We invite you to take a role in our mission by donating to NSC.

If you have any questions or wish to learn more about ways to contribute to NSC, please contact Leyla Dursunova, Development and Communications Director at ldursunova@nscphila.org, 215-893-8400, x. 1522.

Next year we will be celebrating our 90th anniversary.

Visit our website to stay tuned about 90th anniversary events.

**DREAM Act** Represents Hope for Immigrant Youth

Nationalities Service Center has been supporting local students advocating for passage of the DREAM Act, a bill currently pending in Congress. The DREAM Act would provide legal status to youth brought to the U.S. as children who complete two years of college or military service. In the absence of a viable path to citizenship under existing laws, the DREAM Act represents the only hope for these students to pursue a future in the country in which they grew up.

In 2009, local activist Maria Marroquin and NSC’s staff attorney David Bennion organized a local group, DreamActivist Pennsylvania, to raise awareness of the issues undocumented youth face in Pennsylvania. Members of the group have sponsored or assisted with events at Temple University, the University of Pennsylvania, and Swarthmore College, organized supporters to travel to Washington, D.C., for rallies and lobbying events, and participated in local events to promote immigration reform. In February, NSC co-sponsored showings of the film ‘Papers’, about the DREAM Act, at Arch Street United Methodist Church and Chestnut Hill United Methodist Church. The efforts of the activists and supporters resulted in several Philadelphia area members of Congress agreeing to co-sponsor the DREAM Act, including Senator Arlen Specter and Representatives Bob Brady, Chakka Fattah, and Joe Sestak.

NSC sponsored a phone bank at which supporters of the DREAM Act called Senators before the recent Senate vote on the bill. Unfortunately, the Senate voted not to move forward. However, Senator Richard Durbin (D-IL) has announced his intent to bring the DREAM Act up for a vote after the elections this November. The future of the DREAM Act, and of the undocumented youth who would benefit from it, remains uncertain.

Please contact Nationalities Service Center to learn how you can support these deserving young people in their fight for recognition and equality in the U.S.
Our New Neighbors

The Growth of Philadelphia’s Iraqi Sabean Mandaeans Community

NSC has been an active advocate for Iraqi resettlement for the last 4 years. As a result, Philadelphia is now home to more than 300 Iraqi families who represent the beauty and diversity of Iraq. They are Shiite, Sunni, Chaldean, and Mandaeans. They were professors, traders, craftsmen and artisans, physicians, mechanics, and chefs. They hailed from Iraq’s largest cities and its beautiful villages. Now they are Philadelphians and our new neighbors.

In our work with Iraqi refugees, NSC has developed many new partners who work with us to ensure that all refugees are afforded opportunities for full integration. These partners include groups such as the Arab American Community Development Corporation, Project SHINE, and the Mandaeans of America.

At the invitation of board members of the Mandaeans Society, NSC has joined the international efforts to save the lives and ancient traditions of Iraq’s Mandaeans. Philadelphia was home to just two Mandaean families in the early 1990s. NSC resettled our first Mandaean family in 2008 with more arriving in the past few weeks. NSC is now one of only a few resettlement agencies approved for Mandaean resettlement.

Dr. Saidi, board member of the Mandaeans Society of America, reports that the existing Mandaeans community “hopes to establish a viable community in Philadelphia that would embrace American cultural while keeping Mandaean flavors. We encourage newcomers to work and be productive and look for help in making this a success.”

Mandaeans, one of Iraq’s religious and ethnic minorities have been specifically targeted for violence in the current war. There are no more than 5,000 Mandaeans remaining in Iraq while more than 90% having fled for safety in Syria and other countries. Iraqi’s Mandaeans were largely well educated professionals, often working as jewelers and goldsmiths.

NSC and the Mandaeans community welcome assistance, especially ideas for entry-level employment for this community. Please support us in welcoming our newest neighbors.

NSC Mission

The mission of NSC is to help immigrants and refugees participate fully in American society.

We implement this mission by focusing on four main objectives:

* Protecting legal rights
* Strengthening families and promoting self sufficiency
* Eliminating barriers by language and cultural difference
* Promoting public awareness of the benefits of diversity in American society
How does NSC make a difference in the lives of immigrants and refugees? I’d like to describe two clients – out of the thousands we help each year – to illustrate the urgency and importance of our work, and the concrete results we achieve with generous support from our donors, funders, volunteers and community partners.

Hakeem was abducted by armed men in Iraq. He suffered terrible trauma, as did his family, who witnessed him being tortured. Upon his arrival in the United States, NSC’s Survivor’s of Torture Program connected Hakeem to therapy, found employment for his wife, and arranged art therapy for his daughter to help them get over the horrors of the past. Now, father and mother have started a family business using their shared talents, their daughter is in school, and the family is doing well in Philadelphia.

Liberia’s long and bloody civil war left Kadidjia, a woman in her 40s, a victim of multiple abductions, torture, and rape, as well as witness to the abduction, suffering and death of her mother and daughter. She was granted asylum in Immigration Court, but later the decision was reversed by the Board of Immigration Appeals, which found that conditions in Liberia had improved. NSC’s Legal Department helped Kadidjia appeal the decision to the Federal Court of Appeals. We argued, and the Court agreed, that Kadidjia’s case should be granted under the doctrine of ‘humanitarian asylum.’ Now, almost five years after she was first granted asylum in Immigration Court, she is finally being given the protection the law promises her, and she can begin to rebuild her life in Philadelphia.

These are but two examples of the work NSC is doing today...and has been doing for almost 90 years. Next year, 2011, we will be celebrating our 90th anniversary. If you believe that NSC’s work is important to immigrants and refugees in the Philadelphia region, help to make sure that we are here for another 90 years! Your generous support helps people build new lives and contributes to the vitality and richness of our city and region.

Thank you.

Dennis Mulligan
**ESL Students** Know Their Rights to Access Public Services

Recently NSC’s Education Department staff received a call from an emergency room regarding a patient who couldn’t speak English. The patient, Antonio Garcia, was an ESL student who received one-on-one tutoring at NSC, since he could not learn in a classroom environment due to the trauma he experienced in his native country of El Salvador. The hospital staff had problems communicating with Antonio, who speaks a dialect of Spanish that is difficult for most interpreters to understand. Daniela Romero and Ellen Polsky, NSC’s Education Department staff, helped with communication at the hospital, but this experience and many others in which our students turn to our staff for information and advice on healthcare access, childcare, academic advancement, accessing information for their school-age children, and domestic violence prevention led us organizing workshops that focus on access to education and health care for Philadelphia’s immigrant community.

On August 25th and September 15th, the Education Department’s summer intern, Julia Federico, organized workshops on “Your Children in Philadelphia Public Schools” and “Access to Health Care for All Immigrants.” Participants at the sessions received language access cards, a list of community health resources, and information regarding full participation in Philadelphia schools and public health services.

The presenters brought together years of expertise. Our thanks go to Ludy Soderman, from the School District’s Multilingual Family Support Office, Jafar Abdulayev from the ARC of Philadelphia, Natasha Kelemen, Refugee Health Coordinator at NSC, Mayla Henderson Jackson, Outreach Specialist with the Philadelphia Department of Public Health, and Loraine Iglesias from Public Citizens for Children and Youth. Workshop information was translated into Indonesian, Spanish, French, Haitian Creole, and Mandarin Chinese. The Indonesian newspaper Kabar Kilat featured the workshop. Generous donations were also made by Longman Publishing Company and the ARC of Philadelphia.

Bryn Mawr students developed material to provide three additional workshops on health care access this fall. One of the workshops will be on prevention and wellness, one will be on specialty care, and the third workshop will be on access to children’s care. ActionAids and PPCCY (Public Citizen’s for Children and Youth) will be presenting.

“With NSC’s help I am not only learning how to read, write and speak English, but I am also gaining self-confidence about my own abilities” - Antonio, ESL student.

---

**NSC’s Senior Center Garden** is a Huge Success!

Saran Meas, like many other seniors served by NSC, used to farm in her native country of Cambodia and wanted to use that knowledge to grow food and teach others new skills. The staff at our Senior Center, for their part, had long thought that starting a garden at the Center would be a great addition to the programs we are able to offer members and would be a source of fresh produce for the meals prepared for Center members. So we are very pleased that earlier this year NSC was awarded a grant through the PA Department of Aging and the Philadelphia Corporation for Aging to create a community garden. Within eight weeks of receiving the grant, and in time for this summer’s growing season, we built a garden that fulfilled our seniors’ desires to grow fresh produce and created a wonderful new program at the Senior Center.

On July 15th we celebrated the grand opening of our Senior Center garden, which is located on the grounds of Our Lady of Hope Catholic Church on north Broad Street. Special guests included Ray Prushnok, the Deputy Secretary for the Department of Aging, and Holly Lange, Senior Vice President of Philadelphia Corporation for Aging. Over 70 guests toured the garden and enjoyed fresh produce graciously provided by Weaver’s Way Farm.

Our thanks go to Philadelphia Green/City Harvest, Baker’s Creek Seeds, and Primex Garden Center of Glenside for helping us with plants, salt hay, raised beds, seeds, tools, and funds to continue the project. Over 1000 volunteer hours were put into building the raised beds, which allow anyone, regardless of physical ability, to work in the garden. Our AmeriCorps and Bridging the Gap members are creating a nutrition/garden curriculum for this winter. NSC’s garden has a mix of plants, herbs, and vegetables from all over Southeast Asia, China, Korea, and Eastern Europe, in addition to native plants from the Southern U.S., and Pennsylvania.

Participants made sure to plant native flora around the garden to attract birds and insects and improve the local environment. To reduce our “footprint” and to engage the Center’s members in recycling, we use rain barrels, compost bins, as well as “green” and “brown” plant material. Our produce doesn’t travel miles to reach our congregate meal kitchen. Our food is being grown without chemicals and does not pollute local water sources.

The garden project is still in its infancy, but we believe that the possibilities for collaborations and innovative projects are limitless. If you would like to tour the gardens or hear more about our project, please feel free to contact us at NSC, or at tarasl@nscphila.org.