

New curriculum introduces students to the refugee experience

MALDEN, Mass, November 19, 2020 / A new, free resource, *Welcome to the New World* Curriculum and Learning Guide, is now available for teachers who are looking for engaging ways to teach about timely issues like migration, refugees and the Syrian Civil War. It was produced by the not-for-profit The Immigrant Learning Center (The ILC) in partnership with Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Jake Halpern. His latest book, *Welcome to the New World*, is a graphic novel based on the real-life experiences of a family of Syrian refugees who arrived in Connecticut on Election Day in 2016. *Welcome to the New World* Curriculum and Learning Guide is intended to accompany the novel and contains nine lessons, along with worksheets, graphic organizers, resources and rubrics, well suited for language arts, social studies, current events and world history classes in grades seven through 11. These flexible plans can be used as individual lessons or collectively as a curriculum and are easily adapted to other classes.

Immigration, refugee resettlement and asylees are contentious and not well understood topics. In an overheated political environment, it can be difficult to bring these issues into a classroom. The *Welcome to the New World* curriculum brings the refugee experience to life in a uniquely relatable way. This project started in 2016 when Halpern and illustrator Michael Sloan met the Aldabaan family as they arrived in the United States. For four years, Halpern and Sloan documented the family's experiences in a Pulitzer Prize-winning editorial cartoon series in *The New York Times*, which formed the basis for the graphic novel. The story is told mainly from the perspective of the teenage son. This perspective makes the story relatable for many students, and the graphic format makes the material particularly engaging.

Halpern chose to partner with The Immigrant Learning Center on this curriculum because of its track record providing high-quality, free professional development for educators and its partnerships with well-known organizations such as the Anti-Defamation League, Teaching Tolerance, Re-imagining Migration, and many schools and universities. For more than a decade, The ILC has provided in-person and online workshops, videos and a wealth of other resources for teaching immigration-related topics as well as serving immigrant students. This project is the first in an upcoming series of free, immigration-related curricula from The ILC. *Welcome to the New World* Curriculum and Learning Guide is currently available for free at The ILC website at www.ilctr.org/promoting-immigrants/ilc-workshops/educators-2/ and will be published on sharemylesson.com.

About The Immigrant Learning Center, Inc.

The Immigrant Learning Center, Inc. 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 LinkedIn.

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