



# Celebration, Education and Collaboration

## Honoring Refugees

In June, IICONN joined with people the world over to celebrate World Refugee Day. We celebrated the courage, perseverance and resilience of those who wait for years for a place to call home - a place where they can live in peace and security, where their children can get an education and have the promise of a future. On June 17, close to 100 people gathered in Bridgeport's Seaside Park to honor refugees globally and locally, and to celebrate the many contributions they bring to our communities



Celebrating the contributions of refugees at Seaside Park, on World Refugee Day. *Photo Credit: David Vita*

In June, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees Global Trends report stated that 65.3 million people were displaced from their homes by conflict and persecution in 2015, compared to 59.5 million just 12 months earlier.

**On average, 24 people were forced to flee each minute in 2015.**

**One in every 113 people globally is now either a refugee, an asylum-seeker, or internally displaced in his/her own country.**

The United States is endeavoring to do its part. The U.S. Department of State has redoubled its efforts to meet its goal of resettling 85,000 refugees this fiscal year. Across the state, CT refugee resettlement agencies are increasing our numbers. *At IICONN, we will meet or exceed our stated target of resettling 115 refugees this fiscal year.*

## **Immigration Legal Education**

The Immigration Integration Funders Collaborative Connecticut is committed to building the legal capacity of nonprofits and community groups to assist immigrants in applying for Deferred Action (DACA/DAPA) and other immigration status changes. As part of this statewide initiative, IICONN collaborated with the Community Foundation of Greater New Haven and the Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition (MIRA) to deliver a 40-hour immigration law training in late May. Along with the director of MIRA, IICONN staff attorneys Alicia Kinsman, Adriana Podesta, Caroline Sennett and Ellen Messali facilitated training sessions on topics including family visas, implications of criminal convictions on immigration status, asylum applications, and immigration relief for victims of serious crimes and for victims of human trafficking. The 20 trainees included attorneys eager to gain expertise in immigration law, as well as staff of nonprofits that are recognized by the US Board of Immigration Appeals (BIA) or who are actively seeking BIA recognition.

In related news, the Immigration Legal Resource Center (ILRC) approved IICONN's application for a license to deliver immigration training using the ILRC curriculum. **As the only agency in Connecticut authorized to facilitate this training, IICONN is proud to build local capacity to deliver life-changing immigration legal services to our local immigrant communities.** This intensive gold-standard course helps to



provide the necessary initial training component for individuals working at BIA recognized agencies who wish to apply for accreditation from the BIA. With BIA accreditation, non-attorneys working at recognized non-profit organizations may assist individuals in immigration matters before the Executive Office for Immigration Review's immigration courts and the Board of Immigration Appeals, the Department of Homeland Security, or both. Training participants receive an ILRC certification upon completion of the full course and passing an exam covering course topics.

## Collaboration Spotlight

On August 3, IICONN hosted a bicycle distribution to our refugee clients. Many thanks to Karen Sherman, one of IICONN's amazing volunteers, for her ideas and determination, and for forging an important collaboration that has had tremendously positive impact for IICONN's clients. IICONN clients received bikes, helmets and Kryptonite locks. Karen reviewed and explained bike riding safety practices and "rules of the road".



Thank you, NECC and Kryptonite®!  
*Photo Credit: Amanuel Tefferi*

As a result of this extraordinary collaboration, IICONN will distribute 30 bikes, helmets and locks to adults and children. And, we have just learned, that NECC is donating an additional batch of bikes that will be provided to a broader group of IICONN clients, including Project Rescue survivors of human trafficking.

Huge thanks to:

- ***Northeast Community Cycles*** for providing bikes and helmets - NECC is a nonprofit, community initiative dedicated to providing safe, refurbished bicycles free of charge to underprivileged children and adults in Fairfield County, CT. <http://necommunitycycles.org/>
- ***Kryptonite***® for donating the Kryptonite U-locks and keys.

**Our success depends on your help!**

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**Volunteer!** There are many ways to support IICONN by giving your time and talent. Visit our website for a full list of volunteer opportunities. <http://iiconn.org/volunteer/>

