Letter from the President & CEO

Nashville International Center for Empowerment (NICE) has ended 2013 with extraordinary records. Every department at NICE would recall the past year as one of major accomplishment. In this summary report, I would like to highlight some of the milestone achievements this organization has accomplished.

The Employment Program at NICE has served hundreds of people through career development services, included career assessment, job training and placement, resume assistance, and referral service. Thanks to our employment team and partners, NICE placed 169 individuals in jobs.

The educational programs at NICE for both adult and youth had remarkable records. Adult Education served 684 students, and offered 23 classes in different satellite locations that NICE utilized in Nashville’s Middle Tennessee community. The pre-GED educational component was a successful one. It rendered needed services to those who could not otherwise obtain them due to numerous significant barriers.

The youth component of the educational program was incredible, both in number of students who took advantage of the program and the quality of service provided. The youth educational module covered academic achievement and leadership development, included attending Peace Jam, meeting Nobel peace laureates, and other notable amenities. Over 440 educational teachers in Middle Tennessee were served through the culture exchange component of the youth program as well.

Immigration served 527 refugee and immigrant clients with their immigration needs, which involved filing their immigration forms for adjustments or family reunification forms. The Resettlement Program, which resettled 118 individuals, was an outstanding program due to unwavering partnership support with state and federal organizations and individuals. The last program to highlight is health, which includes fitness classes, cooking classes, health screenings and Wellness Partners. The success of health is thanks to our incredible staff, partners and supporters on this essential program.

Some of these accomplishments were acknowledged during our programmatic events at the end of last year, included One World, One Dream and Music City International Soccer Cup where NICE staff recognized significant members in the Middle Tennessee community who have rendered their services needed by our vulnerable community. These recognizable individuals are acknowledged every year for their support to NICE’s mission.

Year 2014 is promising! I am pleased to unveil that our new NICE location has made a significant difference in our organizational physical setting. Thanks to you, our incredible donors and supporters, for ensuring this happened. We have also welcomed new team members in several departments at NICE which I believe was way overdue but will have noteworthy positive impacts to our refugee and immigrant clients. NICE will revisit its strategic planning strategies for future growth as it assesses demands and responds to client needs.

It has been a pleasure to work with you as partners and team members who are so caring and dedicated persons, both in management and in governance board. Together, I believe NICE will remain the shining and hope in lives of those it serves.

Thank you!

Gatluak Ter Thach
Employment Program

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 employment, specifically through resume building, mock interviews, application assistance, and job placement.

NICE has seen incredible success in the 2013 Fiscal Year, serving 206 clients and successfully placing 169 of these clients in jobs, exceeding the program goals. To accomplish this the employment team developed 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.

If you know of a company looking to hire, please contact Gopal Basnet at 615-454-5198.

Immigration Services

2013 was a major year of development for the Immigration Program at NICE. In late 2012, NICE received Board of Immigration Appeals (BIA) recognition. As a result, the team can offer a multitude of services throughout the immigration and citizenship process, which can be quite confusing. The goal of our team is to help refugees and immigrants navigate these processes as easily as possible. This includes everything from general advice to successfully filing required paperwork to follow-up with the government. NICE proudly offers these services for a very low cost—the lowest in all of Nashville—making them much more affordable and realistic for those in the community in need of assistance.

All told in 2013, NICE served 527 clients in this program. If you or someone you know need the help of our immigration specialists, contact Aisha at 615-678-7267.

Resettlement Program

In 2013, NICE’s resettlement program resettled 118 refugees from 8 different countries, including Bhutan, Burma, Iraq, Iran, Democratic Republic of Congo, Afghanistan, Ethiopia and, Somalia. 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(s) at the Nashville airport and takes them to their new home. 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.

Thanks to the hard work of the team, NICE has been approved to resettle up to 175 refugees in FY14. This coming year should be one of growth and new beginnings in the Resettlement Department.

The Sultan family as they arrived to the United States.
Adult Education Program

A total of 684 clients participated in one or more of the 26 classes or programs offered in the NICE Adult Education Program. Classes and programs offered included English Language Learning, pre-GED, Citizenship, and computer classes in addition to the RI and RISE programs, described later. This year, the Adult Education Program grew to offer more courses at more locations than ever before, allowing 615 students to work to improve their English.

Our unique pre-GED program bridges the gap between high level ELL and GED level classes. It proved to be a major success with over 80% of students becoming prepared for GED classes.

The RI program, which empowers refugee populations to become self-sufficient, completed its second year of programming. Components include: leadership training, the social learning program, internship and entrepreneurship training as well as workforce development training. NICE also added the RISE program near the end of 2013. This program, like RI, will empower refugee populations through childcare training, re-certification and pre-driver’s education.

Overall, this was also a tremendous year all the way around for adult education and we continue to expect great achievements out of this program.

Youth Education Program

In 2013, the Youth Education Program continued its trend of growth. Between the after-school program at Glenciff High School and the summer program at Millwood Apartments, the NICE Youth Education staff and 116 volunteers served 114 students. After-school students met two Nobel Peace Laureates as a part of the Peace Jam event and had the first graduated senior enroll in college. The summer program helped 92% of students increase their ability to read English. Through the third component of the youth program, Culture Exchange, NICE facilitated presentations to 440 teachers in the public school system, giving them information they need to relate to their refugee students and families. Speakers from all over the world relayed the information and 90% of the teachers reported the information being very useful, allowing them to better serve their refugee and immigrant students. We are proud of the achievements of the Youth Education Program at NICE and look forward to continued growth!

“This presentation has a profound impact on me as a classroom educator. I’m inclined to work more diligently in assisting my ELL children to be successful in my class. Thank you so much for taking the time to share this "wealth of knowledge" with us."

—Bernice Whitaker, 1st Grade
Health Program

2013 was the first full year of the Health Program at NICE and the results were fantastic. Through two programs, detailed below, NICE was able to serve 303 refugees and immigrants. Health Coordinator Frances Anderson worked hard to get the program off the ground—ensuring clients were enrolled, volunteers were organized and all details were planned. The success of the program was a great start that we will continue to build upon in the coming year.

The programs:

Nashville Refugee Health Initiative:
- **Fitness Classes**: Teach participants the importance of staying active with exercises they can do on their own.
- **Healthy Cooking Classes**: Teach participants the importance of eating healthy foods, how to cook healthy meals and even give them ingredients to duplicate meals at home.
- **Health Screenings**: Measure blood pressure, glucose levels and more, combined with health tips, to help participants make adjustments as needed to live healthier lives.
- **Wellness Partners**: Pairs newly arrived refugees with volunteers who teach participants healthy living habits via curriculum.
- **86% of participants** in these programs maintained or lost weight while **90%** maintained or decreased blood pressure and glucose levels.

Preventative Health:
- **Health Orientations**: Provide training to newly arrived refugees on general health, mental health and nutrition topics.
- **Difficult Medical Cases**: Assist newly arrived refugees with medical care when participants are unable to obtain quality care on their own.

SPOTLIGHT: NICE EVENTS

NICE saw numerous events held in 2013. In June and December, we held our semi-annual Student Celebrations. The June celebration was held at New Song Church, where many adult education classes are held, and was highlighted by the attendance of South Sudanese Ambassador to the U.S., Dr. Akec Khoc. The December celebration was held at Glenciff High School, another site where many adult education classes are held. Representative Jason Powell spoke to those in attendance about his personal journey and passion for education.

In October, the inaugural *Music City International Soccer Cup* was held at Vanderbilt University. Teams with players from around the world competed, with the final match held in Vanderbilt University Soccer Stadium. Somalia Elman F.C. won the championship in a 5-4 thriller. You can see NICE staff members taking in the action pictured above.

In November, NICE held the 2nd annual *One World, One Dream: Refugee Benefit* at Quatro Evento Reception in South Nashville. NICE recognized those who do so much for the refugee and immigrant communities in Middle Tennessee. Award winners for the evening included Dr. Tom Negri, Doug Martin and Prince Partners, Inc., Tennessee Immigrant and Refugee Rights Coalition (TIRRC) and Amy Richardson. A few clients of NICE talked about how NICE has helped them. The evening was a great time of recognizing the great work being done on behalf of refugees and immigrants in Tennessee.
Many thanks to our supporters...

The Memorial Foundation
Dorothy Cate and Thomas F. Frist Foundation

2013 Income

- Government Grants $805,031
- Foundations $85,241
- Private Donations $57,146
- Earned Income $46,732

Total: $994,152

2013 Expenses

- Program 89.6%
- Admin and Fundraising 10.4%

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

Volunteering
NICE is looking for volunteers in all areas for each program. Information can be found on our website, or you can contact Kate Burns at 615-678-7273.

Monetary Donations
Monetary donations can be made on GivingMatters.com or our website. All donations are 100% 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 Cindy Cunningham at 615-454-5172 for more information.