



IICONN News: Annual Naturalization Ceremony, Survivor Services and Partner Highlight

Annual Naturalization Ceremony, Join us!

Co-hosted by IICONN & USCIS

Wednesday, December 7th 10:00am

The Klein Auditorium

910 Fairfield Ave, Bridgeport, CT 06605



IICONN is honored to co-host with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) our annual Naturalization Ceremony, during which permanent residents take the oath in unison to become naturalized U.S. citizens. This year, approximately thirty new Americans living in Connecticut, all of whom have been approved by USCIS after a lengthy application process to become naturalized, will take the Oath of Allegiance to the United States in front of a federal judge. The ceremony emphasizes the benefits of U.S. citizenship, highlights Connecticut's diversity, and celebrates the culmination of a long immigration process for those taking the oath. **For many of the new citizens, this day marks the fulfillment of a lifelong dream, as it is the first time they can call themselves an American citizen.** The day is even more special for them because they take the Oath next to their families, and are able to share this important day with their loved ones. The new Americans receive their certificates of naturalization, and a small American flag to wave proudly as they start their new lives as citizens.

This year, Honorable Senior Judge Warren W. Eginton will preside over the ceremony and Bridgeport Chief of Police, Armando J. Perez, will deliver the keynote remarks. Please join us for this powerful event that celebrates the best of America.

IICONN Program Spotlight: Survivor Services

Established in 2012, the Survivor Services program is designed to provide eligible individuals with specialized services to address the complex results of human rights abuses. Working with refugees, asylum seekers, asylees, and other foreign-born survivors of torture, Survivor Services aims to **empower survivors** to heal from torture, regain independence, and lead productive lives through the provision of comprehensive, individualized services. Dedicated to maintaining a holistic view of survivors' needs, we offer a collaborative and self-sufficiency-focused approach that encompasses a wide range of services and interventions.

Grounded in trauma-informed care and a strong network of community providers to promote healing and independence, the Survivor Services program is comprised of four pillars of service: **mental health, physical health, legal services, and social services**. All of the services offered through the program provide a safe environment for healing and can be custom designed to fit the unique needs of each survivor.

We offer psychosocial wellness groups to promote healing from a different perspective. The **nationally-recognized** Beauty School, for example, offers women a community space to engage in various activities aimed at breaking cycles of isolation, increasing self-confidence, and providing a safe space to disengage from past traumatic experiences and join in fellowship. Meeting every other Friday, the group invites community members to facilitate educational discussions designed to equip women to help them grow. Topics are related to health and wellness, self-care and self-sufficiency, social integration and overall life skills.



- To date, Survivor Services has served over 80 clients. Clients have diverse backgrounds, ranging from pastors to lawyers to market vendors. The majority of current clients are seeking asylum and are extremely vulnerable due to their immigration status and inability to access many government services.
- Our largest country of origin population is from the Democratic Republic of Congo; Haiti ranks second. We currently have one family from Syria.
- With over 3 million refugees in the US (arrived since 1975), it is estimated that 1.3 million have survived torture. Of these, 40-50% experience post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and/or major depressive disorder, which requires mental health care to facilitate effective integration into communities and economies.
- There are over 28,000 refugees, asylum seekers, and asylees in Connecticut, largely from Iraq, Eritrea, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. These are countries which regularly use torture against their citizens.

IICONN Partner Highlight: Helping Hands



Helping Hands
Community Thrift Store & Furniture Bank

Making a Difference

... in the lives of many. Helping Hands' Furniture Bank is available to clients of partnering social service non-profit organizations who may be extremely low income families, formerly homeless people who are transitioning to permanent housing, senior citizens with little or no income, survivors of domestic violence, families who have lost furniture due to disaster, individuals suffering from HIV/AIDS and many other people in need. When you donate home furnishings and other items to Helping Hands, a portion of the proceeds from the sale of those items goes to support IICONN. You can donate, shop and help others! Please go to <http://www.helpinghandsctfb.com/> for store location and hours.

Amazon Smile

#StartWithaSmile at smile.amazon.com for your holiday gifts and Amazon donates to International Institute of Connecticut Inc.!

A promotional graphic for Amazon Smile. It features a white background with festive holiday decorations on the left, including a red star, a blue snowflake, and a blue circular ornament with a white snowflake. The text is centered and reads: "Start with a Smile at smile.amazon.com this Holiday Season". Below this, it says "Support us and find all of your holiday essentials including gifts, decorations, and more." and "You shop. Amazon gives." At the bottom is the Amazon Smile logo, which consists of the word "amazon" in black and "smile" in orange, with a yellow arrow pointing from the 'a' to the 'e' in "amazon".

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smile.amazon.com this Holiday Season

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IICONN counts on donations it receives from generous members of our community to continue our important work. To learn more, and to volunteer, please visit www.iiconn.org. Secure contributions can be made directly to IICONN through our [donation page](#).



