2012 was a remarkable year. It’s with a great honor for me to highlight some accomplishments for NICE and its refugee and immigrant programs.

The Refugee Integration Program (RIP) was in full swing in 2012. Its Train-to-Work, Social Learning, Leadership, and English Language components exceeded their initial goals serving over 175 clients.

One major accomplishment, via partnership with Vanderbilt Institute for Global Health, the South Nashville Family Resource Center and the Vanderbilt Center for Health Services “CASTLES” program, was a refugee-centered Community Kitchen at the Coleman Community Center. During the meal, local community members shared exercise and nutrition lessons as well. Refugee and immigrant attendees were given the recipes and fresh, budget-conscious ingredients in order to replicate the meal at home.

The Employment Program made great strides this year. Together, our employment programs found over 260 NICE clients new work throughout this year.

The Resettlement Program also grew this year, resettling the most clients we have so far. We even resettled our first Cuban refugee.

The Adult Education Program continues to be NICE’s largest program and is integral to our mission. Where this is most evident is in our Citizenship Preparation class, where over 20 students gained citizenship to the United States this year!

The Youth Education Program, like other programs, is continuing to grow. This year, the program taught Metro Nashville school faculty, along with other students, parents and community members, about the cultures of seven different growing populations in the Nashville area. The hope is to make the education process work better for all students, including our clients.

NICE received its Board of Immigration Appeals (BIA) Accreditation, which means our agency has been approved and recognized by the Bureau of Immigration Appeals, including NICE Staff for accreditations. With this accreditation, the BIA has determined that NICE and its staff has the resources and knowledge necessary to help immigrants with their immigration needs, including filling out immigration forms and helping them follow up with the United States.

NICE was chosen in 2012 as one of 500 finalists in Toyota’s 100 Cars for Good program, which donated 100 Toyotas to 100 nonprofits around America. Winners were determined by Facebook votes, with five organizations competing each day. NICE’s vote day corresponded with our World Refugee Day celebration, and although we didn’t win the van we did get second place, and I’d like to say a big THANK YOU to all our supporters who helped spread the word!

NICE’s “One World One Dream 2012” was inaugurated and NICE presented Karl Dean, Mayor of Nashville, with the Genesis Award. Other awards presented that night included the Sonrisa Tripple Volunteer of the Year award to Angela Harris and the Tennessee Foreign Language Institute, the Donna Pack Community Empowerment Award to Donelson Fellowship, and the New Arrival Award to Dr. Bill Thompson and St. Thomas Health Services.

Thank you!

Gatluak Ter Thach
Acquiring and maintaining employment is a key determinant in the living situation and self-sufficiency of new refugees. For this reason, the NICE employment team has worked diligently to provide our clients with secure and stable work environments, through such assistance as resume building, mock interviews, application procedures, and job search and placement.

NICE has seen incredible success in the 2012 Fiscal Year, serving 300 clients and successfully placing 268 of these clients in jobs, far exceeding the year’s goal of 140 placements. This has been accomplished through the development of new relationships with employers in Nashville, most notably the Nashville Convention Center, Opryland Hotel, Dollar General and various Tyson locations, which have devoted their energy to provide job opportunities for refugees.

**Employment Program News**

Understanding that immigration is much more than a simple application process, NICE’s Immigration and Employment Specialist, A’isha Garba, aids clients in all aspects of achieving citizenship status and in providing the opportunity to reunite with their family members.

In September of 2012, the Immigration Department achieved Board of Immigration Appeals (BIA) certification. With this certification, A’isha has offered a multitude of services throughout the immigration and citizenship process. This includes everything from general advice to actually assisting clients in successfully filling out required paperwork which often proves to be difficult or prone to rejection. NICE proudly offers these services for a very low cost, in fact the lowest in all of Nashville, making them much more affordable and realistic for those in the community in need of assistance.

“One of my dreams has always been to attend college, but I couldn’t because I don’t have a high school diploma or a GED. Thanks to the NICE center, they are helping me make this dream possible by providing help to get my GED. Once I get my GED I plan on going to college to open up my own business.”

Ajyan Moustafa

**Immigration Services at NICE**

NICE’s resettlement program once again saw great progress in 2012 with an impressive 161 resettled clients. Clients were resettled from such countries as Bhutan, Burma, Iraq, Iran, Ethiopia and, for the first time, Cuba. Preparations for the arrival of refugees begin as soon as the Resettlement Team is notified of their upcoming arrival. These preparations include searching for appropriate housing, along with furniture and appliances, setting up medical appointments, and anticipating any other refugee needs.

An R&P (Reception and Placement) team member meets the refugee or refugee family at the Nashville airport and takes her/him/the family to their new home, either with family or at our arranged housing. For 90 days, various members of the resettlement team, with assistance from other NICE program staff, help our clients enroll in benefit programs, cash assistance programs, schools for the children and English classes for the adults, among other services.

**Resettlement Program**

The Basnet family receives a computer from their caseworker, Lachu.

Refugee Dhan Gazmer receives his Tyson Badge.
Adult Education Program

A total of 640 clients participated in one or more of the 14 classes offered by 20 volunteer teachers at both the NICE main office and at our secondary location at Donelson Fellowship Church. Classes offered included English Language Learning, GED, Citizenship, tutoring and computer classes. At the end of the first half of the year, 86 ELL students took the final exam and 76% advanced to the next level. At the end of the year, 81 students took the final exam and 73% advanced at least one level. This year, 10 students registered in the Pre-GED classes, which cover all subjects including Language Arts, Science, Social Studies and Math. This was also a tremendous year in our citizenship classes, with 20 students passing the citizenship exam.

Youth Impact Program

Not to be outdone by growth elsewhere at NICE, the Youth Impact Program took off this year, launching a summer program for elementary and middle school learners at two locations and a full-fledged after-school program at Glencliff High School. This year the Youth Impact Program served 119 learners through the efforts of 150 volunteers, who often worked with learners one-on-one to assist with reading and language skills. The number of children and teens on our waiting lists demonstrate that we have the possibility for growth in this program in the future. Volunteers and interns are the backbone of our program, made possible with the help of some stupendous partners: the Center for Student Missions and Teach One. These partners brought volunteers to our doors week after week, enabling us to serve greater numbers of students than ever. Our tutoring program at Glencliff for English Language Learners is made possible through a partnership with the Family Resource Center there. Our status as a Pencil Partner, as well as partnering with Alignment Nashville, meant increased collaboration and support from the schools. Teachers at Glencliff tell us our program is really making a difference!

School Impact Program: Cultural Exchanges

The goal of the School Impact Program is to provide school personnel with the information they need to relate to their refugee students and families. We brought speakers from Iraq, Burma, Bhutan, Somalia, Cuba, Eritrea, Burundi and Iran—countries with vibrant or growing communities in Davidson and Rutherford counties, and facilitated a discussion geared toward equipping school staff to better serve their diverse learner populations.

We presented ten times throughout the year to teachers and school personnel, utilizing 24 speakers from eight refugee communities to present at staff meetings, professional development sessions and conferences. 155 teachers reported that the presentations increased their knowledge and access to resources, enabling them to better serve their refugee students.

“Expectations are important for teachers because we know how to conduct parent conferences by phone and by internet and by person. Also, it helped me understand what the Kurdish students were allowed to draw and what the Kurdish parents expect of their children, my students. I am an art teacher, and I need to respect their point of view…”

Rosemary Wade Art Teacher at Croft Middle School.
SPOTLIGHT: REFUGEE INTEGRATION PROGRAMS

Implemented in February of 2012, NICE is extremely proud of the incorporation of the Refugee Integration Program into the organization’s services. Though NICE provides many services to newly admitted refugees, often times refugees find that they do not have enough time within this allotted resettlement period to fully acclimate to and learn about their new home. By targeting refugees who have been in the U.S. for at least eight months, the Integration Program fills this service gap which often occurs after their initial settlement assistance has ended. Developed specifically with this in mind by Refugee Integration staff, this program is very unique in the specific services it provides to this population, and is one of the only programs of this nature offered throughout the United States. Refugees become further integrated through a variety of services, all aimed at providing practical experience and knowledge which can prove crucial in the refugee’s ability to become a thriving and contributing member of the Nashville community. Refugees are offered participation, often multiple programs, as seen applicable to their specific situations. In 2012, NICE assisted approximately 175 refugees through the following programs:

The programs:

Leadership training:
These workshops provided participants with the ability to become leaders in their community and they were asked to share information with other community members. The first installment of this workshop saw nine graduates, who were all given $250 scholarships to aid future leadership endeavors.

Community English Classes:
Unique to the programs held through NICE’s education program, the Refugee Integration courses are held in apartment complexes where refugees reside, making them accessible to a larger population. Partnered with the Tusculum Elementary School, the program also held citizenship classes.

Social Learning Program:
In partnership with the Vanderbilt Center for Social Health, this program provides services for families with acute needs. Families are educated in such areas as public transportation, time management, access to TennCare, and personal health care and issues. In the program’s first attempt we were able to assist 12 refugee families with these needs, and the program will continue to serve these families and more.

Workforce Training:
Through a partnership with Belmont PhilanthroTeach, classes are held in computer labs at Audubon Apartments which offers an intensive workplace training program with ACT curriculum. Workforce training was also provided in 2012 through cooperation with a local thrift store, where refugees learned specific labor skills.

Legal Training:
Taught by Vanderbilt law students, refugees are educated on specific legal matters prevalent in the United States, such as traffic laws, laws surrounding alcohol, parking tickets, and other areas where lack of knowledge could prove detrimental.

**Thanks to support and partnerships given to the Integration Program, we are excited to add new services in 2013, such as a Refugee Entrepreneurship Program and a series in Mental Health!!**
Many thanks our supporters...

The Frist Foundation
Dr. Bill Thompson
Julia Lydon, PhD
Ben and Linda Ragsdale
Avery W. Cowden
Center for Student Missions
Will Alexander
Bill Ruff, DCA
Tennessee Foreign Language Institute
The Donelson Fellowship
Vanderbilt Center for Health Services

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If you would like to assist NICE in its mission to serve the immigrant and refugee communities of Nashville, please consider:

**Volunteering**
NICE is looking for volunteers and in all areas for each program. Information can be found on our website, or you can contact Karen Jones at 615-315-9681.

**Monetary Donations**
Monetary donations can be made on GivingMatters.com or our website at this link. All donations are tax-deductible.

**Supply Donations**
Our Resettlement Team is always looking for clothing, dressers, beds, bedside tables and any other home furnishings for our arriving refugees. Please contact Jordan Peoples at 615-678-7267 for more information.