

MCRC NOTICIAS



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June 2012

A FATHER'S HEART BEATS FOR OTHERS

Each June we recognize and honor fatherhood. As we look about us, we can usually find a man who seems to have a certain grace and strength about him that attracts nearly everyone.

At MCRC we happily have found such a man; his name is **Ihsan Taqi**. Ihsan, age 65, and his wife, arrived in Erie as refugees from Iraq about ten months ago. Their long journey began a few years earlier as they fled the danger and violence that had become day-to-day reality of their country. Their struggle to find safety first took them to Turkey where they stayed with their three daughters and grandchildren for two years. During that time, they were not permitted to work, own property, or live their lives as their citizen neighbors could. Furthermore the risk of being sent back to Iraq by the Turkish government was an ever-lingering fear.

In July of 2011, Ihsan received the news that he and his wife, but not his children or grandchild-

ren, had been accepted for refugee resettlement in the United States. Per



Ihsan Taqi

suaed to do so by his daughters who wanted to see their parents live safe and stable lives, he accepted resettlement.

Ihsan arrived in Erie eager to find work, but he soon discovered the reality that a 65 year old man with little English and no American job history has little hope of finding employment in our struggling economy. In a short time, he found his way to MCRC where he attends various English classes and meets with Imad Diab, our Iraqi refugee case manager, for assistance. Ihsan al-

ways greets staff with a kind smile, and he takes every opportunity to express his thanks to America and its citizens for the new beginnings his countrymen and -women have been given. On one occasion, Ihsan presented a beautiful poster that he made to MCRC, and we proudly display it in our central lobby. The work represents his gratitude to America, and his shared belief in our values and freedoms.

Very recently, Ihsan was approached by an MCRC staff member who noticed that he appeared sad and unlike himself. As they talked, Ihsan shared that he could no longer stay in America and expressed a strong feeling that he should return to Iraq. He went on to explain that he was an old man who had lived a long life and that he had no right to be in such a great country when children in his country were dying violently every day. His reasoning was to exchange places to give a child an opportunity to live freely and safely in America.

Coming Events

- June 27—HIV National Awareness Day
- June 29—Hispanic Health Conference
- June 19 –21—ESL new student orientation scheduling
- June 26—United Nations Charter Day
- June 29—Refugee Health Education—Medical Systems
- July 4—Independence Day (MCRC closed)
- July 9—New ESL semester begins

While his heart's desire to make a place for a better life for another cannot be accomplished, his willingness to sacrifice, unwaveringly for the needs of a child is the example of a man that we honor and celebrate. To all those fathers, like Ihsan, who have willingly made sacrifices for their children or the children of others, thank you.

Walkers Raise \$4000.00 in Highmark Walk

MCRC participated in the 2012 Highmark Walk for A Healthy Community Saturday June 9 at Presque State Park raising over \$4000.00 for the day of the event. Thanks to all those who came out to walk or donated. Your commitment is always appreciated.



MCRC Presents Eleven Adult Graduates for GED



MCRC's Class of 2012 proudly received the Pennsylvania Graduate Equivalency Diploma at the Erie County Adult Education Commencement exercises Thursday, June 14 at East High School Auditorium. Eleven MCRC graduates were among 122 students completing the course of study. **Ron Fye**, Education Coordinator and GED Instructor at MCRC served as host for the graduation ceremony, and **Teri**



L. to R.: *Nirmal Gurung, Nanda Adhikari, Chuda Dhungana, Ron Fye (Instructor), Bali Siwakoti, Champa Mainaly, Harka Dahal.*
Not pictured: *Bhim Chuwan, Nanda Chuwan, Purna Giri, Burhaan Noor, Allison Thomas.*

Amicucci, MCRC Director of Education presented the students for diplomas. The theme of the evening was "Moving Forward," and Student Speaker for the Multicultural Center **Nirmal Gurung** gave an inspiring message that included a narrative of his own journey forward. "Walking through the forest in heavy rain was almost a death sentence," he said, as he described his own journey of escape from oppression, resettlement in the U.S., moving to Erie, finding support at MCRC, helping others as a caseworker, and now completing this educational milestone.

MCRC Leads Job Development Program at John E. Horan Garden Apartment Community

On November 1, 2011, MCRC began fulfilling the activities of the **John E. Horan Garden Apartment's Job Development Program**, through a one year contract with the Housing Authority of the City of Erie. The program involves helping residents of the Garden Apartments and the Bird Drive Apartments find employment and develop the skills needed to make them successful in finding and sustaining meaningful employment. Our services include job search, resume' preparation, case management support, GED and ESL classes. Approximately 40 percent of the residents converse with English-as-a-Second Language, with the remainder of residents coming from the general population of Erie.

With job development being such a big part of the MCRC agenda, the John E. Horan Garden Apartment program was a natural. Our job developers have been able to link-up with our temporary employment service, **MOSAICO** Employment, as well as connect with our employment specialists at the main center, to help find employment opportunities for participants in the program. All services are provided in the Learning Center, at the J.E. Horan Garden Apartments, under the direction of long-term MCRC staff person, **Isela Abreu-Arce**. MCRC is excited to have this opportunity and challenge.

JumpStart Success Serves Young Adults in Career Exploration, Job Development

In June, 2012, MCRC added the **JumpStart Success** program to its activities at the John E. Horan Garden Apartments. JumpStart Success is funded through the JEHGA Job Development contract and a grant from Career Links. JumpStart Success is a job readiness and career exploration program

designed to work with young people, 16 to 21 years of age. "Our goal is to help the young people we serve find a 'vision' of what career opportunities are available to them and support their efforts to fulfill these visions," said Dr. Al Turner, Dir. Of Client Services.

The program, developed in Pittsburgh by YouthWorks, Inc., provides an educational curriculum designed to help young people engage the work world with the skills and knowledge necessary to be successful. In addition to the classroom-based coursework, students will participate in leadership building and community awareness activities. "We want this to be fun and interesting, as well as educational. We even have plans to help participants travel to Niagara Falls, Pittsburgh and Cleveland," Turner said. Any 16 – 21 year old resident of Section 8 Housing or a Housing Authority property, is eligible to participate. For more information, please contact the program's Youth Outreach Worker, **Eddie Ocasio**,

Pre-School Children Move Up to Kindergarten



Pre-K Counts graduates with Carol Hofmann, MCRC Dir. Of Child Care and Paula Viehdeffer, Erie Schools Pre-K Counts Teacher

Congratulations to all our MCRC and Pre-K Counts preschool graduates—the Class of 2025!

We hope you had a great year of learning and having fun. We wish you're the best as you go off to kindergarten and look forward to seeing where your future education takes you.

**MULTICULTURAL COMMUNITY
RESOURCE CENTER**

554 East 10th Street
Erie, PA 16503

Phone: 814-455-0212
Fax: 814-453-2363
Web: www.multiculturalcrc.org



**Multicultural Community
Resource Center of Erie**

James Globa, Board President
Joel Tuzynski, Executive Director

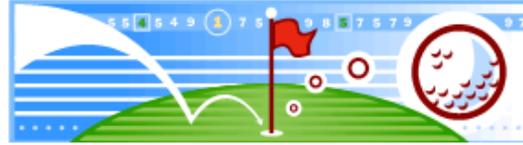
MCRC Noticias Editorial Team:

Joanna Cherpak, Dir. of HR & Fund Dev.
Allan Turner, PhD, Dir. Of Client Services
Trish Lawrence, Staff Social Worker
Al Richards, Editor
554 East 10th St., Erie, PA 16503
PhD: 814.455.0212
FAX: 814.453.2363
Email: MCRC@multiculturalcrc.org

Hitting the Cultural Links

1st Annual MCRC Golf Tournament

Hosted by Multicultural Community Resource Center



Thursday, Sept. 6, 2012

Lake Shore Country Club

Sign in: 12:00 Noon—Sharp!

1:00 P.M. Shotgun Start

18—Hole Play

\$ 100 Non-Members*

Includes Hot Dog lunch, Scramble, Greens Fees, Riding Cart,
Premium Steak Dinner, Prizes!

○

Six sponsorship levels available from \$ 100 to \$2500.

Deadline to register is August 17, 2012

*To register or get more information, contact Joanna
Cherpak at MCRC, 554 East 10th St., Erie, PA 16503.*

814-455-0212

**MOSAICO
Employment Services, Inc.**

254 East 10th Street
Erie, PA 16503

Phone: 814.464.0970

Fax: 814.464.0973

Cell: 814.397.2710

Email:

MosaicoEmployment@multiculturalcrc.org

**Your Donation
is Appreciated**

To make a financial gift to MCRC, send it
to Joanna Cherpak, Director of Human
Resources & Fund Development, 554
East 10th St., Erie, PA 16503 or donate
online at www.multiculturalcrc.org.

MCRC is a 501 (c)(3) charity and all do-
nations are tax deductible.

MCRC volunteer opportunities exist for one-
time or continuing activities.

Please visit the

Volunteer tab at our Website at

www.multiculturalcrc.org.

To inquire, send an email to

MCRC@multiculturalcrc.org. Be sure to in-
clude your name and phone number in your
message.



A great day to help MCRC

Erie Gives is on Tuesday, Aug. 14 from 8 am to 8 pm.



The Erie Community Foundation will match a percentage of each donation made to MCRC through the Erie Gives event. On Aug. 14, the Foundation will share \$76,000 among participating nonprofits, with an additional \$25,000 from GE Transportation.

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