SPECIAL THE CAMPUS EDITION

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Welcome the Stranger

Photos by Logan Kirkland (University of Mississippi)

Left: Berberovic Nijaz, 71, moved to the United States in order to seek safety from the agression in Bosnia. Nijaz said the people of Erie are very welcoming and have made his experience a good one. Even though Nijaz trys to keep a smile, he said that the hardest part is being far away from his home. "I miss my family," Nijaz said. "I miss their hugs." **Middle:** Senada Alihodzic, 49, works at the International Institute of Erie as a community resource coordinator. Alihodzic said her life changed instantly when she fled from Bosnia. The best news she recieved in the United States was when she found out her husband survived the concentration camp he was in. Alihodzic said these stories from the war will stay with her forever. **Right:** Alija Jusic, 60, served as a teacher during the war. Jusic continues to follow this profession today, teaching Arabic and prayer to the members of the Bosnian community center. He is only with this community temporarily.



PHOTO BY ALEX DRIEHAUS (OHIO UNIVERSITY)

A young girl looks over the back of a bench as she sits with her parents during a citizenship ceremony at the federal courthouse in Erie on Friday, March 4, 2016.

Friday, March 4, and Saturday, March 5, saw the collaborative efforts of students, mentors and professional journalists come to fruition in Allegheny's fourth annual journalism conference, entitled "Welcome the Stranger: Stories of Immigrants and Refugees in the 21st Century." Teams worked to tell the stories of immigrants and refugees making a life in Erie, Pennsylvania.

"Welcoming strangers is an integral part of religious practices and cultural traditions around the world. As human beings, we long for the same things: love, shelter and a better life for our children.

In this election year, political polemics endorse slamming doors and closing borders in the faces of people fleeing war, crippling poverty and suffering.

Our conference aspires to remind us of our common humanity and the role journalists play in reporting and sharing the stories of those seeking safety and a new place to call home," the conference program noted.





Left: Dina Kovalevich, a caseworker for the International Institute of Erie, works with Faduma Abdulkadir Salah, an interpreter, to help prepare apartments for the families seeking refuge in the United States. **Right:** Faysel Abubakar Abdulkader and his son, Abubakar Faysel Abubakar, are among these families. They arrived on March 4, 2016 at Erie International Airport.



Nimo Adan Abdi, a refugee from Somalia just arrived to the United States last week with her family.

أهلاً و سَهلاً

Welcome to Erie

Photos by Emerald Wright-Collie (Allegheny College)





Left: Adna Hisir, her brother and their mother arrived to the United States last month from Somalia. They are now living in Erie, Pennsylvania. **Right:** Abdullahi Hirsi plays ball in the apartment while the neighbors wait for the family coming from Somalia. They all convened in the apartment to wait for the family to arrive.

Tamara Kolesnichenko paints a customer's nails on March 4, 2016. Kolesnichenko opened Tamara's Salon in June 2015 to make a dream become reality.



A fresh cut at life

Photos by Brittany Adams • Story by Alex Weidenhof (Allegheny College)

Every time Tamara Kolesnichenko opens the door to her salon, she enters into a world of possibilities that were once unthinkable.

Kolesnichenko was born in the village of Kupelya in Ukraine. After marrying her husband, Vladimir, she moved to Olevsk, Ukraine. At the time, the country discriminated against Kolesnichenko because of her Pentecostal faith, she said.

"It was a tough life there," said Kolesnichenko. "We couldn't practice our religion freely."

Kolesnichenko said her religion prevented many opportunities for her and her family.

"When we still were there, it was kind of getting better but, still, you wouldn't find [a] good job," Kolesnichenko said. "For my older sisters, even me, it was harder to go to school, get [an] education, good education, because, if you practice believing in God, you are not able to get [a] good job, or get an education because it's everything for those who were in the parties of the communists."

In 1998, Kolesnichenko, her husband and her 2-year-old son sought refuge in the United States. She moved to Erie, Pennsylvania, because her brother lived in the city.

"It's easier when somebody [is] waiting than when you go somewhere and don't know anybody," Kolesnichenko said.

Kolesnichenko said one of the earliest difficulties she encountered was the language barrier.

"When I first came, [it was a] different language completely," Kolesnichenko said. "I had to learn English first, and then, little by little, step by step."

When Kolesnichenko mastered English, she became an interpreter. Her sister, who lives in Virginia, pushed Kolesnichenko to open a beauty salon after being a stay-at-home mother for seven years.

"She said it's pretty good business, if you have a good place, a good start," Kolesnichenko said.

Kolesnichenko's first step toward opening her own salon was attending Fortis Institute in Erie. After graduating as the valedictorian of her class, she opened her own salon on Peach Street.

Tamara's Salon, which opened in June 2015, features Kolesnichenko as the only stylist. She said she does not have any specialties but is hoping to hire another stylist.

Kolesnichenko said her salon had more business in the summer than the winter, but she is hopeful to receive more customers.

"I hope it's going to spread more."

Regardless of the success of her salon, Kolesnichenko said she is grateful for the opportunities she received in Erie.

"My kids...it's easier for them. It would probably be more difficult for kids [in Ukraine]," Kolesnichenko said. "It's a completely different style, culture and life is harder. Here, everything is more about comfort. There, it's 'You have to work. Tough.'"

While Kolesnichenko is happy to live in Erie, she still thinks about Ukraine. She has cousins, nephews and two nieces who still live there, and she has returned to the country twice since 1998.

"I don't get that much homesick, but still, I think [about] how it is there, and especially now with war going on there," Kolesnichenko said.

Kolesnichenko said her life has changed dramatically since moving to the U.S.

"It's different," Kolesnichenko said. "I don't know how I would be in Ukraine right now."



Galina Sadchikov, a refugee from Volgograd, Russia, gets her nails cleaned by salon owner, Tamara Kolesnichenko, on March 4, 2016. Sadchikov was a first-time customer.



Tamara Kolesnichenko laughs at the price of hair clippers that salon supply distributors, Kathie Smith and Bud Reale from CosmoProf Beauty, are selling on March 4, 2016.

Behind the scenes: a collaborative conference

PHOTOS BY RICHARD SAYER

"Not like the brazen giant of Greek fame,
With conquering limbs astride from land to land;
Here at our sea-washed, sunset gates shall stand
A mighty woman with a torch, whose flame
Is the imprisoned lightning, and her name
Mother of Exiles. From her beacon-hand
Glows world-wide welcome; her mild eyes command
The air-bridged harbor that twin cities frame.
"Keep, ancient lands, your storied pomp!" cries she
With silent lips. Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"
-Emma Lazarus, "The New Colossus"



Dijana Muminovic, a photojournalist from Bosnia, presented her story, "I'm a Refugee," about coming to the United States as a refugee, and eventually going to Croatia as a photojournalist to cover the stories of other refugees arriving from Syria. She was one of the professional photojournalists who came in for the "Welcome the Stranger" conference to present and collaborate with students from Ohio University, Point Park University, Edinboro University, the University of Mississippi and Allegheny College from March 4 and 5, 2016.





Some of the professional journalists attending the conference and overseeing projects also gave presentations. **Above:** David Gilkey, a photographer and video editor from National Public Radio, gave a talk on refugees seeking safety after fleeing wars in their home countries.



While the teams of journalists took few breaks from their projects, they also attended the series of talks spanning the weekend. Carrie Kahn, an National Public Radio international correspondent, gave a talk on Latin America's migration crisis and the violence prevalant there. Her talk also included examples of her radio reporting.



Projects included, but were not limited to, the coverage of refugees entering their new homes and local business owners. Teams consisted of students from Allegheny College who partnered with students from other universities and professional journalists to oversee their work. All of the reporting was done from sunrise to sunset on Friday, March 4, 2016.



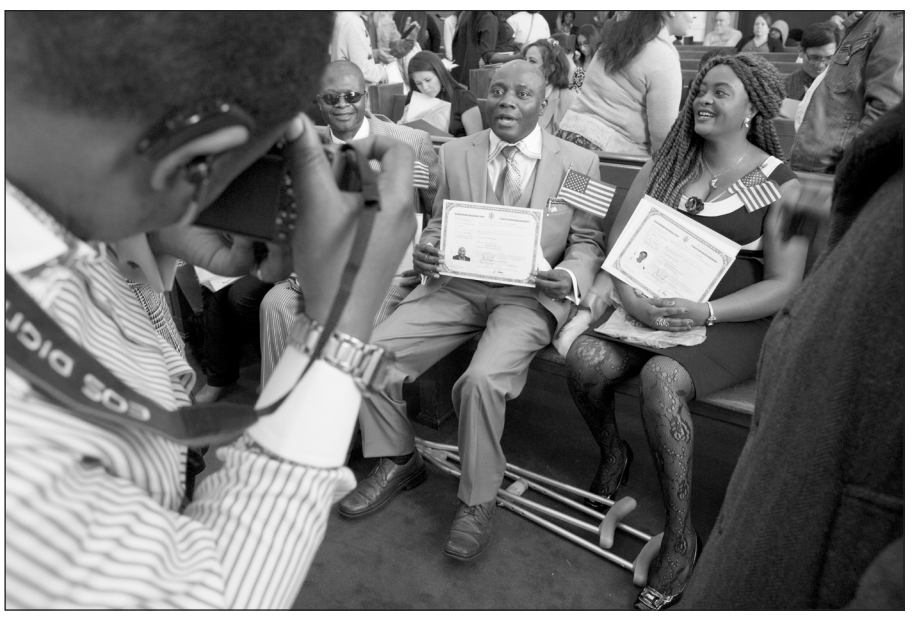


Becoming a citizen, building a home

Photos by Alex Driehaus (Ohio University)



Tila Timsina, left, and Durga Subedi, Bhutanese refugees from Nepal, take the Oath of Allegiance during a citizenship ceremony at the federal courthouse in Erie, Pennsylvania on Friday, March 4, 2016.



Malango Mlongeca, left, and Clarisse Amani pose for a photo by Amani's husband, Alex Amani, to celebrate their new citizenship after a citizenship ceremony.



Sister Cecilia Sullivan prays for immigration reform during a demonstration by the Benedictine Sisters of Erie outside the federal courthouse prior to a citizenship ceremony.



A sign welcomes new citizens after a citizenship ceremony at the federal courthouse in Erie Pennsylvania on Friday, March 4, 2016.



SELLING A SLICE OF HOME

Photos by Amanda Spadaro (Butler Eagle)











Top: Lalit Uprety, 23, is the brother and business partner of Pradip Upreti, who came up with the idea of creating the UK Supermarket, an Asian specialty store in Erie, Pennsylvania. The two are Bhutanese refugees who spent much of their lives in Nepal before coming to the United States. **Middle left:** Samar Monger, 2, lives in Erie with his father, Sagar. The two have been in Erie for seven years and are regulars at the store. **Middle right:** Nav Pokhrel, 57, is originally from Nepal. She has been in the United States for about five years, and Pokhrel is a regular at the UK Supermarket. **Bottom left:** Gioma Upreti rings up a customer's purchases on Friday, March 4, 2016. **Upper right:** Boxes near the back of the Erie's UK Supermarket, owned by Bhutanese refugee Pradip Upreti, are sometimes labeled "EXPORT" in large print. **Lower right:** Brightly colored peppers are easily found at the supermarket.



Adarsh Timsina, 19 months, plays with his brother Zenith, 5, on Friday, March 4, 2016.

Family

Where life begins and love never ends

Photos and story by Rebecca Devereaux (Point Park University)

Bhargabi Timsina, 29, and her husband, Tika Timsina, 32, reside in Erie, Pennsylvania with their two children, Zenith, 5, and 19-month-old Adarsh.

Bhargabi came to the United States in 2010 as a Bhutanese refugee when she was 24 years old. The greatest difficulty she faced when first coming to the states was the language barrier, which worried her.

"I tried to explain to somebody at the time that I was pregnant. They do not understand."

But after a year of English as a Second Language classes, she learned how to speak the language.

"At the time I was nervous, but now I'm OK."

Growing up in Nepal, Bhargabi experienced a different kind of childhood than that of her own children.

"When we are inside we used to play with a friend. We used to play with the mud. We used to play with stone. When I am childhood when my brother used to play ball, you know soccer, they used to make sock, you know sock and put the paper inside the sock and make the ball."

She is thankful that her kids were born in the United States and are able to have toys.

In December of 2015, Bhargabi and Tika were granted citizenship after being in the United States for five years.

"In my lifetime, I never had a citizenship, even not in Bhutan even not in Nepal so I get a citizenship here when I am 29 so I'm very much excited about that."

She now spends her time at home taking care of her young children.







Top: Tika Timsina, 32, holds his son, Adarsh Timsina, inside their home in Erie, Pennsylvania. **Left and above:** Bhargabi Timsina, 29, sits inside of her home in Erie with her children, Zenith and Adarsh. Bhargabi was born in Bhutan and lived in Nepal for 18 years before moving to the United States. She settled in Erie with her family for the past five years.