248

Current Fund

Revenues in Excess of Expenses	\$5,909
Fund Balance on 12/31/01	\$2,588,043
Fund Balance on 12/31/02	\$2,593,952

Address questions to:

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

*Unaudited Statement as of 4/1/03.

Kudos to Volunteers



In 2002, nearly 700 volunteers donated more than 16,000 hours of service to the Institute. Here, Sandy Pumpfrey is recognized for his efforts at the agency's annual recognition reception. Pictured also is a Bosnian member of the Institute-sponsored Brownie Troop.

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Continued on back cover

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2002 Annual Report of the International Institute

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