New American Stories
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Milestones

Immigrating to a new country is one of the most significant events in an individual's and a family's life. In recognition of the impact of immigration on all our lives, Governor Patrick joined states and municipalities around the country in proclaiming June 2014 the first "Immigrant Heritage Month." The Immigrant Learning Center has partnered with Welcome.us, the City of Cambridge, the City of Boston and many local community organizations to host an Immigrant Heritage Celebration at the Boston Public Library on June 21 from 12:00 to 2:00 p.m. You can join the celebration, which will include live music, an interactive heritage timeline, presentations and the exhibition "City of Neighborhoods: The Changing Face of Boston."

Your support of The Immigrant Learning Center, Inc. helps newcomers to this country reach and exceed their goals every day. Below, I'm sharing with you stories of a former student whose family is succeeding beyond her wildest dreams, a member of The ILC family who received recognition for her work on behalf of immigrants, and The ILC's annual Immigrant Entrepreneur of the Year Awards that recognize the significant contributions of immigrants in Massachusetts.

I hope you enjoy these milestone stories. Thank you for your continued support.

Diane Portnoy
Founder and CEO
The Immigrant Learning Center, Inc.
Saddiqa

Saddiqa is one proud mom. This spring, she will attend three graduation ceremonies. Her daughter Lailais graduating from UMass Boston, daughter Jaila is graduating from Bryn Mawr, and her son Bilal is graduating from Malden High School with plans to attend UMass Amherst.

Before graduating, Laila, Jaila and Bilal each participated in a program for low-income teenagers called Summer Search that sent them to Minnesota, Colorado and Peru, respectively. As Saddiqa explains, the program “opens their mind.” This May, Jaila, Bilal and Saddiqa spoke in front of 150 people at a ceremony for Summer Search. Saddiqa says her experience at The ILC helped her speak with confidence.

This is a scenario she could barely have imagined growing up in Afghanistan where the Taliban prevented girls from attending school. You may remember her story from the June 2012 newsletter when she was enrolled in The ILC’s Literacy Program. The ILC gave her the only education she has ever received, and now she is giving back by volunteering in the classroom two days a week. She has lingering health issues from her experiences in the war that prevent her from working, but she comes to The ILC faithfully every week.

Dr. Marcia Drew Hohn named Outstanding Educator of the Year

Director of The ILC Public Education Institute, Dr. Marcia Drew Hohn, was named Outstanding Educator of the Year by the Massachusetts Coalition for Adult Education on April 4, 2014. Marcia has pioneered a multi-pronged program to raise the visibility of immigrants' economic and social contributions that included research, policy development and professional development. The ILC is proud of and grateful for her dedication to giving immigrants a voice.

In photo: Roberta Soolman, president of the Massachusetts Coalition for Adult Education (left) and Dr. Marcia Drew Hohn

Immigrant Entrepreneurs honored at third annual Awards Dinner

From left to right: Diane Portnoy, Marica Hohn, Rosa Tejeda (Tremendous Maid LLC), Nisaury Tejeda (Tremendous Maid LLC), Fitzroy Alexander (Traditional Breads, Inc.), Josef von Rickenbach (PAREXEL International Corp.), Victoria Amador (Tremendous Maid LLC), Dr. Fauzia Khan (Alere Analytics) and Rich Davey, Jr. (secretary and CEO, Massachusetts Department of Transportation).
More than 200 people came together to celebrate the contributions of immigrant entrepreneurs in Massachusetts personified by 35 nominees and award winners at The Immigrant Learning Center, Inc.’s 2014 Immigrant Entrepreneur of the Year Awards Dinner at the Royal Sonesta Hotel in Cambridge, Mass. The nominees in attendance each received citations from their respective legislators, and the winners in four categories also received trophies. All were impressive examples of entrepreneurial spirit. See details and photos from the event on The ILC’s website.

About Us

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 program provides 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 http://www.ilctr.org.