



REFUGEE

SUMMIT 2016

October 7-8, 2016

The refugees in our community
have ***survived*** difficult times.

Now let's help them ***thrive***
as new lowans in their new home.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 7, SESSION SCHEDULE

8:30 - 9:00 a.m.

REGISTRATION & GREETING

9:00 - 9:45 a.m.

Full Group
Waveland Hall

WELCOME

- **Mary Sellers**, President and CEO of United Way of Central Iowa

INTRODUCTION OF KEYNOTE

- **Zeljka Krvavica**, Case Manager with the Iowa Bureau of Refugee Services

KEYNOTE: IOWA - A RECEIVING AND WELCOMING COMMUNITY

- **Chad Dahm**, Refugee State Coordinator, Bureau of Refugee Services

Why, when and how did the first refugees come to Iowa? Who were they? Who assisted them in their new life here? Why do refugees stay in Iowa and what are the roles of various organizations that help them feel safe, wanted and welcome.

9:45 - 10:30 a.m.

Full Group
Waveland Hall

REFUGEES IN CENTRAL IOWA: WHO ARE THEY, HOW DID THEY GET TO IOWA AND WHERE DO THEY COME FROM?

Facilitator: **Helene Grossman**, Director of Community Impact Services, United Way of Central Iowa

Panel:

- **Carly Ross**, Director at U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants
- **Rachel Kinker**, Refugee Resettlement Program Manager at Catholic Charities Diocese of Des Moines
- **Nick Wuertz**, Director of Refugee Community Services at Lutheran Services in Iowa

In our neighborhood stores, our schools and churches, we may see people new to Iowa. Where are they coming from and why have they come to our cold, Midwestern state? What stories do they bring with them of challenges, family loss, war, and refugee camp life? What have they gone through to come to Iowa and what do they need from us to feel welcome in their new homeland? How do USCRI, Catholic Charities and Lutheran Services of Iowa support refugees in their journey and once they arrive? What questions do you have that you have wondered about when you have seen or met our new neighbors? Learn about the recent refugee experience from three experts working in the field.

10:30 - 10:45 a.m.

BREAK

10:45 - 11:30 a.m.

Full Group
Waveland Hall

ARE YOU SAYING WHAT I THINK YOU'RE SAYING? AN EXPLORATION OF COMMON MISCOMMUNICATION IN DIVERSE COMMUNITIES

Facilitators:

- **Caryn Kelly**, Career Coach, Des Moines Area Community College
- **Leslie Olson**, VISTA Supervisor, Oakridge Neighborhood Services
- **Bilingual Community Associates** with LSI from Bhutan, Congo, Iraq, Eritrea and Burma

Culture—a group's shared values, assumptions, beliefs and the behavior that results from this—shapes the way we interpret and respond to situations in life. More cultural diversity in a community can produce environments rife with cultural misunderstanding. This panel will feature five presenters who came to the United States with refugee status. Facilitators of the panel work extensively in intercultural communication and cultural orientation. The presenters will demonstrate how common scenarios in everyday life, including interactions at work, school and in neighborhoods, can be understood—and misunderstood—through a variety of cultural interpretations.

11:30 - 11:45 a.m.
Full Group
Waveland Hall

ENTERTAINMENT BEFORE LUNCH

- **Bhutanese Community in Iowa**

11:45 a.m. - 1:15 p.m.
Full Group
Waveland Hall

LUNCH

INTRODUCTION OF KEYNOTE

- **Carly Ross**, Director at U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants

KEYNOTE: THE WORLD COMES TO IOWA

- **Stacie Blake**, Director of Government and Community Relations, U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants

The global community is facing an unprecedented international crisis with more refugees than any other time in our history. As we watch the protection systems devised over many years continue to fail, we realize new approaches are needed. For a fortunate few, the hope of resettlement is offered. Ms. Blake will share her experience visiting refugee camps, and the opportunity for individuals to welcome newcomers to Des Moines.

1:15 - 2:15 p.m.

CONCURRENT SESSIONS 1

SESSION 1
Waveland Hall 1-2

WELCOMING REFUGEES TO YOUR WORKFORCE

Facilitator: **Judy Conlin**, Executive Director Iowa International Center

Panel:

- **Jennifer Rehah**, Operations Manager, Iowa Workforce Development
- **Joyce McDanel**, Vice President of Human Resources and Education, UnityPoint Health - Des Moines
- **Julie Fugenschuh**, Executive Director, Project Iowa
- **Minka Beganovic**, Housekeeping Manager, Marriott Hotel BIO
- **Sheila Laing**, Senior Vice President, Chief Customer Officer, Hy-Vee

At a time when Iowa is experiencing a very low unemployment rate and a very high need for employees, how do companies tap into the untapped resources of refugee and immigrant populations? How does the employer create a culture of change for management, one that creates a positive environment for refugees? How do you deal with the challenges related to communication issues? Safety issues? Retention issues? What are the successful elements of inclusion training for management? Line-level staff?

SESSION 2
Waveland Hall 3-4

THE CHALLENGES AND SUCCESSES OF REFUGEE YOUTH

Facilitators:

- **Michael Toner**, AmeriCorps, Refugee RISE, EMBARC
- **Stephanie Brewer**, Career Planner and Case Manager, Children and Families of Iowa

Panel:

- **Stephen Meja** (Sudan)
- **Htee Moo** (Burma)
- **Siri Makanga** (Congo)
- **Bal Budathoki** (Bhutan)

Refugee youth often face the unique challenge of having one foot in their traditional culture and one in their adopted country. At school, among their peers, there is considerable pressure to adapt and assimilate quickly – to blend in and become American – while at home, and in their communities, youth are expected to maintain traditional cultural and familial values. How do refugee youth navigate these very different worlds? Our youth panelists come from different countries and traditions, but they have the shared experience of making the Des Moines area their new home. We'll examine the challenges and successes these youth have had here in Iowa and what we can do to aid the transition process of young refugees.

SESSION 3

Greenwood

TAKE A JOURNEY TO A NEW CULTURE

Facilitators:

- **Anindita Das**, Coordinator, Refugee Alliance Des Moines
- **Vinh Nguyen**, Bilingual Community Outreach Program Supervisor, Des Moines Public Schools

The participants will learn the process of cultural and psychological changes that people experience when living in a new culture. The effects of acculturation can be seen at many levels in both interacting cultures. The presenters will also share some of their own stories as they have gone through the acculturation process, one as an immigrant and one as a refugee.

2:30 - 3:30 p.m.

CONCURRENT SESSIONS 2

SESSION 1

Waveland Hall 1-2

REFUGEE WELLNESS

Facilitator: **Jessica Eagan**, Refugee Health Coordinator, Iowa Department of Public Health

Panel:

- **Erin Drinnin**, Health Officer, United Way of Central Iowa
- **Radmila Ilic Abram**, Clinical Social Work/Therapist, Healing Art
- **Rohey Sallah**, Refugee Wellness Program Coordinator, U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants
- **Alyssa Clayden**, Therapist, Lutheran Services in Iowa

Refugees demonstrate exceptional resiliency by overcoming persecution, rebuilding new lives, and giving back to their communities. Nevertheless, the refugee experience entails trauma, hardships, and psychological stress that can be difficult to manage when adjusting to life in a new culture and community. This session will focus on the impact of mental health on well-being, interpersonal relationships, and the ability to live a full and productive life. Panelists will highlight the resources available to refugees in central Iowa and discuss the intricate connection between mental and physical health.

SESSION 2

Waveland Hall 3-4

IT TAKES A VILLAGE: HELPING REFUGEE CHILDREN TO SUCCEED IN SCHOOL

Presenters:

- **Vinh Nguyen**, Bilingual Community Outreach Program Supervisor, Des Moines Public Schools
- **Larry Aye**, Karen Bilingual Community Outreach Worker (Burma)
- **Abdi Abdiinoor**, Somali Community Outreach Worker (Somali)

English language learners (ELLs) benefit just as much from the support of the school, teachers and their parents' involvement in their education as other students. Many English language learner parents may feel frightened about getting involved in schools or helping their children because of their limited English skills, lack of familiarity with mainstream culture and limited understanding of the public school system in the United States. In this session, educators and members of the community will learn some strategies from the facilitators to support refugee students' learning at homes and how to engage students and parents in activities at schools.

Calling Iowa Home

Definitions:

New Iowans

Someone who was born outside of the United States or was a permanent resident of another country who has come to live in Iowa.

Refugee

A person who has been forced to flee his or her country in order to escape war, persecution or natural disaster

Immigrant

A person who voluntarily relocates to a new country to take up permanent residence.

Secondary Migration

Refugees whose first state of resettlement is not Iowa but who choose to relocate to Iowa, usually for employment or to reunite with family members.

SESSION 3
Greenwood

**TOOLS FOR SUCCESS: USING ART TO ASSIST REFUGEES
TO COMMUNICATE**

Facilitators:

- **Samantha Thomas**, Director of Operations, Global Arts Therapy
- **Bev Ellis**, Instructor, Metro Arts

This session will address how arts can improve communication and “safe” space making in all places where participants may work with refugees. Some of the international arts projects that Global Arts Therapy has conducted will also be shared and briefly presented. During this session, participants will learn how to create “tool” kits to further improve nonverbal communication with those lacking in basic English skills. These artistic kits are cost effective and can have a direct impact on all ages.

3:45 - 4:30 p.m.
Full Group
Waveland Hall

REFUGEES AS ROLE MODELS

Facilitator: **Anindita Das**, Coordinator, Refugee Alliance Des Moines

Panel:

- **Vinh Nguyen**, Bilingual Community Outreach Program Supervisor, Des Moines Public Schools (Viet Nam)
- **Anthony Tweh**, Executive Director of Child Future International (Liberia)
- **Hema Bastola**, Staff Nurse, Broadlawns Medical Center (Bhutan)
- **Wasan Waham**, Refugee Resettlement Case Manager, Catholic Charities, Diocese of Des Moines (Iraq)

We hear and read about refugees in the news and social networks as a global, national and local issue. However, we rarely think about what some people go through to leave their entire world behind and come to a country that is brand new and different for them. Most often, they are successful in adjusting and thriving in a new environment. Some even go the extent of persevering through all the hardships and challenges and have overcome the difficult times to emerge as successful role models. It is both necessary and important that we understand the various life experiences and individual attributes that helped them to succeed in their new country.

FREE
TAX PREP
SERVICES



If you earned \$58,000 or less in 2016, you may be eligible to receive FREE tax preparation. You also may be eligible for the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) or Child Care Tax Credits. This is your money to keep and save.

Call 2-1-1 for additional information or with any questions.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 7, SESSION SCHEDULE

8:00 a.m. - noon
Greenwood

REGISTRATION & HEALTH SCREENINGS

- **Des Moines University and Des Moines Health Center**
- *Des Moines University will be providing basic health screenings including checks for blood pressure, body mass index and vision. Additionally, they will screen for risk factors for lung health.*
- *Des Moines Health will provide dental screenings.*

8:30 - 9:15 a.m.
Waveland Hall

WELCOME

- **Tom Ahart**, Superintendent, Des Moines Public Schools

SUCCESSES AS ROLE MODELS

Facilitator: Anindita Das, Coordinator, Refugee Alliance Des Moines

Panel:

- **Vinh Nguyen**, Bilingual Community Outreach Program Supervisor, Des Moines Public Schools
- **Anthony Tweh**, Executive Director of Child Future International (Liberia)
- **Hema Bastola**, Staff Nurse, Broadlawns Medical Center (Bhutan)
- **Wasan Waham**, Refugee Resettlement Case Manager at Catholic Charities Diocese of Des Moines (Iraq)

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9:30 - 10:15 a.m.
Waveland Hall

COMMUNITY ACCOUNTABILITY AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN REFUGEE POPULATIONS

Facilitators:

- **Lata D'Mello**, Assistant Director, Monsoon United Asian Women of Iowa
- **Barwaqo Aden**, Multilingual Advocate, NISAA African Family Services

This session will address the roots of gender-based violence (GBV) in Asian and African contexts and explore how communities can be transformed by addressing GBV through creative interventions.

10:30 - 11:15 a.m.
Waveland Hall

HOW PARENTS CAN HELP REFUGEE CHILDREN TO SUCCEED IN SCHOOL

Panel:

- **Vinh Nguyen**, Bilingual Community Outreach Program Supervisor, Des Moines Public Schools
- **Larry Aye**, Karen Bilingual Community Outreach Worker (Burma)
- **Abdi Abdiinor**, Somali Community Outreach Worker (Somali)

English language learners (ELLs) benefit just as much from their parents' involvement in their education as other students. Many English language learner parents may feel frightened about getting involved in schools or helping their children because of their limited English skills, lack of familiarity with mainstream culture and the limited understanding about the public school system in the United States. In this session, parents will learn some strategies from the facilitators to support their children learning at home and how to engage in activities at schools.

11:30 a.m. - noon
Greenwood Room

TABLE VISITS & HEALTH SCREENINGS

noon - 12:45 p.m.
Waveland Hall

LUNCH

WELCOME & INTRODUCTION

- **Helene Grossman**, Director of Community Impact Services, United Way of Central Iowa

KEYNOTE: HUMAN RIGHTS FOR ALL IN CENTRAL IOWA

- **Joshua Barr**, Director, City of Des Moines' Civil and Human Rights Commission

The City of Des Moines and the State of Iowa have laws that protect all persons regardless of their refugee or immigrant status. These laws were created to ensure that all persons have an equal opportunity to climb the socio-economic ladder of success here in Central Iowa. Hear from the Director of Civil and Human Rights how our local government is protecting these vulnerable groups.

12:45 - 1:30 p.m.
Waveland Hall

GOT RIGHTS? LEGAL ISSUES IN THE REFUGEE COMMUNITY

Facilitator: **Jill Niswander**, Director of Communications and Fund Development at EMBARC

Panel:

- **Lee Heithoff** (Iowa Legal Aid)
- **Brynne Howard** (Justice for Our Neighbors)
- **Christina Sibouih** (Refugee Resource Center)
- **Megan Lantz** (Barten Law, P.C.)
- **Chris Rottler**, (Community Lawyers of Iowa)

The Legal Issues panel is a collection of local legal experts who have experience handling legal questions/cases from refugee and immigrant community members. The panel will take questions from the audience, sharing knowledge and information and giving feedback on how to access legal services, if required. (The information provided during the panel is for information purposes only and does not constitute legal advice, nor does it establish an attorney client relationship.)

Our Community is a Great Place to Live

Over the last year, central Iowa has been applauded for a variety of reasons. Central Iowa has been recognized in new ways for being a great place to live and work. Awards include:

1. #1 Location for millennial home buyers (10-15, Realtor.com)
2. #4 Best City for Tech Workers to Start Their Career (6-12-15, Computer Training Schools)
3. #5 Best City for Retirement (6-1-15, Bankrate)
4. Des Moines Leads U.S. Metro Areas in Community Pride (5-13-15, Gallup and Healthways 2014 survey)
5. #6 Midsize Metro Where College Grads Move for Jobs (5-12-15, American Institute for Economic Research)
6. #2 Best City to Find a Job (3-15-15, Wallethub)
7. #2 Best Farmers' Market in America (11-19-14, The Daily Meal)
8. #1 Up and Coming City for Food (9-17-14, Women's Health and Yelp)
9. Des Moines - Best City for Young Professionals (8-18-14, Forbes)
10. #1 Up and Coming Downtown (7-21-14, Fortune)
11. #4 America's Most LGBT-Friendly Cities (6-11-14, Vocativ)
12. Des Moines is the 11th best place to live in the United States (3-3-16, U.S. News and World Report)

PRESENTER BIOS

Abdi Abdinoor (Issa) was born in Somalia but raised in a refugee camp in Kenya. When he was five years old, a civil war exploded in his country, and his family fled to Kenya for refuge. They were taken to a Dadaab refugee camp and lived there for 18 years. He graduated and obtained his high school diploma and worked as an untrained teacher at an elementary school until their resettlement opportunity from the United States of America. He came to the United States on June 24, 2010. His ability to speak English and Somali enabled him to be hired by Des Moines Public schools to be a Community Outreach Worker. He serves as a liaison between parents and teachers, helps during conferences and translates documents that need to go home. He graduated with honors from Upper Iowa University with a bachelor of science in Accounting. He loves helping the community and all the needy people in our society regardless of who they are.

Radmila Abram, MA, LMHC, ATR is a licensed mental health counselor and registered art therapist in a solo practice, with over twenty years of clinical experience. She is an immigrant from former Yugoslavia, fluent in Serbian language and passionate in integrating art, science and spirituality. Radmila specializes in trauma, depression and anxiety. She enjoys working with various groups in communities, integrating art to promote and encourage the creative process of self-expression, connection, self-exploration, and personal growth.

Barwaqo Aden is a multilingual advocate at Nisaa African Family Services, an organization serving victims/survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault in African communities in Iowa. Barwaqo, who is from the Somali community, grew up in Kenya. As an advocate at Nisaa since 2014, she provides direct services and conducts community outreach and education. Barwaqo also has several years of work and volunteer experience with immigrant populations in South Africa and in the United States. She is currently pursuing higher education in Human Resources and Global Management, and she is deeply interested in global women's health and empowerment projects.

Thomas M. Ahart is the superintendent of schools for Des Moines Public Schools, serving in that role since May 10, 2012. He joined DMPS as principal of Harding Middle School in 2008 and became Associate Superintendent for Teaching and Learning in 2011. He has also served as the Director of Human Resources for Ankeny Community Schools, Director of Instruction for Marshalltown Community Schools, and as a school improvement consultant for Heartland Area Education Agency 11. Ahart also spent eleven years as a language arts teacher at high schools in Denison, IA and Glenwood Springs, CO. He has been involved in a number of educational and professional associations, having served as president of the Iowa Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, the editor of Iowa Educational Leadership, and a member of the Iowa Department of Education's Charter School Advisory Board. He is a board member of The Greater Des Moines Partnership, Junior Achievement of Central Iowa, United Way of Central Iowa, and The Wallace Centers of Iowa.

Larry Aye is from Myanmar and is Karen. He was born in Thailand in a refugee camp and lived there until he was 21 when he left to come to the United States as a refugee. His mom and dad and siblings soon followed. Growing up in the refugee camp was difficult. In April 1995, when he was 8 years old, the D.K.B.A. (Democratic Karen Buddhist Army) and the Burmese government troop attacked the first camp he lived in, and the houses, made of bamboo and leaves, burned quickly sending his family and the rest of the people there fleeing into the jungle. The conflict between the Burmese government and the Karen and other ethnic groups such as the Karenni, Mon and Shan is considered by many analysts to be the longest-running civil war in the world. Although life was hard, the refugee camp laid a foundation for education in his life. He worked for the I.O.M. (International Organization for Migration) as an interpreter till he came to the United States in 2007. He works as a Bilingual Community Outreach Worker with the Des Moines Public Schools, where he helps children and families by serving as a translator and ensuring their needs are met. On September 17, 2015 he became a naturalized American citizen. He says that it was the best day of his life.

Joshua V. Barr presently works as the Director of the Civil & Human Rights Department for the City of Des Moines. With the Civil & Human Rights Commission, Joshua works to eliminate and prevent discrimination in the areas of employment, housing, municipal practices, and public accommodations in order to make Des Moines a model city. He is a native of Sumter, SC where he graduated from the University of South Carolina School of Law in May of 2007. Joshua later studied at the Smeal College of Business MBA Program at Pennsylvania State University. After graduating, Joshua moved to Colombia, South America to conduct research on institutional corruption. Joshua later became a professor at Javeriana University teaching International Business and Law courses. He also served as the International Legal Consultant for Corn Products International Andina (now known as Ingredion) and the Director of Education for the foundation GSC Ingles Para Todos (GSC English for Everyone). After two fantastic and thought-stimulating years in Colombia, Joshua returned to the United States to address social issues in his native state of South Carolina. From 2013 to 2015, Joshua worked as a civil rights attorney and the State Fair Housing Director at the South Carolina Human Affairs Commission.

Hema Bastola is from Bhutan, a sovereign state in South Asia. Hema is working as a Registered Nurse at Broadlawn Medical Center and is working on a BSN at the University of Iowa.

Minka Beganovic has been the Housekeeping Manager for the West Des Moines Marriott for 18 years. Minka grew up on a farm in a small town in Bosnia. In early 1992, the Bosnian War broke out and Minka's job at a construction company was cut. She moved to Switzerland in 1996 to get away from the war and moved to the United States in July of 1998. She soon got a job at the West Des Moines Marriott as a housekeeper. She completed classes for a Housekeeping Supervisor and in 2004, she was promoted to Housekeeping Manager. Minka is fluent in Russian, English, Bosnian, German, and knows a little bit of Spanish.

PRESENTER BIOS, CONTINUED

Stacie Blake is Director of Government and Community Relations and has responsibility for building and maintaining strong and positive relationships with government, elected and community supporters. From 2005-2008, she led the USCRI Vermont field office welcoming hundreds of newly arrived refugees and their families. She was recognized by the Vermont Legislature with a Joint Resolution of Appreciation for her work with refugees and immigrants across the state. She led the Florida Center for Survivors of Torture for three years and developed and launched the National Partnership for Community Training, a research based collaborative to share best practices for communities with limited resources for torture survivors. Prior to rejoining USCRI, she was the Executive Director of Community Tampa Bay promoting a vision of ending discrimination. Ms. Blake holds two degrees from the University of Vermont and was elected twice as a member of the Mount Mansfield Union School District. She is a graduate of the Vermont Leadership Institute and Leadership Florida.

Stephanie Brewer is a Career Planner at Children and Families of Iowa. She is a Des Moines native and graduated from Iowa State University. She served in the Peace Corps and has been working with youth in the Central Iowa area for over 10 years.

Alyssa Clayden is a therapist at the Des Moines office of Lutheran Services of Iowa (LSI) and has recently joined the Des Moines Refugee Health Alliance. In Alyssa's work as a therapist with LSI, she works with a variety of individuals and families, including recently arrived refugees and refugees who are working within the school and DHS systems. This work requires coordination of services, cultural brokering for agency staff and refugees and providing mental health support for trauma that centers around themes of grief and loss, domestic violence, sexual assault and child sexual abuse, being a survivor of war and violence, as well as the complexities of settling and living within a new cultural and linguistic setting. Alyssa's professional background includes 16 years of experience in 6 different countries providing mental health support and interventions, community education, advocacy and outreach, research, and prevention curriculum and programming.

Judith Conlin assumed her position as Executive Director of the Iowa International Center (IIC) in March, 2008. She has overseen the growth of IIC, which has increased its International Visitors Program, more than doubled its interpreters and translators, provided a 24/7 Free Crises Line in 220 languages, added the IIC Dialogue Series, a second website, www.welcometoIowa.org, and accessible ESL classes on site. Conlin has also been involved in developing the ESL Adult Academy Training Center as well as the Refugee Summit. Conlin's education includes a B.S. from University of Iowa, graduate studies at University of Edinburgh, both a Master's and Doctorate from Drake University. She has acted as the Executive Director of the ARL, the Iowa Alzheimer's Association and Department of Aging. Conlin was nominated by Governor Ray to be inducted into the Iowa Women's Hall of Fame in 2014. She was also awarded Woman of Influence by the Business Record and Woman of Achievement by the YWCA.

Chad Dahm is the new Bureau Chief for Refugee Services. He comes to the bureau from DHS central office where he was most recently the Bureau Chief for Child Care. He has been with the department for more than 10 years working in a variety of settings. Chad was born and raised in Iowa and is a graduate of Central College. He and his wife Sheryl, have six grown children and three amazing grandchildren.

Anindita Das is currently working as the Coordinator for the Refugee Alliance Des Moines. She has a Ph.D in Human Development and Family Studies from Texas Tech University and worked as a postdoctoral research associate at the University of Virginia. Prior to joining the Alliance, she was teaching research methods and program evaluation at the graduate and undergraduate levels at Iowa State University. As a Coordinator for the Refugee Alliance, Anindita will take on duties that had been spread throughout a group of volunteers for the past two years, lending a sense of organization and focus to the group's mission. She plans on using research to understand the refugee community, the service providers, the stakeholders, priorities and goals to make a more efficient, organized network that can help new Iowans acclimatize easily.

Lata D'Mello is the assistant director of Monsoon United Asian Women of Iowa, an organization serving victims/survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault in Asian and Pacific Islander communities in Iowa. She works primarily as an advocate, providing direct services to API victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. She also trains and supervises advocates, edits Monsoon's communication materials and performs outreach. She has led an oral history project on older Asian women in Iowa who have been victims of sexual assault. Lata hails from Mumbai, India. She also has had about 22 years of experience as a journalist in newspapers in India, Singapore and the United States.

Erin Drinnin joined United Way of Central Iowa as the Community Impact Officer of Health in May, 2014. Prior to joining United Way, she served as an Executive Officer at the Iowa Department of Public Health, leading the state's Direct Care Workforce Initiative. In that role, Erin managed a multi-million dollar project to develop standardized training and certification for Iowa's 75,000 direct care workers. Erin also served as a Senior Program Manager at State Public Policy Group, a public policy consulting firm in Des Moines. She has experience in policy development, community outreach, grant management, facilitation, research, and organizational development. At United Way of Central Iowa, Erin's work focuses on advancing United Way's mission of improving lives by managing the development, implementation and evaluation of a community impact agenda in the focus area of health.

Jessica Eagan is the Refugee Health Coordinator for the state of Iowa and the co-chair of the Des Moines Refugee Health Alliance. In her work with the Refugee Health Program at the Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH), she coordinates with medical clinics, resettlement agencies, and community organizations throughout the state to promote and protect the health of Iowa's refugees. Critical to the program is ensuring that a comprehensive initial health assessment is completed for each newly arriving refugee. Jessica's background includes over 14 years of experience collaborating with healthcare professionals to improve the lives of others through research, statistical analysis, outreach, and prevention. Prior to her time at IDPH, Jessica worked in research, advocacy and outreach, and data coordination at Blank Children's hospital.

Bev Ellis has been an educator for over 40 years. She was the Facilitator for Elementary Gifted Education for the Urbandale Community Schools for 18 years. Previously, she was an art instructor for the Des Moines Art Center. Currently, she serves as an Art and Conservation Instructor for Metro Arts, a volunteer naturalist and teaching artist for Polk County Conservation Board, a cultural ambassador and teaching artist for CultureAll, teaching artist for VSA of Iowa, and teaching artist for Global Youth Therapy. She holds her B.S. in Elementary Education, studied painting at the Kansas City Art Institute, classes at the Des Moines Art Center, and holds graduate credits in Environmental Studies from University of Northern Iowa.

Julie Fugenschuh, L.M.S.W. has served as the Executive Director for Project IOWA (an organization working to increase access to 21st century, career track, living wage jobs for chronically under-employed and unemployed central Iowans through an intensive public-private skills training and economic development program) since March 2011. Her roles include overall management of the budget, strategic outcomes, developing business relationships, community collaborations and fundraising. Her educational background and experience is guiding the work and research around employment and systematic barriers for marginalized populations. Her previous work was with the Annie E. Casey Foundation's grant initiative called Making Connections as Executive Director. Prior to this Julie worked in the Des Moines Public School system with the Head Start program engaging both parents and children in the educational process. She has experience and knowledge about community driven initiatives and collaborations. She has been part of numerous committees to create and open several non-profits including the Urbandale Food Pantry in 2011.

Helene Grossman has served as the Director of Community Impact Resources for United Way of Central Iowa since 2013. In this role, she is the liaison between United Way and efforts to support refugees in central Iowa. Prior to her role in non-profit, Helene served as the Director of Adult Literacy for the Iowa Dept. of Education. Helene has also had professional roles related to refugees and English language learners for Des Moines Public Schools and Heartland AEA. She is also a certified ESL teacher. Helene coordinated the Iowa Culture and Language Conference for 22 years and was the first recipient of the Dan Chavez Beyond the Horizon Award for advocacy for new Iowans. She has published a text for ESL teachers and now serves on the Executive Committee for the Refugee Alliance and is the Chair of the Education Committee.

Lee Heithoff graduated from Creighton University School of Law in 2001 and began his legal career at Iowa Legal Aid the same year. Iowa Legal Aid is a statewide nonprofit that provides free civil legal assistance to low-income individuals and families. Iowa Legal Aid has 10 regional offices located throughout the state. Lee served as a Staff Attorney in the Southwest Iowa Regional Office in Council Bluffs until 2006, when he was promoted to the position of Managing Attorney. As a Managing Attorney for Iowa Legal Aid, Lee developed a strong interest in developing community collaborations with other nonprofits that were designed to help break the cycles of poverty that are often experienced by low-income individuals and families. In 2015 he accepted a promotion to the position of Deputy Director and transferred to the Central Iowa Regional Office in Des Moines. As Deputy Director, Lee assists the Executive Director and Iowa Legal Aid's Board of Directors in managing program operations across the state.

Brynne L. Howard is a Managing Attorney with Iowa Justice for Our Neighbors. Iowa Justice for Our Neighbors (Iowa JFON) is a nonprofit organization that provides free immigration legal services to immigrants throughout the state. Iowa JFON currently has clinic sites in Cedar Rapids, Columbus Junction, Des Moines, Decorah, Ottumwa and Storm Lake. Iowa JFON also conducts monthly green card clinics in Polk County for refugees. Brynne received her BA from St. Olaf College and graduated from Drake Law School in 2010. Prior to law school, Brynne worked for a domestic abuse shelter and as a case manager with Iowa JFON. Brynne has worked as an attorney with Iowa JFON since April 2011. Brynne is licensed to practice law in Iowa and fluent in Spanish.

Caryn Kelly is a Career Coach with the Bridges to Success program at Des Moines Area Community College. Previously, she served as the supervisor for LSI's Community-based ESL program, where she trained volunteer teachers and supported the development of a team of Bilingual Community Associates to provide outreach to local refugee communities. Caryn has taught adult ESL for over 15 years and holds a Master's Degree in Language, Reading and Culture from the University of Arizona.

Rachel Kinker is the Program Manager of the Refugee Resettlement Program at Catholic Charities in Des Moines, Iowa. For the past two years, Rachel has managed the Refugee Resettlement program and developed relationships with the community and service providers as well as serving as an advocate and educator around refugee issues. Rachel sits on the Refugee Planning Alliance and chairs the Housing Subcommittee of the Planning Alliance. Rachel graduated with a BA in Art Education from The University of Iowa and is currently pursuing her Master's in Public Administration from Drake University. Prior to her work in resettlement, Rachel worked internationally as a Community Liaison for Life Skills with the U.S. Peace Corps in Botswana and as an art educator at Ivy Collegiate Academy in Taiwan.

Zeljka Krvavica came to the United States in 1993 as a refugee from Bosnia and Herzegovina after fleeing her home in war-ravaged Sarajevo. Since then she has devoted her life to helping other refugees make Iowa home. She has accomplished this through her professional work as a Refugee Case Manager with the Bureau of Refugee Services in Des Moines, Iowa and as Iowa State Delegate with UNHCR Refugee Congress, as well as through numerous volunteering engagements such as teaching English as a Second Language or establishing and conducting Green Card Clinics for the refugees seeking adjustment of status, serving as the founding member of Iowa Interpreters and Translators Association, acting as a Cultural Ambassador for CultureAll, a non-profit organization which provides cultural diversity workshops and trainings for school children in Iowa, or being an avid advocate for refugee women's rights. She is the recipient of the Iowa Council for International Understanding 2010 Passport to Prosperity Award and is a 2015 recipient of the White House Champions of Change Award for World Refugees which recognizes everyday Americans who are making positive changes in their communities.

PRESENTER BIOS, CONTINUED

Sheila M. Laing is Executive Vice President, Industry Relations, Chief Customer Officer - Hy-Vee Inc. Sheila has been with Hy-Vee for 29 years, starting part-time as a cashier in Dubuque, Iowa while attending Loras College and has worked in retail, distribution and corporate. Sheila oversees human resources; recruiting; benefits, training and education, customer care center, travel and event planning, Hy-Vee's conference center and office administration. Sheila's educational credentials include a Bachelors Degree in History, Mathematics and Education from Loras College; Human Resource Law Certificate from Drake University; and she holds accreditation as a Senior Professional in Human Resources. In 2010, Sheila was recognized by Progressive Grocer as a top 100 women in grocery and in 2015 by Mass Merchandise Retailer as a Top Woman in Retail. Sheila currently serves on Hy-Vee's executive committee and board of directors along with several nationwide retail industry committees.

Megan Lantz has been working in the field of immigration law since 2004, when she began clerking for a small immigration law firm. Megan serves as an American Immigration Lawyers Association Mentor nationwide in the areas of T & U Visas, as well as Violence Against Women Act Petitions. Fluent in Spanish, Megan worked as a Bilingual Staff Attorney for the Iowa Coalition Against Domestic Violence from 2007-2010. During her employment at the coalition, Megan served as a mentor to students at the University of Iowa College of Law on Violence Against Women Act and U Visa Petitions as part of their clinical program. She has also trained Iowa law enforcement on U Visa Petitions at the Iowa Law Enforcement Academy at Camp Dodge. Megan is committed to immigrant victims' rights issues.

Joyce McDanel has been involved in healthcare leadership for more than 30 years. Her experience as an administrator, COO and CFO in other healthcare organizations has prepared her well for her current role as the VP of Human Resources and Education with UnityPoint Health - Des Moines. In 2005, Ms. McDanel joined UnityPoint Health - Des Moines as the Executive Director of Integrated Services. Ms. McDanel is an active member of the local and national Human Resource Professional organizations, Society of Human Resource Management and serves on the board for the United Service Credit Union and also serves as co-chair for the local Funding Collaborative for Central Iowa Works. She serves as an active member of the CIW Careers in Health Care committee as part of the Central Iowa Works initiative and CareerSTAT, a national initiative to validate and spread the investment in frontline, low-wage earners to move into sustainable wage positions through training and education programs initiated and/or supported by employers. Joyce currently chairs a subgroup of Capital Crossroads for Live Long Learning.

Vinh Nguyen was born in Saigon, Vietnam during the height of the Vietnam War. Soon after the Vietnam War came to an end, his parents decided to have him escape from Vietnam to seek freedom and opportunities for his future. He was smuggled out of Vietnam along with 134 Vietnamese on a tiny and not even seaworthy boat. They were saved by an oil tanker and sent to refugee camps in Thailand. He later was accepted by the United States and resettled in Des Moines, Iowa. With no English language skills, he struggled to communicate. He then enrolled at Des Moines Area Community College, Urban Campus to learn English and worked many odd jobs to survive. He got his dream job as a math teacher in Des Moines Schools after graduating from Drake University. He is currently the Bilingual Outreach Program Supervisor for Des Moines Public Schools helping to support more than 6,500 students coming from many places. Vinh is active in the community and has lent his skills and support in many projects and activities in the Vietnamese, Southeast Asian and Language Minority communities. Vinh also serves as a story teller, speaker and consultant for many topics related to Vietnam, Southeast Asia, refugee and resettlement process, and second language acquisition issues throughout Des Moines area and surrounding areas.

Jill Niswander is Director of Communications and Fund Development at EMBARC and has worked in international business for 15 years. She began her career in corporate finance at Principal Global Investors, where she worked with offices across the globe to develop and implement relevant sales and marketing strategies in specific markets, including Asia, Australia, Europe and South America. In 2011, she turned her passion for volunteering into a career in the non-profit sector by co-founding Dress for Success Des Moines, an organization that helps women obtain and retain employment. Jill previously worked as a business developer at Visiting Nurse Services of Iowa, where she has successfully launched Community Voices, a fee-for-service interpretation business. Jill received her BSBA from Drake University and lives with her husband and four children in Altoona, IA.

Leslie Olson has been working with diverse populations for more than 15 years. Her emphasis is on human rights, intercultural communication and working effectively in diverse communities. Her work has taken her across the United States and around the world, including Kenya, South Africa and Bosnia. Ms. Olson is currently Special Projects Coordinator at Oakridge Neighborhood, an MSW candidate at the University of Iowa and runs a small consulting business called Human Write Communications.

Carly Ross has over fifteen years of overseas experience in Europe, East and West Africa, Southeast Asia, and Central America. She holds a B.A. from Carleton College and a graduate degree in International Development and Forced Migration from the Asian Institute of Technology in Bangkok, Thailand. Carly worked as a resettlement case manager for Lutheran Services in Iowa, overseeing family literacy and refugee medical programs. Carly then served as a staff member for Refugee Support Center Africa (RSC) based in Nairobi, Kenya and for International Organization for Migration (IOM), traveling to refugee camps in Ethiopia, Tanzania, Kenya, and Uganda to conduct screenings under the United States Refugee Admissions Program. A native Iowan, Carly owned small business for over six years before joining USCRI as Des Moines Field Office Director in 2014. She is committed to building an inclusive community of opportunity for new Iowans.

Christopher Rottler is co-founder and partner of Community Lawyers of Iowa, PLC (“CLI”). Christopher was born and raised in Iowa. He traveled east to pursue his undergraduate degree from Goddard College in Vermont, and later his law degree from City University of New York Law School. He returned to Iowa in 2007 as a staff attorney at the non-profit Iowa Legal Aid where he worked until 2014. While there he experienced first-hand the large numbers of people who were turned away for lack of resources and who could not otherwise afford a private attorney. CLI was established in 2014 with a mission to increase access to civil legal services by offering sliding-scale fees, unbundled services and other strategies to make legal representation more affordable.

Rohey Sallah is the Refugee Wellness Program Coordinator for U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants. The Wellness Program serves the more vulnerable population of refugees such as elderly, single mothers, HIV positive, and those with a prior medical history. They are able to receive extended case management for up to one year to help them get connected with the appropriate doctors and community resources to continue the path to self-sufficiency. Prior to USCRI, Rohey worked at Orchard Place/Pace Juvenile Center as a Behavioral Health Intervention Services case manager for four years. She holds a Bachelor's Degree in Human Development and Family Studies from Iowa State University. Rohey is originally from Gambia, West Africa.

Mary Sellers was named president of United Way of Central Iowa in February, 2012. As the organization's chief executive she leads United Way's strategies to achieve substantive community impact in the priority areas of education, income and health to improve lives and build a stronger central Iowa. Sellers joined United Way with a 20-year track record of leadership and success in nonprofit and community organizations. Mary earned her BA degree from the University of Florida and her MBA through the Executive MBA program at the University of Iowa Tippie School of Management. She also graduated from the Getty Leadership Institute at the University of California Berkeley, and the Strategic Perspectives in Nonprofit Management program at the Harvard University Graduate School of Business. Mary is a current Board member of the Greater Des Moines Partnership, a member of the Greater Des Moines Committee and an active member of the Young Presidents Organization. Mary has been recognized as one of 2016's Top 25 Most Influential Business Leaders and a 2014 Woman of Influence by the Des Moines Business Record, as one of the 13 people to watch in 2013 by the Des Moines Register.

Christina M. Sibouih serves as Chief Executive Officer for the Des Moines-based non-profit, Refugee Resource Center and leads programming, training and assistance work with immigration-related matters and forms. The Refugee Resource Center is a volunteer and donation-based organization committed to supporting and advocating for all Iowa's refugees on their path to self-sufficiency, which has served nearly 2,000 clients since its founding in 2014. The Center offers direct service and educational programming, featuring open support nights on Wednesdays for refugees to get direct assistance with their most pressing issues. She serves as Division Administrator for Community Engagement and Grants Administration at the Iowa College Student Aid Commission and has over 10 years combined experience in international development, international programming and evaluation, collective impact and education. She is fluent in Spanish, French and Moroccan Arabic.

Samantha L. Thomas is the executive director and founder of Global Arts Therapy, a nonprofit organization committed to bringing sustainable development projects and arts programs to youth in Iowa and Nepal. Ms. Thomas worked to develop arts programs for youth in South Korea from 2011-2013, prior to teaching in South Korea. Ms. Thomas received her degree of international relations from Drake University. Ms. Thomas has spent the previous 10 years actively involved with arts education and has taught with the Des Moines Art Center, Afterschool Arts Programs and Des Moines Public Schools Adult Education program and guest lectured at King's College in Kathmandu, Nepal.

PRESENTER BIOS, CONTINUED

Michael Toner is an Americorps RefugeeRise member serving with EM-BARC. Originally from Davenport, Iowa, he's spent the last eight years working with ELL populations in both New England and the Midwest.

Anthony Tweh was born in Liberia, West Africa. He migrated to the United States in 2004 as a refugee and has been living in Des Moines, IA since that time. In his last job before migrating to the US in 2003, he served as a Program Coordinator for Action Against Hunger, France/Liberia where he was fortunate to render humanitarian services to nearly 15,000 Ivorian Refugees and internally displaced people. He has five years of experience working as a behavioral technician at the Child and Adolescent Unit with Unity Point Health specifically Iowa Lutheran Hospital and has been with Developmental Services of Iowa as a behavioral counselor since 2012. Anthony is the founder and current executive director of Child Future International, a non-profit organization that works with immigrants and refugees from several African countries including Sierra Leone, Burundi, Sudan, Ghana, Nigeria, Liberia, Somalia and the DR Congo. CFI has been providing child abuse and neglect prevention services to nearly 200 parents and have served more than 900 children in Science Technology Engineering Mathematics (STEM) and cultural activities programming during the summer months. Anthony has also joined a group of Africans in Des Moines to establish an educational program called "Africans in Iowa for Empowerment" providing educational programs. In February 2016, he was contracted by Children and Family of Iowa as a consultant to provide cultural support services to refugees and immigrant population within Polk County. He speaks French, English, and seven local languages from Liberia.

Nick Wuertz is the Director of Refugee Community Services at Lutheran Services in Iowa (LSI). He is a native of Waverly, IA, and a graduate of Wartburg College. He is a 2014 graduate of the Greater Des Moines Leadership Institute and a current member of the Greater Des Moines Partnership's Diversity and Inclusion Council. Nick helped convene and serves on the steering committee of the Des Moines Refugee Alliance which has brought together a diverse group of stakeholders to advance the Des Moines community's ability to welcome and equip refugee families for success. Nick is in his 10th year working in LSI's refugee program helping families fleeing war and persecution begin a new life in the Des Moines community.

Wasan Waham was born in Baghdad, Iraq. She received her Bachelor's degree of Civil Engineering and Construction Engineering from the University of Baghdad. After graduating, she traveled to Turkey for an engineering job and came to the United States in 2009 where she completed her master's degree in Chicago, IL at DeVry University. This past April, Wasan received her U.S. citizenship. She currently works at Catholic Charities in Des Moines, IA as a Reception and Placement Case Manager for the Refugee Resettlement program.

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