

IRISH INTERNATIONAL IMMIGRANT CENTER

Port na fáilte - Boston's Welcome Center

June 2016 Newsletter

AMIDST IMMIGRATION CHALLENGES, IIC OFFERS A BEACON OF HOPE FOR FAMILIES



In the wake of one of the deadliest weeks in the Mediterranean in recent history, and the current anti-immigrant backlash here and across the globe, the Irish International Immigrant Center continues to be a beacon of hope for immigrant families here in Boston. Now, more than ever, we need to stay true to the values of hospitality and social justice by welcoming and supporting families like Lixue, Djonatan and Mia.

Lixue came to the United States from China many years ago, and after becoming a permanent resident, she began teaching English for Speakers of Other Languages. One student, Djonatan (DJ), became a close friend, and eventually, the two fell in love. They dated for a few years, were married, and had a beautiful daughter, Mia.

Born and raised in Brazil, DJ was forced to flee to the United States in 2004 when his father's creditors in Brazil began to threaten violence. DJ worked long hours at several jobs to send money back home so that his family could pay their bills and stay safe from the collectors. However, DJ never had immigration status in the United States.

Shortly after their marriage, Lixue and DJ came to the Irish International Immigrant Center for help with DJ's immigration status. For DJ to get permanent residence he would have to return to Brazil

while his paperwork was being processed, but if he left the United States, there was a chance that he would not be allowed to return. He and Lixue were just beginning their life in America, and with baby Mia on the way, it was crucial that their family remain together.

This was where the IIC came in. If they could demonstrate to Immigration that Lixue would suffer extreme hardship if DJ was not allowed to return to the United States, then DJ could return to America with permanent residence status. The attorney worked hard on the case collecting medical records, letters from family and friends, and detailed statements from both Lixue and DJ. It took a few months to compile the entire application, and a few months of waiting for Immigration's decision. Finally, their case was approved!

At the end of December, DJ, Lixue and Mia traveled to Brazil for DJ's interview with the U.S. Consulate. Everything went smoothly and one month later, the family returned to the United States. This time, DJ entered as a new permanent resident.

Every day, people like Lixue and DJ face incredible challenges to keep their families safe. Some board dangerous boats and cross treacherous waters in hopes of finding a better life. Families lucky enough to reach the United States find not a land of promise and hope, but a tricky web of complex immigration laws. Lixue and DJ were only able to succeed because of their own perseverance, and because the IIC's legal team refused to give up. In this time of dangerous travel, complicated legal systems, and destructive anti-immigrant rhetoric, it is crucial that we continue welcoming and supporting families.

OPENING OUR HOME TO YOU



Come visit Boston's welcome center for immigrants and refugees.

On Thursday, June 9th the Irish International Immigrant Center will host an Open House. The evening will offer an opportunity to learn about the legal, wellness and education services that help nearly 3,000 people each year. Enjoy beer, wine and refreshments and great company.

RSVP to Mary Kerr at mkerr@iicenter.org or 617-695-1554.

SUPPORTING FAMILIES AFFECTED BY ADDICTION

Are you an immigrant who has been affected by a family member's alcohol or substance abuse? Addiction can have devastating effects on family relationships. Sharing experiences within a group can be enormously helpful. Starting June 23rd, we will be holding a drop-in family support group at the center, each Thursday from 7-8pm, for those affected by alcohol and substance abuse.

This will be an on-going group which provides education, guidance and a safe place to talk in confidence with others who are experiencing similar challenges. If you are interested, please reach out to Gina Kelleher at 617 542 7654 Ext 14.

CELEBRATE YOUR HERITAGE WITH IIIC

CELEBRATE IMMIGRANT HERITAGE MONTH

June is Immigrant Heritage Month (IHM), and the IIIC's favorite time of the year (second only to St. Patrick's Day). There is nothing we love more than celebrating America's immigrant heritage!

Many people in this country have an immigration story. It might be your story, or your father's, or your great-grandmother's. We'd like you to share that amazing story with us! Come to a June event – the ICC's Irish Festival and visit our

table, a Haitian dance workshop, a film screening of immigrant-produced documentaries – or share your story on social media. Don't forget to use the hashtag #ImmigrantHeritageMonth.

Let's be proud of our international legacies, and celebrate Immigrant Heritage Month 2016!

OPENING A "HOME AWAY FROM HOME" FOR IRISH STUDENTS



The Cyber Café is now open! Every summer, the IIIC opens its Cyber Café for Irish students living in Boston, providing a "resource center" that students can use when they need a computer, career advice, or just a nice cuppa.

Two interns have just joined the IIIC to help run the Cyber Café this summer. Abbie Martin is a rising senior at George Washington University, pursuing a dual degree in international affairs and human services with a concentration in international development. Monica Riordin is also preparing for her senior year at Providence College, where she is studying Global Studies and French, with a Political Science concentration. These exceptional interns will help the J-1 summer students feel at home in Boston by planning fun trips and hosting events.

The IIIC will host two J-1 orientations on June 1st and June 8th. For more information, please contact Abbie and Monica at j1summer@iicenter.org or 617-542-7654 extension 18.

SERVING WITH LIBERTY, LIBERTY MUTUAL SHARES TIME AND KNOWLEDGE



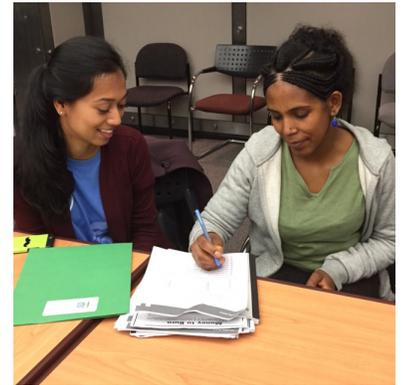
Every year, thousands of Liberty Mutual employees engage in community service through their Serve with Liberty program. This May, the IIC was delighted to host 16 volunteers from Liberty Mutual. With their help, our classroom got a badly needed coat of paint, students of our English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) program had an opportunity to practice their new language, and an important mailing got out the door on time!

James McGlennon, Liberty Mutual's Executive Vice President and CIO, also joined us, leading a conversation among young Irish graduates just starting new careers on the J1IWT visa program, and more experienced

ESOL students from Moldova, Algeria, Iraq and beyond.

An Irish immigrant, James shared his story with the students, offering insights about how a new employee approaches the challenge of "fitting in." Among his suggestions were that it is important to be aware both of your strengths and weaknesses and to know what type of work you really like doing. In this way, it is easier to envision a career path that is productive and rewarding.

For the young graduates with budding careers, and the ESOL students restarting their careers in America, his advice was much appreciated. We are grateful to James for sharing his story and offering his advice.



IIC BIDS HEARTFELT GOODBYES

Farewell Sister Eleanor



After seven years, the IIC said a fond farewell to immigration attorney Sister Eleanor Martin, who is retiring from the IIC. A member of the center's Immigration Legal Services team since 2008, Sister Eleanor has advised and represented immigrants from around the world for many years. Sister Eleanor is a member of the Sisters of Charity of Nazareth, Kentucky whose mission is "... to work for justice in solidarity with oppressed peoples, especially the economically poor and women." A fateful meeting with our own Sister Lena Deevy brought Sister Eleanor to the IIC and we all grateful!

Linking the word "retirement" with Eleanor's name is just not a good fit. Suffice it to say that she is charting a new course for her life and there will always be a need for the gifts of this very talented woman. We will all miss her straight forward way – laced with great humor – and her huge smile. We wish Eleanor a fond farewell and best wishes.

And...

Goodbye Gabrielle

We are also sad to say goodbye to Communications Intern Gabrielle Crossnoe who has dedicated ten months of service to the IIC through Life Together, a community of spiritual activists committed to personal and social transformation.

Gabrielle quickly became a contributing member of the IIC team, playing a key role in the development of our strategic plan; welcoming our guests; managing social media; creating marketing materials; and editing, and assisting with the redesign of our on-line newsletter. If you are reading this, you are seeing her work first-hand! We will miss Gabrielle's calm demeanor, her creativity, and her hard work. We wish her all the best in her future.



Caption: Gabrielle (center) with Janey Tallarida and Ronnie Millar.

DOWNLOD THE NEW WELCOME APP

Download some Irish hospitality today! The IIC just launched a new mobile phone application. You can find the "Welcome to Boston" app on both iTunes and the Google Play Store.

COMING UP AT THE IIC

J-1 Summer Orientation

Wednesday, June 8

2:00PM – 4:00 PM

100 Franklin St, Lower Level, Boston, MA 02110

Welcome students! If you are an Irish student living in the U.S. this summer, join us for a welcome session at our Center in downtown Boston! Staff, volunteers, and sponsor representatives will be available to answer any questions and provide information to help you have a safe, successful, and enjoyable summer. Refreshments will be served! Contact our Summer J-1 Program at 617-542-7654 extension 18 or j1summer@iicenter.org for more information.

Irish Cultural Center's Irish Festival

Saturday, June 4 to Sunday, June 5

Canton, MA

Come visit our table at the Irish festival!

IIC Open House

Thursday, June 9, 5:30 PM

100 Franklin St, Lower Level, Boston, MA 02110

Join the IIC staff and friends for snacks and fellowship. RSVP to Mary Kerr at 617-695-1554 or mkerr@iicenter.org to reserve your spot!

Haitian Dance Workshop

Monday, June 13, 6:00 PM

100 Franklin St, Lower Level, Boston, MA 02110

Participate in a free Haitian dance workshop and discussion with master teacher and choreographer Jean Appolon! In a fun and inviting format, Jean Appolon will teach the folkloric dances of his native Haiti. No prior experience necessary. Following the dance workshop, participants will be invited to join in a discussion about their experiences of immigration. Light refreshments will be served. * Space is limited and RSVPs are required; please email Sarah at sarahcs@iicenter.org or call 617-542-7654 ext. 36 to RSVP.

Stories Rooted in Reality: Documentary Film Screening with Community Supported Film

Wednesday, June 29, 6:00 PM

100 Franklin St, Lower Level, Boston, MA 02110

Join us for a screening of several short films from Haiti. In a climate where mainstream American media typically reports international news from an American perspective with a focus on disaster and crisis, Community Supported Film believes that local stories--told by the people experiencing them--help us to better understand foreign events, diverse cultures and people's complex realities. Contact Sarah Chapple-Sokol with questions or to RSVP sarahcs@iicenter.org

A Translation from One Language to Another: A Poetry Workshop

Fridays, 12:00 - 2:00PM

July 1st - August 26th

100 Franklin St, Lower Level, Boston, MA 02110

The Boston Poet Laureate Program and the Irish International Immigrant Center are partnering to provide a poetry workshop this summer for immigrants and members of the larger Boston community. Taking the Lawrence Weiner mural on the Rose Kennedy Greenway as inspiration, this 8-week workshop will focus on translating texts into English and writing original works of poetry. The workshop will be led by practicing poets and experienced educators. For more information, or to apply for the workshop, please contact Sarah Chapple-Sokol at 617-542-7654 ext 36 or sarahcs@iicenter.org.

WAYS TO GET INVOLVED

Make a gift to the IIC!

Double the impact of your gift.

Find out if your company will match your gift to the IIC.

Volunteer!

Join our team! Contact Ann-Marie at amariebyrne@iicenter.org.

Follow the Irish International Immigrant Center

