

# MCRC NOTICIAS



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## OPPORTUNITY, GOALS, AND TALENT: INGREDIENTS FOR SUCCESS

Edin Alicusic has always been a man who looks ahead and sees new possibilities. At age 23, he and one of his brothers arrived in Erie from Bosnia to find refuge and begin new lives. It was 1994, and Edin was young, single, separated from his homeland and family, and, for awhile, feeling very lost. The struggle to begin learning English, adjust to the fast pace of American lifestyle, and getting to know the people and city around him were a huge challenge. But as he always does, Edin saw new possibilities and began to build a future in which he would earn self-confidence and many successes.

After a time, he developed new language skills and competencies that led him to a position of Interpreter at the International Institute. He later worked as a case manager at MCRC and advanced to a supervisor position in the MCRC Refugee Services Program. He served at MCRC for ten years until 2008.



*Edin Alicusic*

Recognizing his growing talents and professional strengths, MCRC staff encouraged him to apply for the Management Apprenticeship Program at G.E. Transportation. He was accepted and graduated from the G.E. Apprenticeship Training program at Erie Institute of Technology in 2009.

Opportunities have continued for Edin, and today he is enrolled at Penn State/Behrend where, with a G.E. scholarship grant, he is completing a degree in Mechanical Engineering Technology while working full time at the company.

Experience and enthusiasm for getting things done have led him to other significant achievements as well. Advocating the benefits that sports can bring to life, he has been actively involved as a high school and college soccer coach and official for the past ten years. (He officiated for the MCRC Soccer Tournament last summer.) "Sports help build social and other important skills and teach personal discipline," he says.

Edin says he enjoys giving back wherever he can. He has contributed significant leadership and hard work among those in Erie's Bosnian Community, and he is readily recognized for helping to establish and develop the Bosnian Cultural Center at West 16th and Cherry Streets. The Center is a meaningful place for fellowship, social and educational programming, and worship.

Edin and his wife Alma, a nurse at Presque Isle Rehabilitation and Nursing Center have two children, Alem, 6 and Elda, 4.

### December Events

- Dec. 5—Ashura (Islamic Holiday)
- Dec. 7—MCRC /United Healthcare Christmas Party
- Dec. 7—MCRC programs open house at Horan Apts.
- Dec. 9—"A Christmas Carol" presented at SafeNet's Neighborhood Partnership Center, 254 East 10th St, 7 p.m.
- Dec. 20—Young People's Chorus Holiday Concert at St. John Lutheran Church, 2216 Peach St., 7 p.m.
- Dec. 21—Hanukkah
- Dec. 25—Christmas
- Dec. 26—Kwanza
- Dec. 23, 26, 30—MCRC Closed

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## MCRC Staff and Students Join to Observe Thanksgiving

November 17<sup>th</sup> MCRC held its second annual MCRC staff and student Thanksgiving meal. Students and staff brought in various foods, some traditional Thanksgiving items and some not, and sat family style to enjoy the festivities. For many, this is their first exposure to our American holiday of Thanksgiving and a wonderful opportunity for us to educate them about our culture. Watching the faces of those who are trying turkey or stuffing for the first time reminds us here at MCRC the unique opportunity that we have to aid those who now call America their new home.



## MCRC INTRODUCES COMMUNITY PROGRAMS AT JOHN E. HORAN GARDEN APTS.



MCRC program staff at the John E. Horan Garden Apartments hosted an open house for residents, staff and administrators at MCRC and the Erie Housing Authority, and other community visitors on December 7. The event was held at the newly reorganized Learning Center in the apartment complex on Tacoma Road.

The new comprehensive job development program at the John E. Horan Garden apartments and the Bird Drive apartments will assist residents with employment assessment, job preparation and placement, GED classes, career development, casework support, ESL classes, adult tutoring, and computer literacy.

## ANNA TISCHENKO ACHIEVES U.S. CITIZENSHIP

MCRC is pleased and proud to announce that Case Management Supervisor Anna Tischenko took the oath of Allegiance and became a United States Citizen on December 2, 2011.

Anna was born in Kyrgyzstan, a Russian state under the former U.S.S.R. She came to the U.S. in 2004 and began serving the Hispanic American Council (MCRC) in 2005 as a volunteer in ESL classes and language interpretation. Following that, she became a Caseworker, concentrating on the needs of Turkish immigrants. Today she supervises Case Management Services at our organization. Congratulations, Anna!



# VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

## Mercyhurst College Service Learning Program Satisfies Mutual Needs

**Colin Hurley** believes in “strength in partnership” and the premise of ‘win-win’. It’s this mutual need that exists between the Mercyhurst College Service Learning



Colin Hurley

program and the Multicultural Community Resource Center that makes it the perfect situation. Colin is the Director of Service-Learning at Mercyhurst College, a role in which he strives to connect hundreds of students each year to activities in the community that will allow the students to fulfill the college’s core values of being ‘socially merciful’ and ‘compassionate’ among others. Some of these activities, coordinated with Mercyhurst Campus Ministry, take students to places like New Orleans, Honduras, Guyana, or Kenya. As part of a service immersion program, other activities take them to the Multicultural Center, where they

can support the needs of a local organization and engage with individuals from all over the globe. This year, groups of service-learning students from Mercyhurst have assisted at the MCRC with a major spring clean-up, the construction of storage shelving, landscaping, the winterization of new American’s homes and preparation of the MCRC community and children’s gardens. Allan Turner, MCRC Director of Client Services points out that “we have an interest in having our clients meet and work with individuals and groups from the mainstream community, of which the college is a part, and at the same time share a bit of their culture as well. There was something special about being offered ‘Nepali Tea’ while we were in the homes of some of our clients, helping to winterize their windows. It broke the ice and made the experience more of a shared and mutually satisfying one.”

Mr. Hurley says that each year approximately 60 Mercyhurst courses become involved in various service-learning activities in our community, involving over 400 students per term. Dr. Turner

says this can be a challenge, pointing out that “Preparing and coordinating work activities for even 25 students who converge on the center at one time takes considerable effort; however, we believe it is worth the work in order to have our clients and the students interact. Of course, the actual work accomplished is wonderful also.”

The Multicultural Center appreciates the support of the students from Mercyhurst College and the Service Learning program and looks forward to continuing this relationship.



Mercyhurst students volunteer to help with spring clean-up.

**MCRC volunteer opportunities** exist for one-time or continuing activities. Please visit the Volunteer tab at our Website at [www.multiculturalcrc.org](http://www.multiculturalcrc.org). To inquire, send an email to [MCRC@multiculturalcrc.org](mailto:MCRC@multiculturalcrc.org). Be sure to include your name and phone number in your message.

## United Healthcare Teams Up with MCRC for Kids’ Holiday Party

On Wednesday December 7<sup>th</sup> **United Health Care** sponsored our Children’s Holiday Celebration for our day care children. Presents were provided for 125 happy and excited children. They enjoyed cookies and holiday songs as well. A special and heartfelt thanks goes out to all those at United Health Care who made this wonderful occasion possible.



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**GECAC "Go College" Program Opens**

A GECAC representative met with East High School students to enroll those who qualify in their Educational Talent Search program which helps to move students toward post-secondary education. They will meet once a month during the school year and three times over the summer. The program will take place at East High School. It is also available for interested individuals at Wayne and Wilson Middle schools. Parents and students interested in the program in Fall 2012 should inquire at MCRC for more information.



The Multicultural Community Resource Center provides a variety of educational and employment programs to the Immigrant and Refugee populations in Erie in a customer focused manner. The service needs of the clients are of prime importance. All services promote client self-sufficiency and improved economic, physical and/or social wellbeing.

**Your Donation is  
Appreciated**

To make a financial gift to MCRC, you can donate online at our website [www.multiculturalcrc.org](http://www.multiculturalcrc.org) or send it to **Joanna Cherpak, Director of Human Resources & Fund Development**, 554 East 10th St., Erie, PA 16503 or call her at 814.455.0212, X329.

MCRC is a 501 (c)(3) charity and all donations are tax deductible.

**IN MEMORIAM:  
ERIKA FREEMAN**

**The staff and friends of the Multicultural Community Resource Center remember and celebrate the life of our friend and associate Erika Freeman.**

**August 17, 1965 – October 27, 2011**



**Proudly serving the needs of the Hispanic and  
refugee communities since 1975.**