



International Institute of San Francisco



Fairness for Families

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.

The Roots of Our Identity

Stacy Tolchin
President, Board of Directors

It has been a tough year for us at the International Institute. The continuing unpopularity of immigration and immigrants' rights has affected our ability to provide services to the many non-citizens in Northern California who have been relying on us for almost a century. Nationally, we have seen many changes on the immigration front. The days when we felt we were moving forward seem to be temporarily behind us. Rather than fighting for greater rights for non-citizens, we are waging wide scale battles to just keep the status quo.

This year we barely survived proposed legislation that intended to strip the availability of the federal courts for non-citizens challenging their deportation, that attempted to silence political speech of non-citizens, and that tried to dramatically limit our asylum laws. There is no hope at the moment for allowing students to get residency, or for the reenactment of "245(i)", a law that allowed undocumented non-citi-

zens to remain with their family members in the US.

Unquestionably, the biggest motivation behind such legislation is national security. Somehow, immigrants have become synonymous with terrorists. We all know this is a fallacy. We all know that immigration has been the foundation of this country. It laid the railroad tracks, it created our leaders, it grows our food. It has created new technology, and enriched our art, film, and theater. It is our culture and our identity.

If there is one good thing the tsunami of this year has taught us- it is that we are all in this world together, and that people in need – people in

poverty, people recovering from natural disasters, and people seeking a better future- are not national security threats. They are human beings, and so are you and I. There can be no rigid lines drawn between us, no closed borders and no rhetoric, that overcome the connection we all feel when people are in need.

I am so proud to be a part of IISF, because this has always been our belief. We will get through these tough times, and we need your support even more now than before. Thank you for believing, as I do, in the importance of immigration and thank you for being a part of the International Institute of San Francisco.



The tsunami, and the world's response to it, reminded us of our common fragile humanity.

International Institute of San Francisco

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What is Fair?

Margi Dunlap
Executive Director

People talk about “The American Dream” as though we all knew what it meant.

When I was a little girl, before the civil rights movement, I equated the American Dream with equality, fairness, rewards for hard work and self-reliance. While these were laudable ideals, they did not have to be tested where I lived. I was taught, back when California schools were the best in the nation, about representative democracy and about responsibility for sustaining that ideal.

Today, more than one out of three Californians is foreign born. My mother’s ancestors came over on the Mayflower, and my father’s people came from Estonia in 1657. My father stood on the waterfront in Tallin, Estonia in 1997, almost 350 years later, and felt the weight of his ancestors’ decision to leave their country in search of something safer and better. It surprised him to feel a profound connection to the place his family came from so long ago.

We all have stories like this in our family history. Do you know yours? For a third of us, our immigration stories are new, alive, and still in process. We need people to see the connections between the new stories and the old. No one seeking refuge on our shores today is that different from my ancestors, or from yours. Defending immigrant rights honors our own history.

Our current immigration policy doesn’t protect us from terrorists, it’s more like the man who barely makes it into the lifeboat, and pulls up the ladder behind him. But this is not a lifeboat, it is a big wide green country. You know this if you have flown from coast to coast lately. It’s not too crowded.

Still, in the last five years, we have done more to shut out the newcomers, our future, our hope, than we have managed to do in the last fifty years. More than 150,000 people were deported last year. Thousands more have been registered, detained, and harassed. No terrorists have been discovered. This is neither smart nor fair. At the Institute, we see family wage-earners getting deported, as their family members and American Citizen children slip into poverty and fear. When we say, loud and clear, that this is not fair, we need more people who can add their voices to ours.

What is happening is not fair and it makes no sense. Good people going to work can get stopped on the highway and deported for not having the right papers. Do you know how long it takes to get the right papers? Families are in limbo for years, and it’s not their fault. They have met all the requirements, but the government is so backlogged with papers they haven’t had the time to send the right ones to Alicia Martinez or Zlatka Vaslovic. So they, and their children, who were born here but are too young to live without their parents, have to go back to a place they barely know.

We are stifling our “jobless recovery” by denying the rights of immigrants to work, pay taxes, send their kids to school, and ultimately be a part of the rest of us, as we all pursue that thing called “The American Dream.” People tell me they are concerned about security and the “terrorist threat.” Is brutalizing a labor force anxious to be here, anxious to work and pay taxes going to weaken bin Laden?

It doesn’t make sense, and it isn’t fair.

When I was older, my family moved to an immigrant neighborhood in Los Angeles. My best friend was Armenian, and my brother’s best friend was Chinese. My father used to bring African exchange students to Thanksgiving Dinner. We were raised to know there was a world beyond our borders. We

were encouraged to study languages, to look at maps. Now, the best and the brightest of the world’s youth are presumed to be terrorists. In the US we have lost 35% of our international graduate students, the best potential scientists and leaders from around the world. They don’t have to comply with our rigorous and de-humanizing visa regulations to get their doctorates in China or Canada.

I was taught to believe in the ultimate possibilities of America’s inclusiveness. I am afraid we have lost that belief, and are being taught to be suspicious, xenophobic and scared of anyone who’s different. We seem to have forgotten our own family’s immigration stories, the confidence that the Dream was big enough for all of us. I am afraid that we now live in a country where our leaders bully the rest of us into imagining terrorists in every supermarket check-out line and on every commuter flight so that we will forget who is taking our tax money and what they are doing with it.

The International Institute still believes in the “American Dream,” no matter how battered it seems to be at the moment. Our projects, services, and program are a testament to the value and the contributions made — and yet to be made — by new Americans. As you read about our work in the stories and articles we share with you in this report, I hope you will see this too, and offer your support.



Margi Dunlap

Staff and Volunteers

Paul Aguilar, Executive Assistant
 Fekadu Andeberhan, Volunteer
 Charlene Au, Health Worker
 Maria Barraza, Citizenship Program Coordinator
 Jennifer Berger, YouthCares Program Director
 Sheryl Bergman, San Mateo County Program Director
 Lisa Block, Community Organizer
 Maria Reyna Cabral, San Mateo Office Administrator
 Laura Congdon, YouthCares Program Director
 Vanya Danilovic-Jones, Health Worker
 Elena Dokuchaeva, Volunteer
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 Carlota Garcia, San Francisco Clerk
 Ildar Hafizov, San Francisco Immigration and Citizenship Program Director*

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 Yuliya Kogan, Health Worker
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 Carly Leung, Assistant Health Educator
 Yin Yan Leung, Health Educator
 Fredda Luu, Health Worker
 Samira Causevic McCoy, Clinic Site Coordinator
 Anthony Moss, San Mateo ESL/Citizenship Instructor
 Nicole Perrin, YouthCares MAT Coordinator
 Olga Radom, Clinic Assistant Site Coordinator
 Jacqueline Raine, San Mateo Immigration Program Coordinator*
 Ellen Ritchie, YouthCares Partners in Learning Coordinator
 Carlos Rodas, San Mateo Clerk
 Ella Rozman, ESL/Citizenship Teacher
 Irina Rudoy, TB Clinic Liaison
 Carolyn Shin, YouthCares SOMA Program Coordinator
 Marisa Singer, San Mateo Immigration Caseworker*
 Lauren Toker, YouthCares Partners in Learning Coordinator

* Accredited Representative

Denials, Long Waits, And Other Hurdles...

Ildar Hafizov
 Director, San Francisco Immigration and Citizenship Program

It was a beautiful summer day when Mrs. P pulled a letter from US Citizenship and Immigration Service out of her mailbox. Two months before, she had successfully passed her naturalization interview, and followed up by sending all the documents that the immigration officer requested after the interview. This included copies of her rental agreement, insurance statements,

"My mother and I were separated by the war in Cambodia when I was 6 years old. With help of the IISF immigration caseworker I became a US Citizen and will soon re-unite with my mother after 19 years of waiting! Thank you so much!"

—Immigration client

FINANCIAL STATUS July 1, 2003–June 30, 2004

Income

City, State & Other Government Contracts	801,302.43
Other Revenue (grants, fees, donations)	709,062.29

Total Income 1,510,364.72

Expenses

Staff	1,227,973.92
Occupancy Costs	99,490.32
Operating Expenses	151,276.86

Total Expenses 1,478,741.10

Net Surplus 31,623.62



Ildar Hafizov and Carlota Garcia

utility bills, bank statements for the last 6 months, copies of the income tax returns Mrs. P and her husband had always filed, and a chronological list of all her employers for the last 5 years. It was a long list, but Mrs. P was proud that she was able to collect all the documents and send them in on time.

She was sure that the envelope she held in her hands would contain an invitation to her Oath Ceremony, where she would be sworn in as a US Citizen. Excited, Mrs. P opened the letter to discover that her naturalization case was denied. The letter said she hadn't submitted her W-2 forms with the rest of the documents.

"I was crying in shock, anger and disbelief," said Mrs. P. "Both my husband and I are independent contractors

"Thank you for helping me to learn English and preparing me for my naturalization interview! I am a US Citizen now!"

—76-year-old ESL/Citizenship student

and we don't have W-2 forms. That's what I told the CIS officer after the interview! He told me that was all right, that I would be fine if I sent all the other documents on the list! I tried to call the CIS and explain what happened, but when I could finally get through to someone, I was told that the decision was already made and she couldn't do anything about it."

Mrs. P knew that the International Institute was the right place to come for help. She told me her story during an immigration consultation at our San Francisco office, and we began working on a request for hearing on a decision in her case. She had to pay \$250 more to request a hearing, despite the fact that this was not her mistake, and then wait for several weeks for the hearing to be scheduled.

At the hearing it took Mrs. P less than 10 minutes to explain what happened, and show proof that her case should not have been denied. One month later she became a US Citizen.

There are many stories like Mrs. P's. Of the 1,872 people who came to our office in the last year seeking legal advice, I hear from people whose naturalization was denied because background checks show arrests that never occurred, and from people who fall through the cracks after their naturalization interview and wait for months to hear of their next step. Too many people who have traveled the long path toward US citizenship get lost in the system before they can take their oath and become Americans.

Despite all the efforts to improve the situation, the US immigration system continues to be slow and bureaucratic. Inefficient processing has increased the wait to reunify a family to as much as twenty years.

"I petitioned for my only brother in China in 1992," says Mr. T. "We had been waiting for eleven years to be reunited with him in the United States, but he passed away last year."

Is it fair to subject hard-working citizens, who support their family members and pay taxes, to this sad end?

Another group of people affected by poor legislation is asylees. By law, only 10,000 asylees per year can apply for their Permanent Resident status. But every year US CIS receives between 15,000 and 28,000 such applications from asylees.

As a result, there are about 160,000 Green Card applications currently pending at US CIS service center in Nebraska. That means that Mrs. S, who applied for her Permanent Resident status in December of 2003, will not receive her Green Card until 2014 or 2015.

What is fair about a system which, in the name of a "War On Terror," denies good hardworking people a reasonable and timely response to their pleas to be good citizens?

"I would like to thank the staff of the Immigration and Citizenship Program for helping me with my VAWA petition. It took me some time to free myself from domestic violence, but now, since my petition is approved, I feel like my life just started!"

—Immigration client

San Francisco Immigration and Citizenship Program Services Report

July 2003–June 2004

1. Number of Office Visits	1,872
2. Attendance at Informational Workshops and Community Trainings	414
Citizenship Workshops	74
English Language/Citizenship Classes	83
Voter Education Workshops	65
Immigration Law and Procedures	112
Pedestrian Safety Workshops	80
3. Clients Assisted with INS Procedures	1,023
Adjustments/Removal of Conditional Status	67
Citizenship Procedures (N-400, N-600, Acquisition)	134
Visa Petitions	47
Consular Processing (Packet 3&4)	36
Affidavits of Support	68
Work Authorization	84
Advance Parole/Travel Permit	6
FOIA/FBI Requests	17
Replacement of Green Card (I-90)	6
Temporary Protective Status	64
Visa V	15
VAWA	3
Appeals/Motions to Reopen/Requests for Hearing	17
Miscellaneous	37
Translation of Documents	79
Letters/Inquiries	343

Building Better Communities

Lisa Block

Community Organizer, Safety Network

The International Institute is the host agency for the Southern District of a city-wide collaborative to promote stronger safer communities by organizing neighborhood activities that draw residents together. Funded by the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice, the Safety Network Program involves neighborhood residents of diverse backgrounds in the SoMa and Tenderloin in efforts to create a connected community and to improve the well-being of the neighborhoods. It's been proven time and time again that crime goes down when you know your neighbors. There are three things I'm doing that I'd like to tell you about in this report: Community Courts, the Sixth Street Community Fair, and homeless awareness and advocacy.

Community Courts

In South of Market and the Tenderloin, we teach restorative justice. Working closely with the District Attorney's Office, we identify and recruit neighborhood residents to participate in a dialogue-driven process with "quality of life" offenders to identify a response to crime that restores dignity and a sense of belonging to each stakeholder. Unlike the traditional approach to criminal justice, which focuses more on punishment for the sake of punishment, Community Court focuses on holding offenders accountable for their actions and enabling them to achieve personal change. Mark Ellinger, local resident and Community Court panelist, stated, "Community Court is one of the most meaningful things that I am a

part of, because I see real change. Offenders often become better people, more responsible to community."

I facilitate the Tenderloin and SoMa Community Court Steering Committee meetings, and lead the committee through a collective process to identify needed improvements in the courts. Together, we have created a document that reflects the goals and process of the courts. The committee, with the District Attorney's Office and other city agencies, work to achieve, one by one, the improvements identified as our goals. Recently, we've also been working with the Sheriff Department's Resolve to Stop the Violence Program (RSVP) to create a mentoring program, in which court volunteers interview prisoners in jail and help them plan what they'll do when they are released.

Sixth Street Community Fair

The Sixth Street neighborhood is too often seen as a blighted, inner-city area, home to the disenfranchised and the criminals, riddled with narcotic sales and substance abuse. I worked with residents and activists to produce the third annual Sixth Street fair to demonstrate that the Sixth Street Corridor can also be a viable and functioning community. At the fair on June 12, local residents, many of whom are homeless or formerly homeless, were given free manicures, hair cuts, food, and clothing (all donated by local businesses) if they could show a special "passport." The passports proved (with stamps) that they had visited the booths of local service providers willing to help them in a variety of ways.

The one-block fair was bordered by two stages, one with youth spoken word and performances and the other with jazz and R&B artists including Sixth Street's own 75-year-old legend, Tennessee, playing the saxophone from his wheelchair. Ed Musa, co-owner of Fred's Liquor and Deli located on Sixth Street, proclaimed, "This fair validates



Face Painting at the Sixth Street Fair (photo by Allen Craig Schlossman)

the businesses along this corridor. Finally, a positive event on Sixth Street." It was inspiring to see the children spending the entire day playing safely in the street in this impoverished yet soulful corner of the city.

A Voice for the Homeless

As most of San Francisco's homeless population congregates in the SoMa and Tenderloin neighborhoods, we've taken the initial steps toward creating a homeless awareness and advocacy group. Though the vision of the group will eventually be formed by the collective, we will start by spending time with colleagues at different shelters and food pantries, speaking with experts in the field and with police officers charged with homeless outreach, and participating in street outreach with the Coalition on Homelessness and the Mayor's Project Homeless Connect. After we learn enough to move forward, the group will choose a method of advocacy that can better communicate the reality of homeless people's lives, in a way that preserves their dignity and personalizes their history.

It's great to have the International Institute as a home base for this work.

Bosnians Face Ongoing Challenges in America

Yin Yan Leung
Health Educator

The Bosnian Community Wellness Program (BCWP) continues to address the needs of Bosnian refugees with a range of program activities. From our ongoing health education and community resources workshops, psychosocial support groups, assistance to clients in the Bosnian Community Resource Room and at other public agencies, to more leadership development efforts, our clients have benefited from our bilingual services provided by Senad Kulenovic and Vanja Danilovic-Jones, Community Health Outreach Workers.

Through a mini-grant from the Northern California Citizenship Project, this past spring and summer, we recruited and trained bilingual Bosnian high school students to tutor Bosnian seniors in ESL and citizenship exam preparation. They also worked with the seniors to prepare cultural and educational displays for the 2004 San Francisco Refugee Awareness Month celebration. The youth made friendships, gained work experience, and brought great energy to

this intergenerational project.

Although they have made great progress in feeling more resettled in their new country, such as gaining citizenship and making more community connections

through our program, our clients continue to feel the unfairness and harsh reality of today's economic and political climates that impact newcomer communities, from language access challenges to benefit cut-offs.

Unfortunately, we were unsuccessful in our fundraising efforts to continue our services to the Bosnian community. With the end of our program in



Senad Kulenovic, Yin Yan Leung, and Vanya Danilovic

December, 2004, we reflected upon our successes and want to thank our supporters and program staff for all their hard work and dedication to the community. We are very appreciative of the generous support from The California Endowment for the opportunity to go beyond traditional service delivery and to strengthen this newcomer community with capacity building efforts.

Fairness is Culturally Appropriate

Patricia Erwin
Program Manager,
Newcomers Health Program

Fairness guides the work of the dedicated staff of Newcomers Health Program. Our staff continually strives to provide fair and equitable services and assistance to all newcomer patients and clients we see. From providing interpretation to new arrivals and longer-term residents who struggle with English, to assisting with Medi-Cal applications, to educating people about tuberculosis in their own language, we provide the same high quality, culturally appropriate services to everyone.

Fairness is linked to awareness, the more aware we are of unique issues faced by newly arrived communities,

the more fairly we can provide appropriate services to them. To achieve this we have, over the past year, trained social services and health providers, and each other, about the socio-cultural and health beliefs that refugees, asylees, and their family members hold, and the specific health issues that impact them.

Throughout the year we serve diverse patients ranging from Russian-speakers to Chinese, and Bosnian to Burmese, and assist them in accessing health care. We educate them about prevention and treatment of health conditions, and work with them to improve their well-being on both personal and community levels.

A climate of fairness is especially critical when working with refugee communities who, in many cases, have fled inequitable and unjust systems that pushed them out. Thanks to the commitment and dedication of our staff we have aided thousands of newcomers. We look forward to continuing to provide fair, equitable and culturally-appropriate services to all newcomers in San Francisco.

BCWP Activities

July 2003–June 2004

Health Education Workshops

127 participants in 10 workshops

One-on-One Health Education

125 hours with 197 patients at Refugee Medical Clinic

Resources & Referrals

385 visitors to the Bosnian Community Resource Room

319 hours of resource assistance for 466 community members

Social Support Groups

39 sessions involving 367 community contacts

Leadership Development

7 Bosnian youth trained

Is This Fair?

The Importance of Community Education for San Mateo County Newcomers

Sheryl Bergman
Director, San Mateo County Program

Mrs. H believed the private immigration consultant when he told her that all she had to do was sign on the dotted line, pay \$3,000, and she would receive her work permit. At the time, Mrs. H did not realize that this “consultant” was not authorized to practice immigration law, and that the supposed immigration benefit he was selling her did not even exist. With three young US Citizen children to raise, Mrs. H needed that work permit to supplement her husband’s minimum wage job. Even though she had been living in the United States for ten years, working hard, paying taxes, sending her children to school, and obeying the laws, Mrs. H saw this as her only option to adjust her immigration status.

By the time Mrs. H came to the Redwood City branch office of the International Institute, she had lost \$3,000, and had been served with an order to be deported from the United States. She was devastated. If she had to leave the country, who would take care of her



Reyna Cabral answers questions about naturalization at a monthly workshop.

“I just became a U.S. Citizen! I couldn’t have done it with out the excellent English and Citizenship classes provided by the International Institute. Best of all, now I can help my daughter with her homework from her High School civics class.”

—English Language/Citizenship Preparation student

children? If she took them with her, she would be forcing them to move to a new country that they did not know, to speak a language they could barely understand, and to abandon all hope for a decent education and opportunities for a better future. She faced a decision none of us would ever want to make.

About 1,000 of the 4,762 people seeking consultations in our San Mateo County office last year faced similar dilemmas. Hard-working, law-abiding families are torn apart by immigration laws that do not acknowledge social and economic realities, and are exacerbated by fraudulent immigration con-

“I’m so glad I attended the presentation by the Immigration Caseworkers of the International Institute. Now I can understand why the parents are so concerned about speaking up at school meetings. With the information I gained, I can better explain the rights and responsibilities to the immigrant families I work with.”

—Educator who participated in the Institute’s training on Immigration Law and Procedures.

sultants eager to exploit those desperate to buy hope at any price.

To address this crisis, the International Institute expanded community education in San Mateo County, to inform newcomers of their rights and responsibilities in their new country. With the support of Peninsula Community Foundation, San Francisco Foundation, Atkinson Foundation and Redwood City Human Services Financial Assistance Program, we provided information to over 500 individuals



Civic Participation/English students celebrate their graduation.



Clarisa Eakins helps client fill out her citizenship application.



Clients learn about the citizenship process.

during the past year. In our weekly informational presentations, IISF staff explained the basic laws and procedures regarding immigration and other legal issues, answering questions about ways to immigrate, obligations when interacting with police officers, requirements and benefits of becoming a US Citizen, and recourse options for immigrant survivors of domestic violence. We helped newcomers navigate the maze of rules and regulations in our society, and provided them with the information they need to make informed decisions regarding their family's future.

For families that qualified for immigration relief under current US law, IISF Accredited Representatives (immigration caseworkers who are accredited by the Board of Immigration Appeals to represent clients) provided assistance to apply for those benefits, after each client completed an extensive eligibility analysis. This assistance helped to reunite families, enable those eligible to obtain work authorization, social security numbers, and driver's licenses, and to apply for US Citizenship.

With the support of the California Department of Education, IISF contin-

ued its second year of English and Citizenship classes in San Mateo County. Over 235 individuals attended our classes last year, to improve their English skills, increase their civic participation, and gain US Citizenship. Our San Mateo County Program offers classes in Redwood City and the rural coast-side community of El Granada.

In the coming year, we plan to continue providing top quality information, education and legal assistance to all the families who come to us, seeking a helping hand on their path towards self-sufficiency. Your support makes that possible.

"Thank you for helping me to reunite our family. It was so painful when we had to leave my oldest son behind. The immigration caseworker really helped us to bring our family back together again."

—Immigration client

San Mateo County Program Immigration and Citizenship Services

Fiscal Year 2002-2003:

1. Number of Office Visits	4,762
2. Workshops, Presentations, Classes (number of participants)	1,109
Citizenship Workshops	306
Immigration Laws and Procedures Presentations	568
English Language/ Civic Participation Classes	235
3. Clients Assisted with Immigration and Citizenship Procedures	2,735
Citizenship	151
Work Authorization	372
Visa Petitions	185
Adjustment of Status	153
Consular Processing	86
Affidavits of Support	257
Freedom of Information Act Requests	132
VAWA (Violence Against Women Act)	8
Family Unity	9
Waivers	6
Replacement of Green Card	87
Temporary Protective Status	110
Miscellaneous	138
Other Procedures	
Declarations	71
Translation of Documents	225
Letters and Inquiries	445

A Fair Future for Youth?

YouthCares confronts the growing academic and financial needs facing immigrant teens

Jennifer Berger
Program Director, YouthCares

"Can I come in for math tutoring? I really need help—it's so difficult and I have to pass this class to graduate from high school." Carolyn Shin, the YouthCares SoMa Coordinator, received this call from a youth who had been in our program six months before. In an effort to fulfill her graduation requirements on time, Bana enrolled in an Algebra class

"The best experience I had while working at YouthCares was talking to seniors about their experience and what they did when they were a teenager."—Richard Chen

at City College for high school credit. She attended class 2 evenings a week, in addition to being a full-time high school student, a Teacher's Assistant, a Youth Outreach Worker, and a participant in a youth video project.

Bana's City College class was overcrowded and students weren't given any books or handouts. She told Carolyn that students weren't allowed to bring textbooks home because there were not enough to go around. Even handouts had to be returned since there was no money for the instructor to make new copies. Carolyn provided one-on-one tutoring for Bana, and together they spent eight hours covering five chapters in the textbook. As a result of the sup-



YouthCares Program staff Carolyn Shin, Stella Kang, Ellen Ritchie, and Jennifer Berger

port that Bana received, she passed the class and will be graduating from high school in June!

The sad truth is, the lack of resources and support Bana received at school is the norm rather than the exception. Last year, the fees for City College increased by 30% and those for San Francisco State University went up by

"The best experience was helping seniors because I never met my grandparents and I wanted to interact and help seniors. Helping out at the Food Bank was cool because I've never done anything this helpful for people that don't have enough food. This really changed my view of seniors because they showed me how they lived their lives and how hard it is to have disadvantages when you become a senior."—Kevin Nguy

14%. Young people must now find even more ways to finance the costs of their continued education. Immigrant youth, in addition to learning English, contributing to their family's income, and trying to adjust to life in a new culture, face this challenge as well. Some

YouthCares participants have been able to use the skills and experience they acquired in our program to secure jobs that provide better pay to finance their college education.

Through our intergenerational and peer-tutoring programs, YouthCares served 275 youth this year. Youth participants made a positive impact on the community through their work with immigrant youth and senior citizens at eleven service sites throughout San Francisco. Youth teach computer skills to seniors, lead English acquisition activities for their peers at Newcomer High, distribute food to low-income seniors at a local food bank, facilitate arts and crafts activities with seniors, and much more. Youth receive critical work readiness training and job experience in the program. At YouthCares, we are committed to giving youth the skills and confidence they need to succeed in the current job market and to gain admission into community colleges and 4-year universities.

Program highlights from this year include:

Cycles of Oppression Training Series: This fall our three YC Program Coordinators worked together to develop a series of 5 workshops addressing social justice issues, including racism, identity, classism. The Program Coordinators co-facilitated the workshops and more than 40 youth



Intergenerational Arts and Crafts at a Senior Site

attended. Many participants told us that this was the first time they had considered or articulated their thoughts or feelings about issues of class, race, gender, and sexuality. The Coordinators did a fantastic job of keeping the trainings interactive, thought provoking, and relevant for our youth!

Video Project for Youth: Staff from TILT (Teaching Intermedia Literacy Tools) and YC secured funding to support a summer-long video project. After submitting an essay, a group of 8 returning YC participants were selected to work on the project throughout the summer. Weekly classes were facilitated by qualified video professionals from TILT. Participating youth learned about getting their message into the media, operating a video camera, framing shots, and conducting successful interviews. After youth learned the basics of video production, they created a video from scratch and had their film shown at a screening for youth videos.

Intergenerational Community Exploration Events: As a result of a one-time grant from the Department of Children, Youth and Their Families, YC hired 60 youth and expanded our programs last summer. As a way to



YouthCares SOMA celebrates end of cycle by going out to dinner together.

expose seniors to a variety of community and cultural resources in San Francisco, YouthCares took weekly field trips with youth and senior participants. The majority of the seniors we work with live by themselves in subsidized housing facilities and are isolated because of their limited English skills. Youth accompanied seniors from

on the immigrant community. Current and alumni YC participants consistently turn to our staff for much-needed academic, college preparation and career counseling support. With diminished resources for public education and increased competition for youth employment positions, YC teens need our programs now more than ever.

“I had a great time working with my peers at Newcomer High School. This program gave me the opportunity to improve my communication skills and allowed me to be more confident as a person.”

—Veronica Girma

all program sites to the Asian Art Museum, the Legion of Honor, City Hall, the Conservatory of Flowers, and Fisherman’s Wharf. YouthCares participants served as companions and translators for monolingual seniors on the field trips.

The number of youth who participate in YouthCares has grown consistently over the past 7 years. In January of 2005, we had 3 times as many applicants as we had the capacity to accept. YouthCares provides a unique opportunity for bilingual youth to use their language skills to make a positive impact

YouthCares Services

July 2003–June 2004

1. Youth Served (by Ethnicity) 274

Seniors Served	543
Hours of Training Provided	
Ukrainian/Russian	17
Bosnian	1
Filipino	10
Chinese	156
South East Asian	20
African American	16
Latino	27
Middle Eastern	11
Caucasian	9
Bi-cultural	7

2. Seniors Served (by Ethnicity) 516

Ukrainian/Russian	95
Latino	13
Filipino	32
Chinese	356
South East Asian	5
African American	13
Caucasian	2

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