MERRIMACK VALLEY IMMIGRANT & EDUCATION CENTER

Annual Report

Fiscal Year 2019

Merrimack Valley Immigrant & Education Center (MVIEC)

439 South Union St.
Lawrence MA, 01843
978-683-7316

Board of Directors

Laurie Mancinelli
Chairperson

Anne Moriarty
Vice Chairperson

Deb Mangano
Treasurer

Natasha Tenenbaum
Secretary

James M. Bowers, Esq.
Robert O'Koniewski,Esq.
Ying Schmitt
Bopea Sok
Vina Troianello

Judy Chmielecki
Executive Director

Mission Statement

The Merrimack Valley Immigrant and Education Center is a multi-service organization serving Immigrant and Refugee families through outreach and educational programs, in order to assist them in becoming productive Members of the Community.

Students and volunteers thank the Cummings Foundation.

Judy and Karen attend Cummings Foundation reception.

Dear Friends,

The Merrimack Valley Immigrant and Education Center (MVIEC) was one of 100 local nonprofits to receive grants of $100,000 each through the Cummings Foundation's "100k for100" Program. Our organization was chosen from a total of 574 applicants during a competitive review process. MVIEC will use the grant money to provide low-income Immigrants with ESOL and Workplace Education classes to support them in their quest to be gainfully employed and achieve citizenship status.

Representing MVIEC, Executive Director ,Judy Chmielecki, and Program Coordinator, Karen Sheridan, joined approximately 300 guests at a reception at the TradeCenter 128 in Woburn to celebrate the $10 million infusion into Greater Boston's nonprofit sector.

Our vision for the Merrimack Valley Immigrant & Education Center continues to fo-cus on the underserved and struggling population of the Merrimack Valley. This past year, MVIEC has helped hundreds of Immigrants to improve their English language, writing, and social assimilation into the community and workforce. Through many generous grants and donations, we have successfully completed our 32nd year of serving hundreds of residents in becoming productive members in their new communities.

We have many success stories, but that of Tuyet Luong is one that reflects our agen-cy's journey from the Asian Center to today as the Merrimack Valley Immigrant and Education Center. (see Tuyet's story on page 2)

Thank you for your support!

Judy Chmielecki

Tuyet Performing At Elders Christmas Celebration

Fifteen years ago, a shining light entered the Asian Center of Merrimack Valley (which later became the Merrimack Valley Immigrant and Education Center). Tuyet Luong enrolled her son, Leonard, in the Center's Preschool Program and a relationship began that continues to this day. Tuyet was born in Saigon, Vietnam in 1966. Her father worked as an interpreter for the American and South Vietnamese Armies during the war. When the Communists took over and unified Vietnam in 1975, he was forced to leave the country. Tuyet, her mother, and siblings were not able to leave Vietnam until 1990, when they joined her father in Lawrence. Tuyet entered Lawrence High School and graduated after 1½ years of study. She went on to the University of Massachusetts, Lowell, where she met her husband who had been a "Boat Person" leaving Vietnam as a young child. After graduating from college, Tuyet and Dat Nguyen married.
Tuyet worked as a care manager and CNA (Certified Nursing Assistant) at a home care agency and Dat worked as a mechanical engineer.The couple have 2 children: Leonard, 18, a student at the University of MA, Lowell, studying engineering and Isabel, 14, a student at Central Catholic High School. Both Leonard and Isabel have participated in MVIEC's Youth Writing Program They are also accomplished violinists. Tuyet's musical talent as a singer and guitarist enriches MVIEC's many gatherings and celebrations. She also entertains at her Temple and at community events. Tuyet and her husband have worked very hard through much adversity. They are proud of their native Vietnamese culture and have embraced the place they have chosen to call home.
It has been such a privilege for me to have met this extraordinary woman.
(Interviewed by Audrey Rubin, MVIEC volunteer)

WORKPLACE ENGLISH

Our English Communication for Employment Classes (ECE), funded by the City of Lawrence CDBG Grant, consist of 60 hours of instruction. The syllabus includes language skills through topics such as: evaluation of work skills, career exploration, completing a job application, resume writing, interview preparation, communication at work, and cultural norms of the American workplace. Students also explore job training opportunities and attend job fairs.

CITIZENSHIP

The Center's Citizenship Preparation Classes teach American History, Government, and the responsibility of Citizenship. In addition to Citizenship Classes, we assist participants with all aspects of completing the Citizenship process, including the application, interview, and exam. We also facilitate new voter registration. Elected officials are invited to speak to our classes.

ELDER OUTREACH PROGRAM

Our Elder Outreach Program is a critical gateway of services for the Vietnamese, Chinese, Cambodian, and Hispanic Elders of the Merrimack Valley. Our advocates work at educating elders on medical fraud, health benefits and financial literacy. Our bi-lingual and bi-cultural Outreach Workers also help elders navigate the Medicare and Medicaid arena.

ENGLISH CLASSES (ESOL)

MVIEC continues to be a leader in providing English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL). Our classes begin at the most basic levels with learning the alphabet and phonics. The upper level works on conversation, grammar, sentence structure, reading, and writing skills.

YOUTH WRITERS' WORKSHOP

In Our Youth Writing Program, students in the 7th-12th grades participate in a summer twelve session writing workshop and monthly workshops throughout the school year. They are exposed to various types of writing through exploration of ancient history, poetry, and mythology. At the end of the program, the students choose several of their works to be published in our annual MVIEC Review.

Staff of Merrimack Valley Immigrant & Education Center

Judy Chmielecki
Executive Director
judy@mviec.org

Karen Sheridan
Program Coordinator
karensheridan@mviec.org
SHINE Certified*

Mayra Garcia
Administrative Assistant

Muoi Lam
Vietnamese/Chinese
Outreach Worker
Mviec.muoi@gmail.com
SHINE Certified*

Nikki Toeur
Cambodian Outreach Worker
nhek123@yahoo.com

Kimberly A. Whitworth
Grant Writer
kimberlywhitworth@kawlandd.com

*SHINE (Serving the Health information Needs Of Elders) program provides no cost health insurance information, counseling and assistance to MA Medicare recipients and their caregivers.

FRIENDS OF MVIEC

Anonymous
Mr & Mrs. Benincasa
James Bowers, Jr.
Jackie Buck
Clarie Cavanaugh
Judy Chmielecki
Juliann Chmielecki
Ms. Sara Dilg
Barbara Ippolito
Saul & Betty Jaffe
Tom Lam & Ye Thu Ky
Roberta Liss
Yen Lu
Laurie Mancinelli
Nick & Deb Mangano
Frank & Debra McKernan
Anne Moriarty & James Kachulis
Robert O'Koniewski
Tang Tran Vo
Rachel Voiland
Ying & Joe Schmitt
Karen Sheridan
Bopea Sok
Natasha Tenenbaum
Vina Troianello
Fresh Pond Trust
Edward Vo
Caroline Webber
Sonary Ngov
Jeff Roberts
Ethel Schuster
Richard & Kathleen Blain
Robert & Ching Kirk
Cheng Sam
Nancy Woolford
Jane Coe
Trinh Chau
Germaine T Vo
North Parish of North Andover

FUNDERS

Sisters of Charity
Abbot & Dorothy H. Stevens Foundation
Artemas W. Stearns Trust
Rogers Family Foundation
Josephine G Russell Trust
ECCF Greater Lawrence Summer Fund
City of Lawrence/CDBG Grant
State of Massachusetts, ORI Grant
Salem Five
The White Fund
Jeanne D' Arc Credit Union
Margaret CollinsTrust
Eastern Bank Charitable Foundation
Charles Pringle Foundation
Charlotte Home
Agnes Lindsay Trust
National Grid
DCU for Kids
Pentucket Bank
Demoulas Foundation
Lawrence Cultural Council
Ash Charitable Foundation
Cummings Foundation

SALEM CO-OPERATIVE BANK
ANDOVER CHILDREN'S ACADEMY
JEANNE D'ARC CREDIT UNION
DCU For Kids
$100K for 100 Cummings Foundation
MTM INSURANCE ASSOCIATES, LLC
SalemFive Charitable Foundation
"MORE FOR YOUR DOLLAR" MARKET BASKET Demoulas Foundation
nationalgrid Foundation
ECCF Essex County Community Foundation
Pentucket Bank On Track Together Since 1891