Almost 100—and still growing

ELLEN DUMESNIL, IIBA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



www.iibayarea.org

Our work matters. It mattered in 1918 when IIBA was founded and it matters today.

IIBA has always championed the rights of immigrants.

By the year 2042, we will be a minority majority country. In the coming years, the work of immigrant integration—the work of both preparing the newcomer for a new home and preparing the receiving community to welcome, understand and appreciate the contributions of their new neighbors—will require much focus. The International Institute has been providing high quality low cost services for nearly 100 years; a true sign of our sustainability, strong leadership and commitment to improving the quality of life of those we serve and valuing the contributions immigrants make.

What the International Institute has held up, valued and nurtured for these past 94 years is our commitment to recognizing those contributions and supporting immigrants on their path to citizenship and greater civic participation.

Imagine what a gift it is to give someone a new life.

By your support you are a part of that gift and we thank you. Your support matters. Inside you will hear more about the clients you have helped support and learn a bit more about IIBA staff and what is new at the International Institute.

(continued on flap)

Students attend classes in their native language, learning the customs and requirements of being US citizens.

IIBA Annual Report 2011

Nearly a century of improving people's lives

In just a few years, the International Institute of the Bay Area celebrates its 100th anniversary. That's a century of helping immigrants grow new roots and build foundations for their lives in America.

In an effort to learn more about IIBA's history, I have begun to reach out to many of you who have supported the organization for decades. I have simply asked, "Can you tell me a little about your connection to the Institute?"

I spoke with Dolores who was first involved with IIBA in the early 1980's. She told me her parents came here from Mexico when she was a very young girl. They came here for a better life for Dolores and her sister. They spoke no English. When Dolores was in high school her parents became citizens.

I spoke with Betsy who first started volunteering with the Institute when the Institute was resettling boat people in the late 70's. She became involved with several Laotian families and that work led her to take a lead role in documenting and preserving the rich history of Laotians.

I spoke with Ulla who told me how she had come as a refugee in 1993 and how her parents then joined her in 1997 and were helped by IIBA. She said "you are family and that is why every year we donate to IIBA to support you."



Almost 100—and still growing (continued)

On a Personal Note It is an honor to join this great organization founded in 1918. Our longevity is testimony to our sustainability and your support. In joining IIBA, I have, in some way, come full circle.



In my 20's, I decided it was time to see the world, I set sail (literally) and as a result of seemingly random events ultimately arrived in Southeast Asia where I began working in refugee camps. That experience changed my life. Day after

day, week after week, month after month, individuals, families, young and old stood, sat or squatted in the hot sun waiting patiently for the opportunity for an interview.

I heard stories from those who had suffered unspeakable loss and through it all they remained decent, respectful and hopeful for the promise of a new life in the United States. I saw the remarkable courage, endurance and fortitude of thousands to leave their homeland. I came to understand what the United States symbolizes for so many: a beacon and promise of hope for freedom, justice and democracy and a better life for one's children.

Ironically, it took my departure from the United States to truly understand the symbol

IIBA Immigration Program Stats FY10-11

Office Visits	6,825
Attendees at Workshops	
& Training	2,799
Naturalizations	313
Visa Petitions	183
Consular Processing	179
Work Authorization	251
VAWA/U Visa	432
Adjustment of Status	258
Replacement/Renewal	
of Green Card	196
Temporary Protective Status	79



IIBA's impassioned staff attends to all ethnicities and faiths to help keep families united and communities focused. Their commitment to low price, high quality service is what keeps our programs going.

of hope and freedom we are for so many in the world.

The circle of my young work life connects here at the Institute. The organization I joined in Southeast Asia was, in fact, the parent agency of the International Institutes, the US Committee on Refugees and Immigrants.

Our Common Goal Our global perspective motivates us to be respectful, inclusive and open-minded.

Our work is enriched by the knowledge and diversity of our staff, clients and partners.

We believe that equal and informed access to justice empowers people in vulnerable positions.

These are the core values of the International Institute of the Bay Area and I see daily testimony to these values. I see it in the commitment, dedication and passion of IIBA's staff; in the resilience, decency and steadfastness of our clients; and in the strong alliances IIBA has forged with partner agencies to achieve a common goal.

"...imagine what a gift it is to give someone a new life."



Sheryl Muñoz-Bergman joined the International Institute in February 2001. She has consistently brought a sense of passion, excellence and commit-

ment to her work and to the clients we serve. Please join us in congratulating Sheryl in her new position as Director of Programs.

Helping community members become citizens

In the last decade, we have provided services to over 6,000 individuals forging paths to citizenship. Twice a week in our San Francisco office, I see and hear testimony to how fervently immigrants want to become full members in our community. During one class, I asked the students a question: "Why do you want to become a US citizen?" I watched each individual ponder the question.

Here are some of their responses:
"It is absolutely crucial for us to become responsible members of our new country and become citizens so we can vote."

"I want to know all I can of my new home, its history, its laws and its language."

A woman in her late 60's who had waited to be last to respond said, "I lost everything when the Soviet Union collapsed. Everything. The US gave me my new life. It's my motherland."

Sustaining

SACHA STEENHOEK, BOARD PRESIDENT

This year marked a period of great transition, and gave the Board a reason to reflect upon the past and an opportunity to help shape the future of the International Institute of the Bay Area.



Moving On

After seventeen years of service in the Executive Director position (and 34 overall years of service with the Institute), Margi Dunlap announced her retirement, launching a painstaking search for her successor. The Board, after an exhaustive search headed by Jennifer Beckett, Wells Whitney and Anne Peskoe, was delighted to confirm Ellen Dumesnil as the next Executive Director in December 2011.

Knowing the key to this organization's long term success lies in the knowledge of its leadership and strength of its relationships, we felt fortunate that Margi was able to continue in her position during Ellen's onboarding process, sharing her profound understanding of the organization and her rich connections in the immigrant and ally communities in the Bay Area, and provid-



ing a seamless transition for the outstanding staff in all our offices.

We bid a fond farewell to Margi at an intimate and celebratory retirement party in December, and we wish her all the best in these golden years.

Immigrants' stories of

Linda M.

Security for Her Children

Linda came to the US from Mexico when she was only three years old. She had a tough life. She suffered abuse at the hands of her uncle while very young. She had no recourse but to accept that this was her fate but when she realized that her uncle was also abusing her sister she decided to take action. She went to the police and reported the abuse. Linda's testimony and cooperation with the police led to her uncle's arrest.

Linda first came to IIBA in 2007 and shared her story and struggle to overcome the abuse she and her sister had endured. IIBA staff informed Linda that she may be entitled to a visa issued for victims of crimes and helped her navigate the legal system and file for a U interim relief application which was approved. IIBA staff continued to work with Linda to help her improve her life and that of her children In 2012, she received her Green Card.

Linda told IIBA that obtaining the U Visa changed her life because now she feels more secure in the United States and feels her children have a future. Linda demonstrated her courage when she went to the police to report her uncle. She demonstrated her sense of perseverance when she took what could have been a crippling experience and made it one with a positive outcome. She told staff that she could not have done so without IIBA's help.

Josefa Rivera

New Citizen Passes It Forward

Josefa Rivera registered for IIBA's Citizenship Preparation class in October 2010, and quickly we saw her leadership skills at work with her classmates. "You need to do your homework and practice your English every day," she advised her peers in the class, motivating them to keep studying despite the challenges. A grandmother, Josefa was well aware of the difficulties that many seniors face when learning a new language, but she was steadfast in her studies and her progress. Soon, Josefa had mastered the civics questions and English skills that she needed to pass her citizenship interview test, and IIBA staff assisted her with her naturalization application. In February 2011, Josefa passed her test and became a US citizen.

Her eyes shone as she described her interview process to her former classmates, offering a step-by-step explanation of all that happened on the day of her citizenship interview so that her peers would be more prepared, and less nervous, when they had their appointments. Somewhat shyly, Josefa approached her citizenship instructor and asked if she could come back to class as a volunteer, to help some of the other seniors in the class who needed extra time and extra practice in order to acquire the knowledge needed to become US citizens.

For the past year, Josefa has been one of our most reliable volunteers at our citizenship preparation class. As a peer mentor and role model, Josefa has encouraged other senior students to continue learning English and civics. By her example, Josefa demonstrates that is it possible to be successful any age!

Ofelia Rivera

Walking the Talk

Ofelia Rivera began volunteering with the International Institute of the Bay Area in the spring of 2010. She impressed our staff with her incredible accuracy in her

Quality Service

New Director

We also welcome whole-heartedly Ellen and her enthusiasm, incredible passion, and vision for leading IIBA into its next 100 years. In the short time she has been here, she has demonstrated her commitment to the staff and the community it serves and we look forward to the future with her.

New Board Member

The Board also expanded its membership this year, welcoming Jessie Mangaliman, a journalist who has focused his work on issues important to the immigrant community. His depth of experience and unique perspective are welcome qualities to our diverse Board.

Fourth IIBA Location

As one of the last triumphs with IIBA, Margi helped to set in motion the launch of our newest office, located in Antioch, California. The Antioch office, currently staffed with one full-time attorney and a part-time administrative assistant, held its grand opening in February 2012 and has since then been providing much needed services to the community in east Contra Costa County. (see story on right page)

Thank you

I am very proud of all of the hard work our amazing staff and Board have accomplished this year. I am also very grateful for your continued support. We could not maintain the level of service and success we have achieved without the support of this community, and for that we thank you!

FINANCIAL STATUS FY10/11

INCOME	Audited
City, State & Other Government Contracts	671,967
Other Revenue (Grants, Fees, Donations)	784,724
Total Income	1,456,691
EXPENSES	
Staff	1,306,802
Staff Occupancy Costs	108,173
	108,173
Occupancy Costs	108,173 213,340

lives changed for good

data entry, forms completion, and translations. Moreover, she was very effective communicating with clients, and Ofelia was clearly dedicated to IIBA's mission. When an administrative assistant position opened up that summer, Ofelia was our top candidate and she joined IIBA as a staff person.

After several months of assisting clients with their citizenship applications, Ofelia was ready to apply for citizenship for herself. Not only did she fill out her own application, but she helped her husband and her mother-in-law to apply for citizenship at the same time. Describing her motivation to become a US citizen, Ofelia explained, "The United States is our home. Both my daughters were born here, and this is the only country that they know. It has been my dream to be a part of this country."



In March 2011, Ofelia attended her oath ceremony and became a US citizen. The naturalization ceremony was so important to Ofelia's family that they decided to pull both daughters from their elementary school classes that morning, so they could witness their mother becoming a citizen. "When I started working at IIBA, my kids asked me about my new job," Ofelia explained. "I told them that since they were born in the United States, they would automatically have the right to get a social security number, to apply for a driver's license, and to vote. But people who immigrate here from other countries have to overcome many hurdles, and at my job with IIBA, we help people secure those rights."

Ofelia has already voted in local elections, and is looking forward to voting in her first presidential election this year. "It felt really good to vote. I had to learn a lot about the propositions on the ballot before I mailed it in." Less tangible than her mail-in ballot, but perhaps equally important, is the "feeling of belonging" that Ofelia describes now that her whole family are US citizens.



Many of IIBA's teachers are immigrants who have dedicated their time to help people just as they had been helped.

New office in Antioch:

Mission-driven, community-focused

JUAN ORTIZ, IIBA ANTIOCH DIRECTOR



In 1997, as rent prices skyrocketed in San Francisco, my family, like many others at the time, left the city and moved to suburbia. My parents were presented with an opportunity to purchase their first home and

did so in the city of Antioch. I was fourteen years old at the time and a freshman at Deer Valley High School, a school so new it did not even have a senior class. Not only was I new to Antioch, but Antioch itself was undergoing a radical transformation. New housing tracks were being constructed all over the city, paralleling the national housing boom of the time. The city of Antioch and I entered our formative years together.

I graduated from Deer Valley HS in 2001 and enrolled in San Francisco State University immediately thereafter. I would never have imagined that exactly a decade later I would have the opportunity to assist families with their legal immigration issues as an attorney, in an office located down the street from Deer Valley HS.

It all happened very serendipitously. After graduating law school in 2010 I narrowed down my list of practice areas to immigration. My own experience as an immigrant and my ability to speak Spanish made immigration law a natural fit for me, a realization that became apparent to me after I started volunteering at IIBA.

Not one month after I started volunteering at IIBA's Oakland office as an immigrant rights fellow, I accompanied the Executive Director and the program managers on a trip to east Contra Costa County to gauge the need for legal immigration services in the area. The need was significant.

With the opening of IIBA's new office in Antioch, distance and cost is no longer a barrier for the residents of east Contra Costa County seeking immigration legal assistance.



As a new attorney, working for IIBA in its new Antioch office, I am closer to my community than ever before. I have met more people in Antioch while working for IIBA in the past seven months than I did in the previous ten plus years living here. Thus far I have had a chance to personally meet with an Antioch council member, a commander and a lieutenant with Antioch Police Department, the Police Chief, City Manager, various school Principals, Council Members and the Mayor of the city of Oakley.

Support from community organizations has been equally positive.

Before, when I told people I was from Antioch, I did not really feel a connection

"equal and informed access to justice empowers people in vulnerable positions."

to the city. It was just the place I lived. But because working as an IIBA attorney has allowed me to become more involved in community events and meet more of its residents, I feel a greater sense of belonging to Antioch and pridefully share in the responsibility of making it a great place for others to call home.

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