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*Diane Portnoy*

*Founder and CEO*

## **Forty-Two outstanding Massachusetts entrepreneurs nominated for The 2016 ILC Immigrant Entrepreneur of the Year Awards**

MALDEN, Mass, March 21, 2016 / On April 28, 2016, at The Immigrant Learning Center's fifth annual Immigrant Entrepreneur of the Year Awards, more than 250 business and community leaders will come together to honor 42 immigrants from 26 countries who founded businesses in 18 Massachusetts communities. These nominees represent outstanding business leaders from across the commonwealth in four business categories: growth, neighborhood, high-tech and life science.

This is a diverse group. The businesses they founded range from three to 56 years old and are as dissimilar as a neighborhood bakery, a law firm and a cutting-edge technology company; but each of these 45 nominees made the same choice to leave the country of their birth, start a new life and a new business in this country. The residents of Massachusetts benefit greatly from this choice.

The 2016 winner in each category will be announced at the Immigrant Entrepreneur of the Year Awards Dinner on Thursday, April 28, 2016, at the Royal Sonesta Hotel in Cambridge, Mass., with Master of Ceremonies, Massachusetts Secretary of Housing and Economic Development Jay Ash. Ticket and sponsorship information is available at <http://www.ilctr.org>.

### **Business Growth**

According to data from the Massachusetts Department of Labor and Workforce Development, private employers added 5.8 percent more jobs from 2012 to 2015. The nine nominees in the Business Growth category increased their number of full-time-equivalent employees by 20 to 1067 percent during the same time frame. These immigrant entrepreneurs have had phenomenal success in a sluggish economy and are expanding the Massachusetts workforce. The nominees for The 2016 ILC Immigrant Entrepreneur of the Year in Business Growth are:

Herby Duverne, Taino Consulting Group, LLC, Boston  
from Haiti

Wendy Estrella, Estrella Law Firm, Lawrence  
from Dominican Republic

Eduardo & German Fernandez, Brothers Market, Inc., Dorchester  
from Dominican Republic

Francisco Fernandez, Happy Supermarket, Dorchester  
from Dominican Republic

Marc-Andre Lebel, FRX Polymers, Inc., Chelmsford  
from Canada

Larry O'Toole, Gentle Giant Moving Company, Somerville  
from Ireland

Hitendra Patel, IXL Center, Cambridge  
from Zambia

Jose de la Rosa, Guardian Healthcare, Jamaica Plain  
from Dominican Republic

Tony Salem, Sea-Dar Construction, Boston  
from Lebanon

### **Neighborhood Business**

Small businesses are the lifeblood of many neighborhoods. They provide needed goods and services, local jobs, and they give back to their communities. The nominees for The 2016 ILC Immigrant Entrepreneur of the Year in Neighborhood Business are:

Angelica and Diana Cardona, Chocolafee, Revere  
from Columbia

Eva and Nick Chau, Tai Tung Pharmacy, Boston  
from China

Joe DeSouza, Modelos Market and Cafe, Somerville  
from Brazil

Mai Du, Wah Lum Kung Fu & Tai Chi Academy, Malden  
from Vietnam

Julia Frenkle, Opus Design LLC, Brighton  
from Germany

Suraj Gurung, Asian Star Markets LLC, West Springfield  
from Bhutan

Dheyaa Habeed, Baghdad Bakery and Market, West Springfield  
from Iraq

Sandra Katz-Deleon, Center For Bilingual Services, Lawrence  
from Ecuador

Fatima Langa, Muqueca Restaurant, Cambridge  
from Brazil

Gerardo Loza and Hilda Torres, My Little Best Friends Early Learning Center, Malden  
from Mexico

Danaris Mazara, Sweet Grace Heavenly Cakes, Lawrence  
from Dominican Republic

Moe Mobasherat, Omnidentix & Associates, Medford  
from Iran

Elizabeth Nolberto, Ellie's CPR and First Aid Training, Lawrence  
from Dominican Republic

Jignesh Patel, Jay Square, Beverly  
from India

Colette Phillips, Colette Phillips Communications, Boston  
from Antigua

Antonio Rodrigues, TNT Cleaning Services Inc., Assonet  
from Cape Verde

Magbe Savane, Makomas LLC, Revere  
from Côte d'Ivoire

Douglas Tran, All Seasons Table Restaurant, Malden  
from Vietnam

Angela Westen, Angela Westen Insurance Agency, Lowell  
from Brazil

## **High-Tech**

The nominees in the high-tech category have each made remarkable contributions in their fields, and they contribute to Massachusetts' reputation as a top ecosystem of innovation. They are at the cutting edge of technologies as diverse as cybersecurity, energy, nanotechnology, mobile apps, cloud computing and the internet of things. These immigrants are forging innovations that can have a significant impact on the future. The nominees for The 2016 ILC Immigrant Entrepreneur of the Year in High-Tech are:

Edison Almeida, eCurv Inc., Cambridge  
from Brazil

Rajini Anachi, mZeal Communications, Littleton  
from India

Vladimir Bulovic, QD Vision, Lexington  
from Yugoslavia

Mihael Mikek, Celtra Inc., Boston  
from Slovenia

Markus Rex, ownCloud, Lexington

from Germany

Omri Shor, Medisafe, Boston  
from Israel

## **Life Science**

Immigrants are overrepresented among patent holders and Nobel Prize winners. In Massachusetts, immigrant entrepreneurs are a critical component leading to Massachusetts' reputation as a life science powerhouse. These founders are making significant breakthroughs that impact the health and well-being of us all ranging from neurologic disorders, cancer, food science, human microbiome therapies and gene-based drugs. The nominees for The 2016 ILC Immigrant Entrepreneur of the Year in Life Science are:

Sudhir Agrawal, Idera Pharmaceuticals, Cambridge  
from India

PJ Anand, Alcyone Lifesciences and Arthromeda, Inc., Lowell  
from India

Garo H. Armen, Agenus Inc., Lexington and Children of Armenia Fund, New York, NY  
from Turkey

Magdalena Leszczyniecka, STC Biologics, Cambridge  
from Poland

Bernat Olle, Vedanta Biosciences, Inc., Cambridge  
from Spain

Elisabet de los Pinos, Aura Biosciences Inc., Cambridge  
from Spain

Oliver Yu, Conagen, Inc., Bedford  
from China

## **About The Immigrant Learning Center, Inc.**

The Immigrant Learning Center, Inc. (ILC) of Malden, MA, is a not-for-profit organization that gives immigrants a voice in three ways. The English Language Program provides free, year-round English classes to immigrant and refugee adults in Greater Boston to help them become successful workers, parents and community members. The Public Education Institute informs Americans about the economic and social contributions of immigrants in our society, and the Institute for Immigration Research, a joint venture with George Mason University, conducts research on the economic contributions of immigrants.

For more information, visit the website <http://www.ilctr.org>. The ILC can also be found on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Flickr.

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