

2 0 0 1 A N N U A L R E P O R T



# *International Institute of San Francisco*



## Protecting Immigrants' Rights

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The purpose of the International Institute of San Francisco is to enable immigrants, refugees, and their families to become effective, responsible participants in community life.

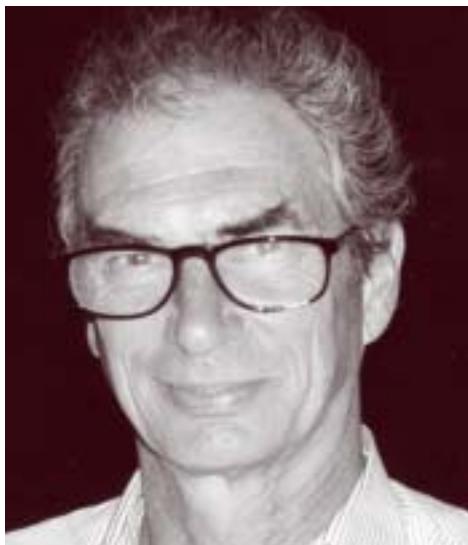
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# Message From the President

Wells Whitney

The topic of immigrants and refugees in America has become part of both dinner table conversations and roundtable discussions in this post-September 11th world. A consciousness of the presence of immigrants has heightened, in both positive and negative ways. Only through self-education can we begin to understand

the current realities faced by immigrant communities. It is for this reason that I am pleased to present you with the International Institute of San Francisco's Annual Report for 2002. This year's Report will give you an idea of what we are doing to further the rights and roles of immigrants and refugees in the Bay Area.



Wells Whitney, President.

## We are witnessing times that call for activism and advocacy from organizations and individuals alike.

We are witnessing times that call for activism and advocacy from organizations and individuals alike. The International Institute of San Francisco is able to affect a great deal of change within immigrant and refugee communities. Perhaps now more than ever before, the Institute is in a position to help protect

the rights of immigrants, as mainstream and political opinions push for fewer civil liberties for non-citizens and greater restrictions on entry into the US. Our clients are the newcomers who are likely to experience a new wave of backlash against their ethnicity, countries of origin, as well as their religious and cultural identities.

As the space between September 11th and today widens, the Institute's commitment to bringing services, resources and information to immigrants and refugees also grows. Despite shifting public sentiments, our dedication to serving the newcomer community remains unwavering.

### IISF Financial Status

July 1, 2000 through June 30, 2001

<b>Income</b>	
Federal, State, and Other Contracts	\$782,767
Other Revenue (Grants, Fees, Donations)	\$649,352
Transfer from Investment Fund	\$93,462
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$1,525,581</b>
<b>Expenses</b>	
Staff	\$1,314,328
Financial Aid to Refugees	\$15,278
Operating Expenses (4 Locations)	191,439
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$1,521,045</b>
<b>Net Surplus</b>	<b>\$4,536</b>

## International Institute of San Francisco

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# History Lessons

Margi Dunlap, Executive Director

Last summer, I was given the opportunity to take a sabbatical. I needed a break; a certain impatient cynicism had crept into my work. Time elsewhere would restore and affirm my commitment to this work, away from daily pressure to raise money and write reports and balance budgets.

So in December I found myself in a small Belgian town that played a significant role in World War I. Every night at eight o'clock in Ieper, under a great stone arch called the Menin Gate, buglers blow the Last Post, a British version of "Taps," to honor the unknown soldiers who died in the brutal battle for the Ypres Salient on the Western Front that lasted from 1914–1918.

People come to the Last Post ceremony to pay their respects to memories of men who by now would have been their great-great-uncles or great-grandfathers. School children come as part of history assignments. The man standing next to me said that he was there because his grandfather was conscripted and ready to fight when the Armistice was signed in November of 1918. He said he had always felt grateful to the people who finished the war before his grandfather had to go. His statement resonated in my peace-loving, anti-war heart.

There are 53,000 names inscribed in the stone of Menin Gate, more names than on the Vietnam Memorial. And the list only includes men whose bodies were never found or identified. The diversity of the names surprised me: Pashtuns and Chinese and Ethiopians, as well as Brits and Scots and Frenchmen, fought side by side. The names on cemetery markers across the Western Front testify to this as well, three million

markers, three million men. United by something worth fighting for.

And how does any of this relate to the International Institute today? We are here to protect immigrants and their right to become responsible citizens. And as the harbingers of xenophobia and immigrant-bashing surface in these post-September 11th times, I think of the values and vision that brought us to today.

Our belief in the values of democracy, even if its practice is flawed, must be strong. We aren't perfect, we can be as greedy and blind as any other country. We've made mistakes. Still, it's only through reaffirming the ideal by the way we live here at home, every day, transcending the urge for revenge, acting in the world with generous spirits and open minds, that we improve on our past record of living the dream that has brought so many millions to these shores. We must relentlessly strive for the greater good that unites us all: the immigrants who came last year with immigrants who came a few centuries ago. No one, save a small group of trained killers who must be stopped, wants to see three million cemetery markers anywhere again.

I wish that everyone who is flying the flag today would stop for a moment and remember what life was like in the part of the world their families came from, how hard they worked to get here, and how nothing about that difficult journey, what motivated it, or the tenacity and determination required to succeed at it, has changed with time.

**We must relentlessly strive for the greater good that unites us all: the immigrants who came last year with immigrants who came a few centuries ago.**



Margi Dunlap, Executive Director.

# YouthCares: Cultural Exchange through Peer-Tutoring and Service to Seniors

**Y**outhCares (YC) brings together a diverse group of youth to take on leadership and become active members of the community. YouthCares provides intergenerational community service to senior citizens in the Richmond and South of Market neighborhoods, and peer tutoring at Newcomer

High to recently arrived youth.

This past year was full of accomplishments: hiring and training three new YC staff, serving 170 youth, 285 seniors, and providing 315 hours of leadership training. Our three new staff members bring with them extensive training and youth program experience. The YC

Team is committed to increasing collaboration in areas such as trainings, field trips, and staff development.

We have created and implemented a five-part job skills training throughout all YC programs. We have also worked hard to provide an open environment for youth to discuss their feelings and



Youth and staff from all three YouthCares programs at the beach on Angel Island. From left to right: Atiqur Orellana, Chhu Heng Ieng, David Montalvo, Deziel Camargo, Jennifer Berger, Laura Congdon, Stephene Forte, Katarzyna Krasnopolski, Mehjaben Patel, Elvira Lainez, Jennie Tanaka, Alex Ramirez, Amrin Patel.



Angel Poon and Andy Li from the YC Richmond Program provide computer training at Richmond Senior Central.

## Staff List

**Laura Congdon,**  
YouthCares Program Director

**Jennifer Berger,**  
Program Coordinator, Partners in Learning

**Jennie Tanaka,**  
Program Coordinator, YC SoMa

**Stephene Forté,**  
Program Coordinator, YC Richmond

## Youth Reactions to September 11th

**"Earth is earth wherever you go, sometimes  
I find it funny just to think how people  
become so proud about borders & division."**

—Deziel Camargo: Partners in Learning



**"My parents are very concerned about my safety and they don't want me to go out as much as they did before 9/11."**

—Elvira Becirovic: YouthCares SoMa

concerns following the terrorist attacks of September 11th. Adult staff have facilitated discussion groups and tried to be sensitive to how difficult this may be for immigrant youth, many of whose families fled their home country for the US so their children could be safe. We are beginning to collaborate with the Arab Cultural Center and hope to have a teach-in with YC participants in the near future to educate our youth about the region's history, culture and religion.

Below you'll find some highlights

from each program and quotes from a few YouthCares participants.

This year's first annual YC Halloween Party brought together immigrant seniors and youth from our programs for an afternoon of fun, games, and treats. Youth from our **YC South of Market** (YC SoMa) program decorated the room, planned Halloween games, and helped translate for the seniors. Newcomer youth learned about the American traditions and customs of Halloween for the first time. After seeing how much fun everyone had, we

decided to make the Halloween party an annual event.

This fall YC SoMa added a new service site, The William Penn Hotel, in the Tenderloin neighborhood. We are off to an exciting start with YC youth and more than 30 seniors coming together for activities such as bowling, arts and crafts, and bingo.

At **YouthCares Richmond**, youth participants bring a variety of language skills to the program. One youth is utilizing his language skills by teaching Spanish classes to seniors at one of our



Deziel Camargo, peer tutor with Partners in Learning, works with Newcomer High School students.

Helena Ou, Jennie Tanaka and Yuki Peng, from YC SoMa, celebrate Halloween with seniors.

**"If this [the terrorist attacks] would have been done by Latinos I would feel ashamed and be very sad. And what I would do, I would show other people that not all Latinos are the same. And I will try to help in everything I can."**

—Cristy Avila: YouthCares SoMa

**"Race cannot be a factor to know what characteristics a person contains."**

—Katherine Ip: YouthCares Richmond

**"At school my Arab-American friends cannot express their ideas about 9/11, others laugh at them & make them feel bad. What we need is to open our minds & don't stereotype them."**

**"I think that the actions of a few people shouldn't be a reason to blame a whole ethnic group."**

—Miriam Chan: Partners in Learning

sites. Youth also help translate flyers about the program for Russian and Chinese-speaking seniors, which has proved to be a good ESL tool for youth to strengthen their English skills. Youth-led multilingual computer classes for seniors continue to be in high demand at Richmond Senior Central. So far, 20 seniors have received a certificate of completion for the three-part computer training taught by YC youth. Seniors find that access to the

Internet allows them to communicate with family members in their home countries and introduces them to the world of technology.

**Partners in Learning** continues to provide opportunities for recent immigrant youth to learn about American culture and make new friends from different countries. As a result of the nine languages spoken by tutors, more than 45 students attended the program this semester, our largest number since Part-

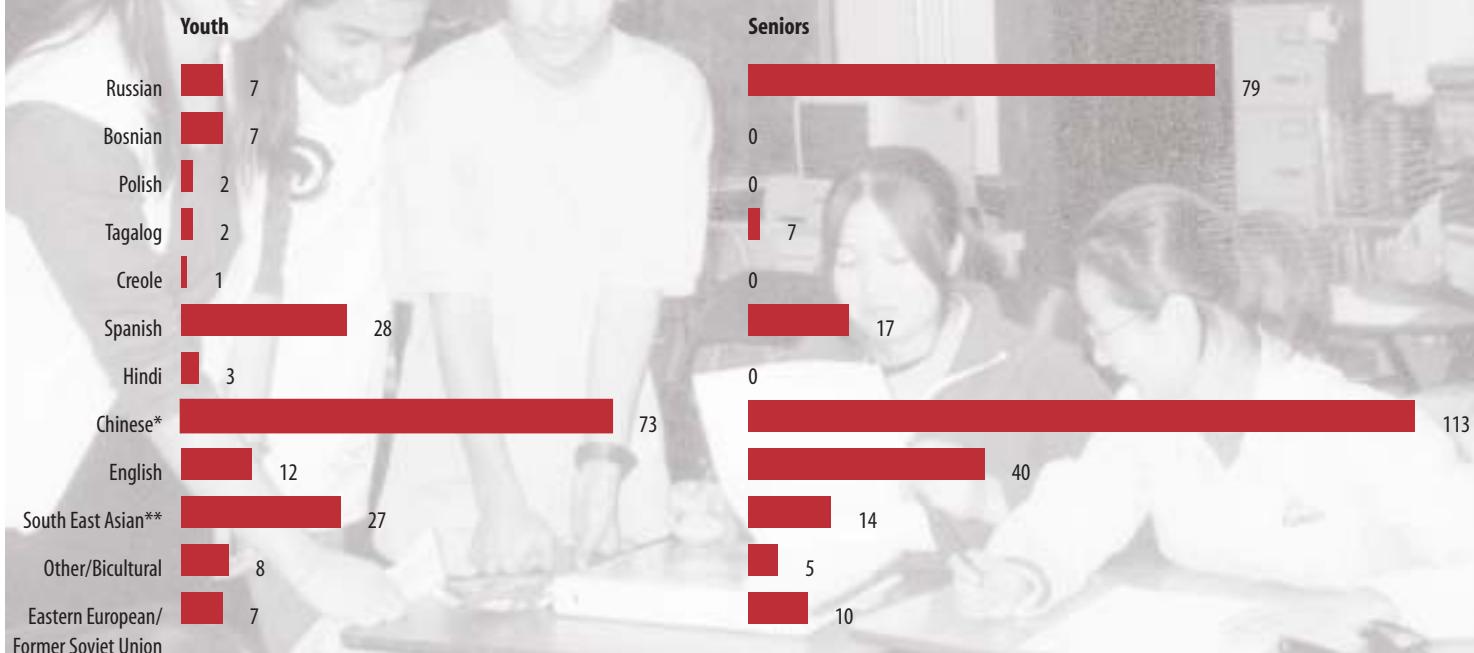
ners began. This fall, youth from all three programs were brought together for a field trip to Angel Island. For some of our immigrant youth, this was their first experience traveling on a boat and being away from San Francisco. Youth participated in team-building games, got to know their peers from the other YC programs, hiked around the island, and received a tour of the immigration station.

### YouthCares Program Statistics

September 1, 2000–August 15, 2001

	YC: South of Market	YC: Richmond	Partners in Learning	Total
<b>Youth Served</b>	35	40	95	<b>170</b>
<b>Seniors Served</b>	87	198		<b>285</b>
<b>Leadership &amp; Skills Training Hours</b>	100	92	138	<b>330</b>
<b>Service Hours Provided</b>	1,455	1,757	823	<b>4,035</b>

### Linguistic Breakdown



\* Cantonese & Mandarin, Taiwanese

\*\* Bengali, Laotian, Thai, Burmese, Khmer, Vietnamese, Korean

# Protecting Immigrants' Rights in San Mateo County

San Mateo County Immigration and Citizenship Program

*"I petitioned for my son to be able to immigrate to the US, but I haven't heard anything from the INS. I'm worried that it will be harder for all immigrants now, after September 11th."*

*"Can you help me? The INS came to our home last night and took away my sister. It was late, and she was wearing only her pajamas. She doesn't have even a dime with her, nor any phone numbers to call. Can you help me to find where they took my sister, so I can bring her some clothes and some money?"*

*"Is it true that new citizens would be the first to be called up in a draft?"*

*"My husband is a US Citizen, and my three children were born here in California. But I don't have legal documents. What is the process I should go through?"*

*"I tried to go to the INS office to turn in my immigration paperwork, but I couldn't even get through the door because of the tighter security requiring valid ID. It's very hard for some newcomers*



Jackie Winant (2nd from right), Immigration Program Coordinator, explains immigration forms to the family of Magda Gonzalez (left), Assistant to the City Manager of Redwood City.

*to obtain valid ID – in fact, that is what I hoped to achieve by presenting my immigration paperwork."*

*"My two brothers and my sister fled Afghanistan and are now in Pakistan. What can I do to help them come to the US as quickly as possible?"*

*"How will the aftermath of September 11th affect me and my family?"*

**T**hese are some of the questions that members of the newcomer community asked recently during our drop-in consultation hours. Families from all over come to our San Mateo County Office, located at the Fair Oaks Community Center in Redwood City. Our trained and accredited caseworkers counsel clients on immigration and citizenship issues. After careful intake, staff will provide eligible

families with assistance in filing petitions with the Immigration and Naturalization Services (INS). Sometimes we are able to refer them to specialized immigration attorneys or other community agencies for issues that are outside of our areas of competency.

**"Thank you for helping me with my application. I hope to become a US Citizen soon. God bless America!"**

**—60 year old citizenship client**

During the past year, the San Mateo County Office of the International Institute served over 9,500 individuals with immigration and citizenship services. This work is very rewarding, as we are able to resolve immediate and pressing problems for the families we serve. In recent focus group surveys, immigration and citizenship issues were a top concern of local residents. We are proud to be able to offer these services to the newcomer community.



Community members attend a free, informational workshop, led in Spanish, to begin the process of becoming citizens.



Sacha Steenhoek does outreach with immigrant parents at Family Connections day care center in East Menlo Park.

However, the tragic events of September 11th have spurred a new dimension to our work. As recently as August, our society by-and-large perceived immigrants to be hard-working men and women who accept the diffi-

cult jobs that many others shun. Many have recognized, and celebrated, that grandparents or great-grandparents were immigrants to the United States. Now, though, members of the immigrant community feel targeted, because

of the color of our skin, our accents, our appearance, or the simple fact of being immigrants. The International Institute's San Mateo County Program seeks ways to increase dialogue and understanding on these issues, and to break down misperceptions that may exist.

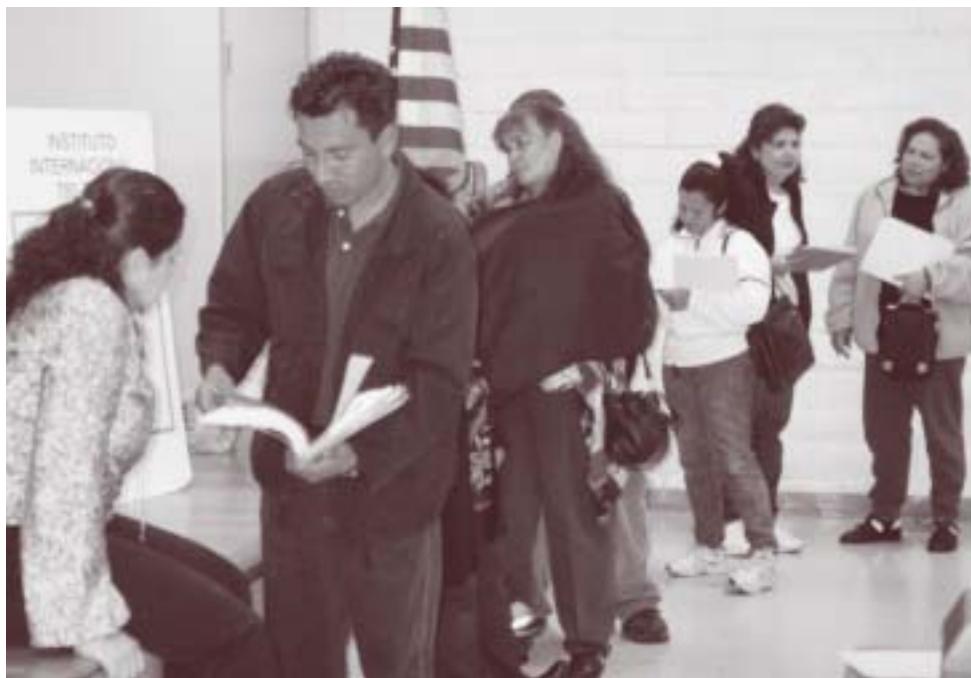
**"I just wanted to tell you that my son arrived safely yesterday. Now our family is together again. Thanks for all your help!"**

—Father of three

Our Community Education and Outreach Program is planning presentations, dialogues, and workshops to address critical issues such as immigrant rights, access to services, community participation, and cross-cultural understanding. Our goal is to share information and resources that promote the formation of an informed constituency committed to building healthy and inclusive communities, while we continue to protect immigrant rights through our direct services.

**"I enjoyed the workshop on immigration laws and procedures. I feel safer now that I understand what the process is, and I want to share this information with others in my community. So many people need help."**

—Youth workshop participant



Maria Barraza (far left), Citizenship Caseworker and Program Associate, answers questions from a line of community members at an informational workshop.



Volunteer Carlos Jalpa explains the N-400 INS form to community members at a workshop in November.

**The San Mateo County Office of the International Institute provides legal services for family-based immigration, citizenship, and community education.**

For more information, please call 650-780-7530.

**"I'm so glad you set me straight! I almost paid \$3,000 to a 'notary' for a program that my family doesn't even qualify for. I'll always come back to the Institute for accurate information."**

**San Mateo County Office  
Immigration Services Report**

July 2000 – June 2001

<b>1. Number of Office Visits</b>	<b>5,966</b>
<b>2. Number of Telephone Contacts</b>	<b>9,838</b>
<b>3. Attendance at Informational Workshops and Community Trainings</b>	<b>3,390</b>
Citizenship Workshops	403
Citizenship Interview Preparation	42
Voter Education Workshops	87
New Immigration Legislation and Procedures (LIFE Law)	2,440
Other Immigration and Citizenship Topics	409
Volunteer Trainings	9
<b>4. Clients Assisted with INS Procedures</b>	<b>3,373</b>
Adjustments/Removal of Conditional Status	144
Citizenship Procedures (N-400, N-600, Acquisition)	232
Visa Petitions	450
Consular Processing (Packets 3&4)	100
Affidavits of Support	278
Work Authorization	207
FOIA/FBI Requests	131
Family Unity	14
Waivers (I-601)	8
Replacement of Green Card (I-90)	222
Temporary Protective Status	71
Visa V	17
Legalization	12
Miscellaneous	15
Other Procedures	
Translation of Documents	837
Letters/Inquiries	556
Declarations	79

# A Program with Many Sides

**San Francisco Immigration and Citizenship Program**

The events of September 11th have directly affected many of our clients by creating a climate of fear and anxiety for newcomers. Throughout these difficult times, we work to remind our clients that they should be proud to be immigrants, since it is immigrants who built America.

The San Francisco Immigration and Citizenship Program has undergone major changes in the past year. We are currently in the process of strengthening the program, with a new Program Coordinator, Ildar Hafizov, a Staff Attorney, Kevin Pimentel, Caseworker Ella Rozman, and our wonderful Administrative Assistants, Helen Boikan and Carlota Garcia.

**"IISF helped me to bring my family from abroad and now we can live and work in the US together. Thank you!"**

—Immigration Program client

The San Francisco Immigration and Citizenship Program continues to focus on family-based immigration. We provide a wide variety of services, including visa petitions, adjustment of status, and citizenship to more than 1,800 clients per year. The LIFE Act, passed late last year, flooded our office with people eager to take advantage of the extension of section 245(i), a provision of the law that enables families to reunite faster. The designation of El Salvador as a country eligible for Temporary Protective Status created a number of new clients that were able to regularize their status. The introduction of the "V" Visa,



San Francisco Immigration and Citizenship Program staff. L-R, Kevin Pimentel, Helen Boikan, Ella Rozman, Carlota Garcia, Amy Petersen, Ildar Hafizov.



Kevin Pimentel, Staff Attorney, offering immigration consultation to clients.



Ella Rozman conducting her citizenship class for Russian seniors.

which allows family members of green card holders to obtain status after three years of waiting, is a new component of our program. We are also beginning to take on a number of Violence Against Women Act cases, which allow victims of domestic violence to obtain green cards independent of the status of their abusers. Our English and citizenship classes remain very popular among Russian-speaking senior refugees. We have also expanded outreach efforts, in which program staff attend health & resource fairs, senior events, and visit high schools to increase the awareness of our program throughout the community. We are planning a number of

free, informational workshops that will provide immigrants with a basic understanding of the immigration system and educate them about the legal services offered at IISF.

**"With help from the Immigration Program I was able to learn more about the citizenship process and became a US Citizen three weeks ago!"**

—Immigration Program client

# The War at Home

Kevin Pimentel, Staff Attorney

**T**he first thing you learn about immigration law is that immigration law is retroactive. One of my first cases at my first immigration job dealt with a man who was born in Germany and came to the US on an immigrant visa when he was eight months old, in the late 1950's. He never applied for citizenship, and in 1973 was arrested and convicted for petty theft. In 1975, he was arrested and convicted for petty theft with a prior. He had been caught for shoplifting twice, 25 years ago, and had paid the applicable fines, never serving any time in jail for these minor offenses.

The passage of the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act in 1996 changed everything. Because his second conviction was a crime of theft with a possible sentence of one year in state custody, he had become an "aggravated felon." As such, the only way he could remain in the United States would be for him to show that there was a 51% or higher chance that he would be tortured or persecuted if returned to Germany. This man, who had spent over 40 years in the United States, was effectively banished from his country for two shoplifting convictions.

The above may or may not be shocking or an indictment of the injustices inherent in the immigration system. What is more disturbing is that our views on immigration are just as retroactive as immigration law. As I write this statement in mid-November, the Department of Justice is spearheading what appears to me to be an unprecedented attack on immigrants of Middle Eastern descent. Already, over 1,200 immigrants are in detention, some have died or been subject to human rights violations.

Federal authorities plan to "request information" from a list of 5,000 Middle Eastern immigrants. President Bush has ordered that suspected terrorists be subject to trials by military tribunals, without most traditional constitutional protections. John Ashcroft has warned, "If you overstay your visa – even one day – we will arrest you."

Has this happened before? In World War II, the government stripped over a hundred thousand Japanese American immigrants and citizens of their property, their land, and their freedom. I never truly understood the motivations behind the concentration camps. Intellectually, I have accepted the concepts of centuries of exclusion, jealousy over the success of Japanese American farmers in California, and the idea of "enemy aliens" for a long time, but I have never seen firsthand the primary reason for such drastic civil rights violations: pure, abject fear.

In the early 20th century, the INS was a division of the Department of Labor. This intrinsically makes sense. Immigrants work. They built our national railway system, pick and process our food, make our clothes, and do an infinite number of jobs necessary to our economy.

In the 1930's, due to growing national security fears about suspected communist immigrants, the INS was moved to the Department of Justice.

Recent immigration history and policy have wavered between the duality of immigrants as criminals and as labor. In 1986, we had a legalization program designed to regularize the immigration status of laborers. Ten years later, we had IIRIRA, designed to criminalize nearly all immigrants. In the last few years, when the H1-B Visa program created a nearly limitless supply of high tech non-immigrant labor, and President Bush flirted with a new wave of legalization, we seem to have entered an era where immigrants are a valuable resource; an era where no human being

**Recent immigration history and policy have wavered between the duality of immigrants as criminals and as labor.**

is illegal, and no group of people has "no status."

As of this writing, immigrants are dangerous individuals that pose the greatest threat this country has ever faced. Especially dangerous are those immigrants who study in the US, because they are no doubt solely engaged in learning how to destroy us.

This fear is not rational. We cannot abandon and rewrite our history in the name of security. Real security comes not from the knee-jerk persecution of those deemed "different," but from a sense of trust that our leadership will ensure that the laws controlling our society will be reasoned, fair, and equitable, and that the application of these laws will be even-handed and just. We must not forget that our country was, is, and will always be born of immigrants.



Kevin Pimentel, staff attorney.

# Community Empowerment, Safety Network Style!

Amy Petersen, Community Organizer

**H**osted by the International Institute of San Francisco, the Safety Network Program continues to keep the Institute connected to the South of Market neighborhood. This year, the Community Organizer has initiated three new projects in the neighborhood as well as continuing to maintain her involvement with long-term programs that were initiated during the last program year.

**Monthly Police-Community Relationships Forums.** Community and Police collaboration is difficult to achieve, especially in a neighborhood where strained relations have made these types of partnerships complex. Over the past year, though, the Southern Station police department has begun to see that community-centered policing strategies pay off. By paying attention to issues that come from all sections of the district, the station is recognizing the important role that neighbors play in deterring crime and reintegrating their local officers into the fabric of community life. Monthly

forums allow neighbors and officers to problem-solve together. The forums also address district-wide issues such as parolee placement and crime statistics. Community participation at these meetings has tripled in the last year.

## "How Violence Affects Children

**Workshops.**" In July, the Community Organizer collaborated with several other organizations to bring important Department of Public Health curriculum to families in the South of Market neighborhood. This curriculum teaches families and individuals to understand how domestic violence affects a child's social and cognitive development. Specifically, the program focuses on how violence in the home and the community have a negative impact on young children and perpetuate the cycle of violence. Although much of the developmental damage is irreparable, parents and caregivers learn how to help themselves and their children cope with the impacts of trauma. These workshops were conducted in several of the neighborhood's Residential Hotels where the rates of domestic violence are high.

**Monthly Police-Community Relations Forums allow neighbors and officers to problem-solve together ... participation at those meeting has tripled in the last year.**

**Restorative Justice—Community Court Project for South of Market and Tenderloin Neighborhoods.** A movement is taking place in many cities across the country as people seek to develop better policies and strategies to address persistent neighborhood problems. As communities come together to problem-solve they often find that existing neighborhood conditions and community well-being are strongly linked to incidences of crime. Persistent social

problems such as lack of economic opportunities, education advancement opportunities, substance abuse treatment, housing and a myriad of other ills ranging from clean streets to adequate green space have been found to foster criminal behavior. Members of the South of Market and Tenderloin neighborhoods are working together to prevent crime, improve their neighborhoods, and strengthen the bonds among community members. The establishment of a Restorative Justice Center will be an innovative project in which a community panel will have the opportunity to help determine how damage done to a community through criminal activity will be repaired. The project is being supported by the San Francisco District Attorney's Office and the Southern Station Police Department.

## San Francisco Immigration and Citizenship Program

### Immigration Services Report

July 200-June 2001

1. Number of Office Visits	1,788
2. Number of Telephone Contacts	5,840
3. Attendance at Informational Workshops and Community Trainings	891
Citizenship Workshops	83
Citizenship Interview Preparation	248
Voter Education Workshops	62
New Immigration Legislation and Procedures	430
Other Immigration and Citizenship Topics	68
4. Clients Assisted with INS Procedures	1,029
Adjustments/Removal of Conditional Status	63
Citizenship Procedures (N-400, N-600, Acquisition)	48
Visa Petitions	178
Consular Processing (Packet 3&4)	57
Affidavits of Support	117
Work Authorization	64
Advance Parole/Travel Permit	7
FOIA/FBI requests	28
Replacement of Green Card (I-90)	42
Temporary Protective Status	11
Visa V	8
Miscellaneous	69
Translation of Documents	141
Letters/Inquiries	196



Amy Petersen, Lezlee Cox, Marisa Singer and Donna Rowles have their picture taken after coordinating a three-part workshop on how domestic violence affects children.

# Newcomers Health Program: Past Accomplishments & Future Opportunities

**O**n May 30, 2001, a collaboration of San Francisco agencies celebrated Refugee Awareness Month at a lunchtime reception in the Philippine Consulate Building. Spearheaded by Institute staff of the Newcomers Health Program, the event brought together dozens of refugees and service providers to recognize the important role of refugee service agencies and the contributions of refugees in our community in the recent past. This annual report also gives us the opportunity to highlight and reflect upon the accomplishments of the Newcomers Health Program over the past year.

The core of the Newcomers Health Program has been to provide medical interpretation services between refugee patients and health care providers at San Francisco General Hospital's Refugee Medical Clinic. For over 20 years, staff have bridged linguistic and cultural gaps for newly arriving refugees, recently documented asylees, and their family members who receive comprehensive health assessments at the Clinic. Newcomers Health Program medical interpreters/health workers also provide access to health care through linguistic and cultural interpretation, health education, and referrals for ongoing primary care for refugee patients.

**"I came to San Francisco recently and I didn't know anything about health care in the US Thank you very much for the interpreters, information, care, and for all your help."**

As of this writing, the arrival of new refugees has virtually come to a standstill nationwide due to the events of September 11th. The Presidential Determination authorizing the admission of 70,000 refugees into the United States for resettlement for the year of October 1, 2001 through September 30, 2002 was signed at the end of November. However, additional security measures for refugee arrivals are still being put in place and it is uncertain how extensive these measures will be. Thousands of refugees remain in limbo in refugee camps or uncertain condition pending resolution of the security measures. Despite the lack of current new refugee arrivals, there is a continuing need for medical interpretation for ongoing primary health care visits.

While providing these critical services related to health care access, Newcomers Health Program is also expand-

ing our health education services and community-based programs that focus on health promotion and community capacity building. Through a second year of generous support from the Mt. Zion Health Fund, we have been able to continue our Refugee Health Education and Interpretation Program. This program provides additional interpretation services at Refugee Medical Clinic and enhances our health education resources for Russian-speaking and Bosnian patients at the Clinic. We conduct one-on-one counseling sessions and group health education workshops,

**"There is a great need for interpreters because we do not speak English. Thank you to everybody for taking care of refugees."**

and develop bilingual health education materials for patients.

Also in its second year of funding, the Refugee Employment Social Services Set Aside Grant from the Private



The staff of Newcomers Health Program. Back row (left to right): Linette Escobar, Sasha Mosalov, Olga Radom, Xuan Nguyen, Bella Mogilev, Samira Causevic, Freda Luu, Irina Rudoy, Darko Micic, Nina Boyko, Julia Mogilev. Front row (left to right): Binh Tu-Au, Yin Leung, Patricia Erwin, Senad Kuenovic.



Bosnian refugees gather for a health education workshop led by Senad Kulenovic, staff member.

Industry Council of San Francisco allows us to promote public health programs such as Women, Infants & Children (WIC) and Healthy Families to Bosnian refugees. Our staff interpret for Bosnian clients at San Francisco General Hospital's WIC office, translate

**"This idea of making it possible for Bosnians to spend some time together ... This is exactly what we need. I am very thankful for that ... Thank you very much."**

WIC materials, and conduct outreach throughout San Francisco.

Since 1999, we have been working extensively with the Bosnian refugee community, one of the more underserved refugee groups in San Francisco, to provide health information, develop social support networks, and increase the capacity of community members to advocate for themselves. With two years of initial funding through June, 2001 from the Refugee Health Section of the

California Department of Health Services, we were able to lay a foundation by conducting health education workshops, social support groups, and leadership development trainings. To build upon these efforts, particularly in light of the events of September 11th, we maintained community activities through December with a short-term grant from the San Francisco Foundation. By holding educational workshops and social support groups, and providing a safe place to share concerns, we are assisting members of the Bosnian refugee community to cope with their reactions to September 11th. Bosnian participants have raised issues including restimulation of war trauma, uncertainty of the future, especially in regards to being able to reunite with overseas family members due to changing immigration attitudes and policies, and confusion about changes in public benefits. As we work with Bosnians to face these important and opportune issues, we are extremely pleased that we received a three-year grant from The California Endowment to continue and expand our community-based programs with this community.

Moving through these uncertain times, looking towards future opportunities, and reflecting on past accomplishments keeps us motivated as we work together to improve the health and well-being of newcomer communities in San Francisco through our various programs and services. Countless thanks go out to our dedicated staff who make all our efforts so successful and provide the critical links to so many newcomers throughout San Francisco.

#### Newcomers Health Program Statistics

##### Clinic-Based Services

July 2000 through June 2001

Total Number of Contacts through Health Assessments, Medical Interpretation and Clinical Health Education Services:	9,898
<i>Comprehensive Health Assessments of Newly Arriving Refugees:</i>	251
Russian-speaking	201
Bosnian	18
Iraqi	9
Vietnamese	7
Other Countries*	16
<i>Contacts for Medical Interpretation for Ongoing Primary Care Visits:</i>	5,258
Vietnamese	2,470
Russian-speaking	1,723
Bosnian	661
Iraqi	362
Eritrean	30
Other Countries**	12
<i>Total Contacts for Clinical Health Education Counseling:</i>	4,389
Russian-speaking	2,131
Vietnamese	1,676
Bosnian	557
Other Countries***	25

\*includes Armenians, Burmese, Chinese, Cubans, Guatemalans, Iranians, Lebanese, Somalians

\*\* includes Albanians, Armenians and Iranians

\*\*\* includes Armenians, Burmese, Chinese, Cubans, Guatemalans, Iranians, Iraqis, Lebanese, Somalians

# An Immigrant Youth's Thoughts Regarding the Sept. 11th Incident

By Miriam Chan,  
Partners in Learning Tutor

**E**veryday, on TV, in newspapers and online, we are exposed to more and more information about terrorism in America. Since American news media is the only information source we have access to, it feels like all we can learn about this issue is what we see and read in the news. No matter what language, the media has been controlling the public with their information. We don't even know whether or not to believe what we see and hear. In the play "Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead" by Tom Stoppard, there is a quote that says: "We only know what we are told, and that's little enough. And for all we know it isn't even true."

We think that there are only a few cases of discrimination, like the few that we hear about on the news. But in



Neha Shah and Miriam Chan.

reality, there are many which go unheard of. At our schools, we see how Arab-American teens are being treated. I believe that discrimination doesn't only involve action. Instead, what I have seen is that people use language and gestures to discriminate, all because of the way someone looks. My school has created an Arab Cultural Club, where Arab teens can get together to talk about their ideas and thoughts, and where other students can learn about the history and culture of the Middle East. Even ethnic groups that don't have much to do with the Middle East are experiencing problems due to their skin color or religion.

Our society doesn't really know much about the Middle East. How can we judge and criticize their culture and ways of living when we don't understand it? People should be educated about Middle Eastern culture, politics, religion and history. After learning about how their systems work, people will be more prepared to come to clear conclusions about what happened and how the US should respond. We need to try to stand in their shoes in order to understand how they feel. And who better to teach us about the situation in the Middle East than Arabs themselves? We can acquire this education by listening to what Arab people have to tell us about themselves.

Many immigrants think that prejudice will grow against them, affecting their lives and eventually forcing them to go back to their country of origin. We all live in the same country, we are all here for a reason, so why can't we respect one another's beliefs and experiences?

There are many people out there who are trying to make a difference, but alone they are not able to move mountains. If we all unite forces, regardless of where we come from, we could help this country we live in. What makes a nation powerful is not a prosperous economy or an undefeatable military force, but every single one of us, standing united. And united we stand.

# What Patriotism means to me as an Immigrant

By Neha Shah,  
Partners in Learning Tutor

In a recent Newsweek article "Why They Hate Us," Fareed Zakaria says "The nation that has given you the freedom to form your own opinion has come under attack by a force bent on taking that freedom away from you." Immigrants have gotten their freedom from the US and not from their country of origin. But if terrorists want to steal that freedom from us, then there is nothing that America could do without the help of immigrants. Right now we have freedom, but if someone attacks that freedom, then it is up to us to defend it.

I'm sure you've seen American flags posted on cars and house windows. Many immigrants put up flags for reasons of safety. The flags are up so that no American blood will be thrust upon their homes and take away their freedom. They are not forced to do so by the government or anybody else, but because they want to live peacefully.

Patriotism means loving, supporting, and defending your country, being loyal to your nation. As an immigrant, I do not believe that I have to feel patriotic towards the United States because I consider my nation, India, to be my country of origin. This does not mean that I cannot and will not help the people of the United States, because that is helping human kind. But I do not have to be drafted or serve in the US military to show that I am patriotic. There are many ways for immigrants to show their patriotism, including giving blood, money, or food donations or by physically helping in New York.

## With Continuing Appreciation for the Support and Contributions of:

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### **Volunteers**

37 youth who have participated in YouthCares over the last year  
 Alex Andrade  
 Alex Winant  
 Bella Mogilev  
 Betsy Reyes  
 Carlos Jalpa  
 Claramaria Granados  
 Claudia Ramirez  
 David Pasternak  
 Flora Garcia  
 Heather Stanley  
 Hector Avila  
 Jay Steinman  
 Jeannette Mukhar  
 Jenny Valencia  
 Jill Vernon  
 Joe Friedman  
 Julio Garcia  
 Larry Booker  
 Lucy Rodriguez  
 Magda Gonzalez  
 Margarita Ventura  
 Mariela Thaning  
 Martin Estrada  
 Mary and Charlie Hoyt  
 Milla Fastovsky  
 Mirna Cohen  
 Mui Cam Ho  
 Nelly Valencia  
 Pilar Alzugaray  
 Refugio Huizar  
 Rudy Suarez  
 Sergio Segovia  
 Shelli Rosenfield  
 Stefan Justi  
 Steven Pisano  
 Teri Chin  
 Tracey and Joe  
 Victor Eisner  
 Viviana Alcazar

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### **Member List for 2001-2002**

Iosif and Leya Abramson  
 Wade Acton  
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 Alice Adjemian  
 Victor Aguirre  
 Felipe Ake  
 Plontino and Anatoliy Aksenen  
 Lucinda Pease Alvarez and Antonio Jose Alvarez  
 Robert Appleton  
 Justo Anders  
 David Anger  
 Marco Asencio  
 Putpong Bacardi  
 Yvonne Baker  
 Doris Bassett  
 Jennifer Beckett  
 George and Barbara Beckett  
 Gleb Belonogoff  
 Aline and Warren Berl  
 Judith Bloomberg and Michael Burnett

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