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**MALDEN-BASED ORGANIZATION UNVEILS GROUNDBREAKING RESEARCH
ON IMMIGRANT ENTREPRENEURS AND HOMEBUYERS**
Reveals They Are Assets to the Massachusetts Economy

Boston, Mass - The Immigrant Learning Center, Inc. (ILC) today unveiled two groundbreaking research studies about immigrant entrepreneurs and immigrant homebuyers to more than 120 business and community leaders during a special presentation at The Omni Parker House. Commissioned by The ILC, a Malden-based, not-for-profit adult learning center that provides free English classes to immigrant and refugee adults, the studies highlight unnoticed economic and social contributions these immigrants make to their communities and the Massachusetts economy. Both studies were conducted by university researchers through in-depth, personal interviews with a sample of immigrant entrepreneurs and homebuyers in Boston, Lowell and Lawrence, Mass. Interviews were also conducted with key community informants and relevant U.S. Census data was compiled and analyzed.

The first study, *Immigrant Entrepreneurs and Neighborhood Revitalization*, focused on the Boston neighborhoods of Allston Village, East Boston, and Fields Corner and was conducted by the Gaston and Asian American Institutes at the University of Massachusetts-Boston. The immigrant entrepreneurs interviewed run small storefront retail and service businesses such as grocery stores, beauty salons, video stores and restaurants. The study revealed that these immigrant entrepreneurs make major contributions to improvements of their neighborhoods. They revive commerce and investment in declining neighborhoods by providing needed goods and services for immigrant groups and bringing in new customers attracted by the diversity and distinctive character. In turn, the revived commerce incubates new businesses and increases employment opportunities. Over time, the neighborhoods become cleaner, brighter and safer. The immigrant entrepreneurs themselves have visions for expansion. Many have already opened new locations, diversified their range of goods and services or taken on entirely new ventures.

UMASS-Boston researcher Paul Watanabe notes that, "one is left with wonder and appreciation for what they have achieved for themselves and their communities."

The second study, *Immigrant Homebuyers in Lawrence and Lowell: Keys to the Revitalization of the Cities*, was conducted by researchers from Northern Essex Community College and Tufts University. The study outlines economic and social characteristics of new immigrant homebuyers and their experiences in purchasing a home.

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The study also reveals the rise of a new immigrant middle class in both cities. Income and educational levels are rising among immigrants, business entrepreneurship is up and these immigrants are making a commitment to staying in the city through buying a home.

Among the findings is that Latino home ownership in Lawrence rose by 166 percent over the 10-year period ending in 2000. In Lowell, immigrant home ownership is up by 82 percent, mostly among Southeast Asians. These new immigrant homeowners are generating local and regional economic activity through sizeable spending for home repairs and appliances and helping to support the cities through property taxes. The revitalization of Lawrence and Lowell is being fed by these immigrant individuals and families committed to the cities.

Both studies highlight the unnoticed economic and social contributions of immigrants. The studies also found that the immigrant entrepreneurs become immigrant homebuyers, which provides dual investments in their communities. Most importantly, the studies capture the voices of the immigrants often absent in discussions about economic and civic life.

“These research studies affirm the positive impact that immigrants are having on our economy and communities,” said ILC Co-Founder and Director, Diane Portnoy. “Immigrants and refugees are gifts to this country, and we need to welcome them.”

"The Immigrant Learning Center's research reports are important additions to the public dialogue about the value of immigrants to our economy and to our culture in Massachusetts," said Tripp Jones, chief administrative officer of The MENTOR Network. "Immigrant entrepreneurship represents the best of what our state has to offer, and I'm proud that The ILC has documented these great American success stories," he continued.

Founded in 1992, The ILC is a year-round, not-for-profit adult learning center that provides free classes in English to immigrant and refugee adults. Its mission is to help foreign-born adults gain the necessary English language proficiency to lead productive lives in the U.S. and become successful workers, parents and community members. The ILC also promotes immigrants as assets to America. The school is fully enrolled with 400 students and maintains a wait list of between 700 and 1,000 applicants. Since its inception, The ILC has served more than 3,900 individuals from 72 countries, now living and working in 58 Greater Boston communities.

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