The Immigrant Learning Center, Inc. (ILC) held its first Immigrant Entrepreneur Awards Dinner on May 9, 2012, at the Royal Sonesta Hotel in Cambridge, MA. The process began back in January 2012 with forming committees and soliciting nominations, which came pouring in from across Massachusetts for 21 impressive immigrant entrepreneurs.

With Master of Ceremonies Richard A. Davey, Jr., secretary and CEO of the Massachusetts Department of Transportation and ILC trustee, 150 attendees celebrated the achievements of three award winners.

The first category, Neighborhood Business, highlights the important role immigrant entrepreneurs play in revitalizing and stabilizing urban neighborhoods. The winner, Larry Dossantos, is from Cape Verde and founded 912 Auto Center in Dorchester 27 years ago. More recently, he modified his business practices to be more eco-friendly, built community gardens and launched a neighborhood advisory group for minority business owners.

The second category, Business Growth, demonstrates the important role immigrants play in growing the economy. Julia Silverio, from the Dominican Republic, won for growing Silverio Insurance Agency in Lawrence to $2.5 million in 2011. That’s an impressive 56 percent increase over 2009 revenue. Julia congratulated the other nominees saying, “We came to this country in pursuit of the American Dream and a better life for ourselves and our families. And, just by that mere fact, we are all winners.”

The third category, Science/Technology Business, reflects the fact that immigrants represent a disproportionately large segment of U.S. patent holders and founders of high-tech businesses. The winner, Amar Sawhney, is from India and has founded five high-tech businesses in Massachusetts. His innovations are the subject of more than 100 patents.

Photos and video from the event can be seen on The ILC website at www.ilctr.org/events.
MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT AND CEO

As you read this News Update, you will see it has been a very productive and exciting year for the school and its students.

As the school approaches its 20th anniversary this fall, I can not help but look back and think about the more than 7,000 immigrants from 109 countries we have helped learn English. Due to incredibly competent, caring and creative teachers, staff and volunteers, ILC students have found jobs, started businesses, entered training programs, gone to college, become citizens and learned to navigate our very complex health, education and economic systems. So many of their children attend college, enter professions and give back to their families and communities that nurtured them. Like my immigrant parents and friends, immigrants continue to ensure that The U.S. remains an economic powerhouse.

Throughout American history, immigrants have come to America to create a better life for their children, to find freedom and security, to practice their religion freely, to go to school, find jobs and create businesses. In return they bring their skills, drive, ingenuity, ability to take risks and their work ethic. It is imperative that we continue to welcome them.

To help create a more welcoming environment for future immigrants, The ILC has partnered with George Mason University to establish an Institute for Immigration Research (IIR). Building on the work The ILC's Public Education Institute has done in Massachusetts and regionally, the IIR will do national research to educate policy makers, media, teachers, students and the business community about the contributions of immigrants as entrepreneurs, workers and consumers. This initiative moves The ILC into the national arena and into the future.

Over these 20 years, I have been fortunate to be surrounded by wonderful staff, volunteers, Board members, students and supporters. The staff and the school continue to be recognized locally and nationally for excellence. We all look forward to the coming years as there is still so much to be done.

Diane Portnoy

ILC STUDENTS

Tammy La is a student in The ILC Literacy Program. She and her husband, Dave, traveled from Vietnam to Canada to escape war. They came to the U.S. in 2002 with two sets of twins, and the children have flourished here. Today, the older set, a boy and girl, have graduated from high school. Sam will study engineering, computer science or physics at Worcester Polytechnic Institute on a full scholarship, and Teresa is going to Seoul, South Korea, as part of a high school exchange program for academically gifted students.

The younger son, Allen, placed eighth in an international math competition last year. He and his sister, Anita, will be seniors in Malden High School this fall. Tammy and her husband are grateful because here their children have “education, affordable health insurance and housing, and the chance for a good future.”
FOCUS ON FUNDERS

Kathryn Andriko, Vice President and Commercial Transaction Counsel, Commonwealth Land Title Insurance Company-New York, NY

“Many years ago, Jennifer Clark of Reit Management and Research, LLC introduced me to the wonderful work that The ILC was doing. As the granddaughter of Polish immigrants, I understand first hand the difficulties of immigrants in assimilating into American life. When my grandmother died after living in the United States for over 65 years, she still barely spoke English and interacted almost exclusively with the Polish community in our area. I cannot help but feel that if she had the support of an organization such as The ILC, she would have had an easier and less limited life. Commonwealth Land Title Insurance Company is proud to be a contributor to such a worthwhile effort.”

Jim Healey, President, the Yawkey Foundation

“Tom and Jean Yawkey valued the importance of education and understood its ability to change lives. Today, the Trustees of the Yawkey Foundation are pleased to support The Immigrant Learning Center and its commitment to supporting the educational needs of immigrant adults in our community.” A generous donor since 1995, the Yawkey Foundation commends The ILC for instilling an environment of tolerance and respect where people of all ability levels and backgrounds come together to learn the skills they need to become successful workers, parents and community members.

ILC HONORED

June 2012 was full of recognition and awards for The ILC and Founder and CEO Diane Portnoy. On June 6, 2012, the Malden YWCA honored The ILC as an Organization of Distinction at its 21st annual Tribute to Women awards dinner. The ILC was recognized for its contributions to the Malden community and support of the YWCA’s mission of eliminating racism, empowering women, and promoting peace, justice, freedom and dignity for all. Diane accepted the award on behalf of the students, staff, volunteers and Board of Trustees before an audience of 250 people at Anthony’s of Malden.

The ILC was one of four finalists for the Excellence in Innovation award from the Massachusetts Nonprofit Network on June 11. This award recognizes a nonprofit organization that has made substantial progress toward key outcomes through use of new approaches or strategies, and The ILC was selected because of its Public Education Institute’s innovative approach to supporting immigrants and refugees through public education.

The Malden Chamber of Commerce presented Diane with the Community Service Award at its 13th annual Salute to Malden’s Shining Stars awards dinner on June 14 at Anthony’s of Malden. She was honored for her lifelong work serving the immigrant community. Her remarks before an admiring audience of elected officials and business and community leaders praised the courage of ILC students for leaving their countries to create a better life in America and immigrant entrepreneurs whose contributions positively impact our communities, the economy and the country.
Seed Folk of Malden
Presented by the ILC Theater Group

*Seed Folk of Malden*, The ILC’s Spring Theater Group production, used the imagery of gardening and growing food to illustrate the universal themes of understanding others and working together. Based on Paul Fleishman’s *Seedfolks*, a 2012 Malden Reads selection, the production shows us a community at odds with itself and a dirty vacant lot that symbolizes their discord.

Efforts to clean the lot provide humor as the residents get the run-around at the Mayor’s office and quarrel with each other. But it is the seeds planted in the lot by a young girl that change antagonists into friends. The seeds become bean plants, and soon the lot is a community garden.

At the conclusion, members of The ILC Theater Group spoke about their dreams and the opportunities they have been given. *Seed Folk of Malden* was the last production for Kathleen Klose, director of The ILC Theater for nine years. The cast and audience gave her a standing ovation.

As always, Music Director Jeantilus Gedeus played piano and conducted the singing. Everyone joined in John Lennon’s *Imagine* at the conclusion.

Congratulations to 17 Students Who Became New Citizens from October 2011 to June 2012

Yamina Hachem Danoune (Algeria), Samuel Cesar Ribeiro (Brazil), Cleida Sathier Rodrigues (Brazil), Xie Hui Tan (China), Vicenta Hernandez (El Salvador), Emil Manukian (Georgia), Charite Merise (Haiti), Magalie Lacombe (Haiti), Rosita Jode (Haiti), Adianne Senat Compere (Haiti), Parminder Kaur (India), Prafullaben Patel (India) Muhame Millanaj (Kosovo), Abdelmajid Ferradi (Morocco), Chrichem Cherki (Morocco), Svetlana Postnikova (Russia), Alaba Olalere (Nigeria), Ermite Chery (Haiti), Hong Hai Chen (China)

VISITING NURSE

Susan Taricani, a registered nurse at Massachusetts General Hospital, is studying for a Master of Science in Nursing at Salem State University. As part of her program, she came to The ILC for two days in February to take students’ blood pressure and answer questions about medications. In April, Susan offered workshops for students in prevention, healthy lifestyles, nutrition and first aid. Teachers introduced vocabulary beforehand and went over the material the next day. Susan received lots of good questions, and both students and teachers had positive responses to the workshops.

The ILC was a natural choice for Susan. She spent three weeks in Haiti during the recent cholera epidemic and is glad to offer medical advice to ILC students. She “likes the immigrant population” and is glad to offer medical advice to ILC students. After these successful workshops, possibly more nursing students will complete their practicums at The ILC in the future.
Students in The ILC Literacy Class visited with Mayor Gary Christenson at Malden City Hall on May 14. Accompanied by ILC volunteers Deb Cicero and Pam DeGroot, the students presented the Mayor with a booklet of essays they had written about their lives and their reasons for coming to the U.S. Mayor Christenson would like to see the demographics of City Hall more reflective of Malden’s population.

The Mayor and School Superintendent David DeRuosi, both in their first term of office, toured The ILC. Visiting classrooms and meeting with students reinforced for them the importance of having a school of this stature serving the immigrant community in Malden.

So much is happening at The ILC that the media is taking notice. For example, one of the largest newspapers in the country, Deseret News, recently profiled Diane, and the Boston Globe did an in-depth story on the launch of the Institute for Immigration Research. To see the top stories about The ILC, visit the news section of the website at www.ictr.org/ilc-news.

Pictured above is a group of dedicated volunteers who were honored by The ILC at a lunch on May 4, 2012, for helping immigrants and refugees achieve their goals and participate more fully in Massachusetts society. Under the direction of ILC teachers, a total of 57 volunteers spend three or more hours every week helping foreign-born adults learn English reading, writing, grammar and conversation skills, and increase their understanding of American culture. They assist in the classroom with currently enrolled students and work one-on-one with some of those waiting to be enrolled who would not otherwise receive assistance. Some have volunteered at The ILC for more than a decade.

The Immigrant Learning Center, Inc. (ILC) of Malden, MA is a not-for-profit organization that helps immigrants and refugees become successful workers, parents and community members through direct service programs and public education. Our direct service programs provide free year-round English classes to immigrant and refugee adults in Greater Boston. The ILC further supports immigrants through the Public Education Institute, which informs Americans about the economic and social contributions of immigrants in our society. For more information, visit www.ictr.org.
THE ILC PRESENTS IMMIGRANT ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN D.C.

On the heels of her report, *Immigrant Entrepreneurs: Creating Jobs and Strengthening the Economy*, Director of The ILC Public Education Institute Marcia Hohn moderated a panel of four immigrant entrepreneurs in Washington, D.C., before an audience of 70 journalists, researchers and policymakers.

The session highlighting the economic impact of immigrant-owned businesses was hosted on February 28, 2012, by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the Immigration Policy Center (IPC) of the American Immigration Council, which had jointly published the report in January.

Marcia introduced the panel saying, “Immigrant owned growth businesses are hugely important to strengthening local economies as well as providing jobs essential to economic recovery.” The four panelists of varying backgrounds provided impressive examples:

- Francisco D’Souza of Cognizant in New Jersey, a Fortune 500 company, was born in India and traveled the world with his diplomat father before settling here.
- Saul Perlera of Perlera Real Estate in East Boston arrived in the U.S. from El Salvador as an undocumented immigrant who spoke no English. Today, he’s on his way to becoming a U.S. citizen and speaks Spanish, English and Italian.
- Mei Xu of Chesapeake Bay Candle Company in Maryland was trained as a diplomat in her native China. She has factories all over the world and recently relocated one of them from Vietnam to Maryland.
- Albert Yousif of A2Z Facilities Maintenance in Michigan is an Iraqi refugee who went from cleaning offices 18 to 20 hours a day to owning his own business. He tells his employees, “There are opportunities but you have to educate yourself, improve your language skills and work hard.”

Following the session, Marcia, Saul, and The ILC’s Diane Portnoy and Kathy Smith had an audience with Massachusetts Senator Scott Brown. Senator Brown has a strong interest in small business and was keen on hearing about Saul’s rise to success.

For more information on immigrant entrepreneurs, click on the “Promoting Immigrants” tab on The ILC website.
EDUCATING THE PUBLIC

Reaching and engaging immigrant businesses

To help economic and community development professionals better reach immigrant business owners, on April 24, 2012, The ILC partnered with MassINC and the Massachusetts Association of Community Development Corporation to host a workshop on “Reaching and Engaging Immigrant Businesses.” This training is part of a larger effort to document the economic activity of immigrant entrepreneurs in Lynn, MA.

New report creates excitement at the State House

The latest report from The ILC Public Education Institute was the focus of a legislator briefing at the State House on May 15, 2012. *Massachusetts Immigrants by the Numbers, Second Edition: Demographic Characteristics and Economic Footprint* was published in March and updates one of The ILC’s most popular reports with vital new data. Authors Alan Clayton-Matthews of Northeastern University and Paul Watanabe of University of Massachusetts Boston shared their findings with 50 legislator aides and members of community organizations and consulates. The report is available on The ILC website at www.ilctr.org. For a printed copy, contact Ewa Goodman at egoodman@ilctr.org or 781-322-9777.

Teacher workshop goes online and nationwide!

For the first time, the annual ILC workshop for educators, “Teaching Immigration Across the Curriculum,” moved out of The ILC’s Malden office and into the World Wide Web for K-12 and adult educators nationwide. This year’s pilot took place from July 10 to 12. Through webinars, videos and group chat rooms, the workshop featured interactive modules to educate teachers on immigrants and immigration while addressing classroom diversity.

Get more on The ILC Public Education Institute’s news page, where you can also download the report *Immigrant Entrepreneurs: Creating Jobs and Strengthening the Economy: www.ilctr.org*

BOARD NEWS

Mass Department of Transportation Secretary and CEO and ILC Board Trustee Richard A. Davey, Jr. has been named one of Ten Outstanding Young Leaders by the Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce. The awards were presented on June 21, 2012, at the Weston Waterfront Hotel.

Save The Date

The ILC will celebrate 20 Years of Giving Immigrants a Voice at a gala on Saturday, October 20, 2012, at the Royal Sonesta Hotel in Cambridge, Massachusetts. The evening will include a welcoming reception, dinner and dancing to the music of Hip Pocket. Please plan on attending.

Golf Classic Rescheduled

The ILC Golf Classic scheduled for June 4 was rained out and will be played on Monday, August 27. Email Peggy Louden at plouden@ilctr.org to re-register your foursome.

The ILC is a not-for-profit corporation supported by tax-deductible charitable contributions and, in part, by funding from The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Mystic Valley Elder Services, Inc., the Massachusetts Executive Offices of Elder Affairs and the Federal Administration on Aging, and the cities of Malden and Medford, Massachusetts. The ILC admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin or disability.
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