

## April 2023



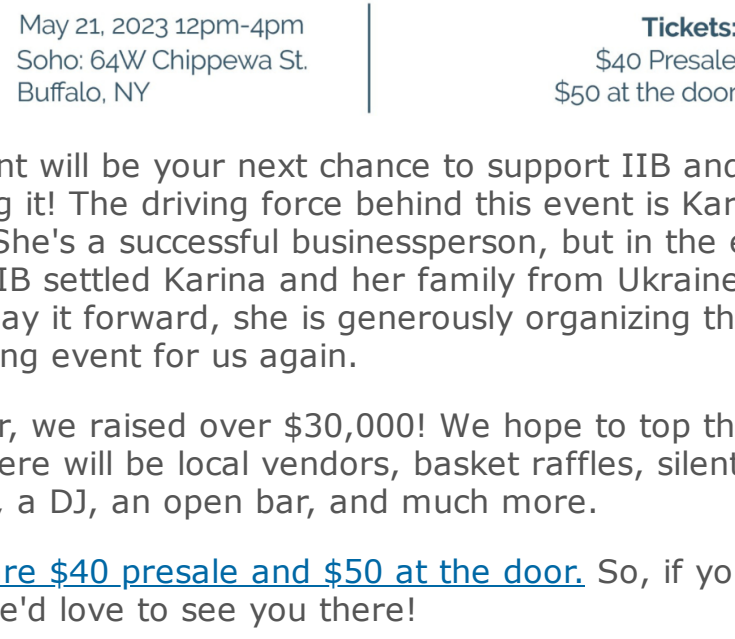
**Jennifer Rizzo-Choi, Executive Director**

It's the end of April, and I don't know about you, but I look forward to driving with my car window open and taking advantage of the fresh air!

During the warm months, we have ample opportunities to take advantage of the sunshine and the excellent weather. I like to take my family to the zoo and the park. There are also many festivals and events to go to!

I hope to see you at a few community events where the International Institute of Buffalo will participate. First, we will sponsor the Taste of Diversity on the West Side at Grant and Lafayette on Saturday, June 24th. Nothing is more enjoyable than spending a few hours immersed in that vibrant multicultural neighborhood, enjoying music, art, and food!

Coming up more quickly is a fantastic fundraising event we'd love you to attend!



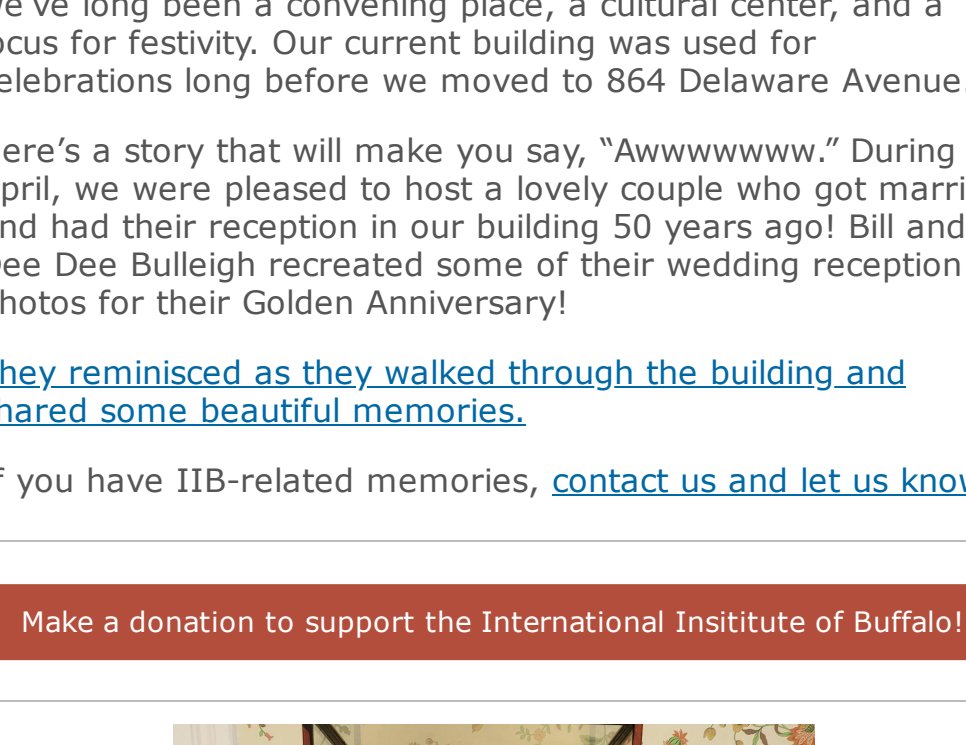
This event will be your next chance to support IIB and have fun doing it! The driving force behind this event is Karina Krantz. She's a successful businessperson, but in the early 1990s, IIB settled Karina and her family from Ukraine. As a way to pay it forward, she is generously organizing this fundraising event for us again.

Last year, we raised over \$30,000! We hope to top that this year! There will be local vendors, basket raffles, silent auctions, a DJ, an open bar, and much more.

[Tickets are \\$40 presale and \\$50 at the door.](#) So, if you can come, we'd love to see you there!

*Jennifer Rizzo-Choi*

Get tickets for "We Stand for Peace" fundraiser!



### Did You Know?

Regardless of where the International Institute was in Buffalo, we've long been a convening place, a cultural center, and a locus for festivity. Our current building was used for celebrations long before we moved to 864 Delaware Avenue.

Here's a story that will make you say, "Awwwwwww." During April, we were pleased to host a lovely couple who got married and had their reception in our building 50 years ago! Bill and Dee Dee Bulleigh recreated some of their wedding reception photos for their Golden Anniversary!

[They reminisced as they walked through the building and shared some beautiful memories.](#)

If you have IIB-related memories, [contact us and let us know!](#)

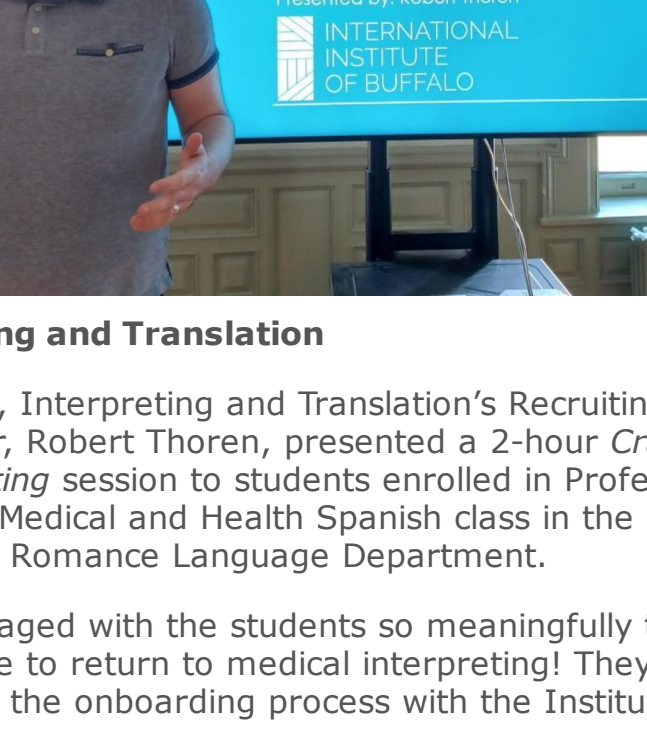
Make a donation to support the International Institute of Buffalo!



### From the Archives—The IIB Doll Room

Over the decades, people in the community have given us many kinds of objects. There is no more vibrant and visually stimulating exhibit than the scores of dolls we've collected and displayed in our appropriately named Doll Room.

If you have memorabilia or artifacts related to IIB from your family's journey and you want to show us, we'd love to see them and learn more about them! [Contact us and let us know!](#)



### International Exchanges and Education

We just had our annual Community World Trivia competition! Fourteen teams competed vigorously for the title of "Buffalo's Most Globally Smart." The team, Sherlock Homies, came out on top! [Get all the details at our blog](#) and [see the story that WGRZ did to cover it.](#)

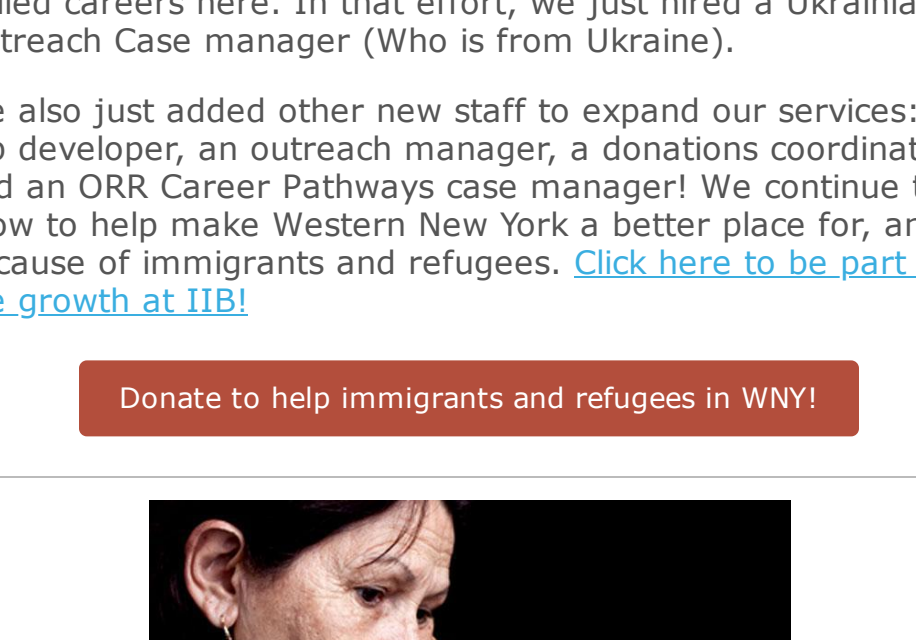
This month we welcomed a group from Italy who came to study how to promote human and civil rights for minority communities. They met with various community social service providers. They enjoyed cultural activities such as visiting Niagara Falls, attending the Dyngus Day Festival, having lunch at the Buffalo Italian Cultural Center, and sharing an evening with our amazing home hosts!

As a part of our Refugee Health Program, in collaboration with Erie County Cancer Services, we conducted a Colorectal Cancer Education program for over 35 refugees and immigrants in our area.

May Shogan, Department Director, also led a Cultural Competency Training for a group of D'Youville University students to better prepare them to work in an increasingly global community.

After a short respite, we continued with the second part of our Great Decisions Speaker Series. Local experts discussed important international topics such as "Iran at a Crossroads," "Economic Warfare," "Climate Migration," and the last session, "China and the U.S." If you're a lifelong learner and curious about the world around you, you owe it to yourself to check out Great Decisions next year!

Donate to help IIB education programs!



### Interpreting and Translation

This month, Interpreting and Translation's Recruiting & Training Coordinator, Robert Thoren, presented a 2-hour *Crash Course in Interpreting* session to students enrolled in Professor Melissa McCarron's Medical and Health Spanish class in the University at Buffalo's Romance Language Department.

Robert engaged with the students so meaningfully that it inspired one to return to medical interpreting! They are currently in the onboarding process with the Institute.

Attendees learned some of the basics involved with the language access industry.

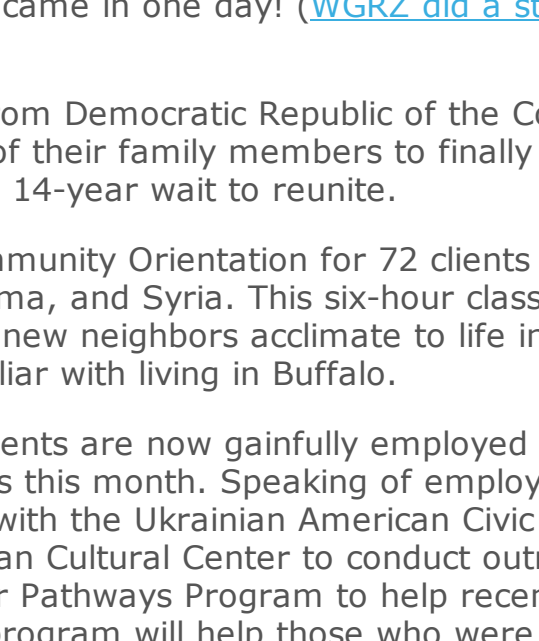
Topics covered included:

- The differences between 'certified,' 'qualified,' and 'trained' interpreters
- Interpretation vs. translation
- Tips for getting started
- The interpreter's code of ethics
- The importance of skill building

To learn how you can schedule a *Crash Course in Interpreting* sessions, [please reach out to the Interpreting & Translation Department.](#)

During April, we featured Edina Toole on our blog. She interprets and translates into German and her native Hungarian. She's lived a remarkable life characterized by perseverance. [Learn more about her life as a refugee and her journey to America.](#)

Do you need Interpreting or Translation done?



### New American Integration

During April, we did ten home setups for 46 people. Thirty-three of them came in one day! ([WGRZ did a story on that too!](#))

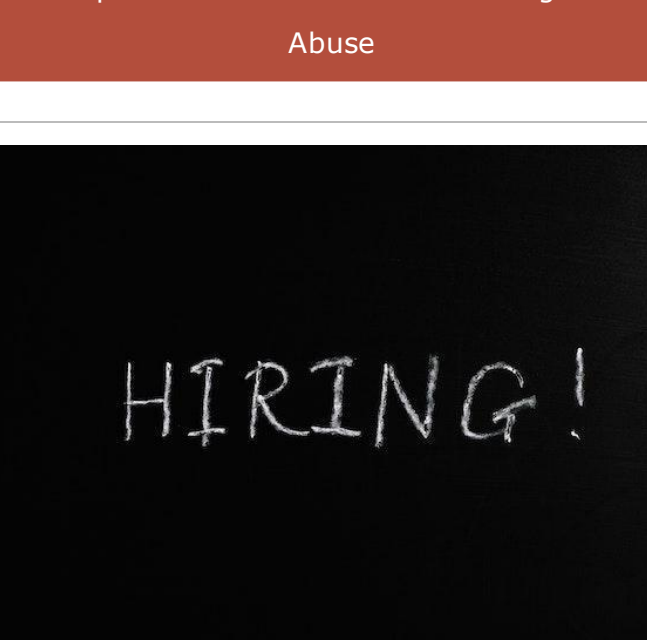
Two families from Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) were the last of their family members to finally make it to Buffalo after a 14-year wait to reunite.

We had a Community Orientation for 72 clients from an ORC, Colombia, Burma, and Syria. This six-hour class is an overview that helps our new neighbors acclimate to life in America and get more familiar with living in Buffalo.

Twenty-four clients are now gainfully employed thanks to our job placements this month. Speaking of employment, we are in discussions with the Ukrainian American Civic Center and Dnipro Ukrainian Cultural Center to conduct outreach events to use our Career Pathways Program to help recent Ukrainian arrivals. This program will help those who were professionals in their home countries get the necessary credentials, education, and experience to start their professional and skilled careers here. In that effort, we just hired a Ukrainian Outreach Case manager (Who is from Ukraine).

We also just added other new staff to expand our services: a job developer, an outreach manager, a donations coordinator, and an ORR Career Pathways case manager! We continue to grow to help make Western New York a better place for, and because of immigrants and refugees. [Click here to be part of the growth at IIB!](#)

Donate to help immigrants and refugees in WNY!



### Survivor Support

During April, we highlighted National Sexual Assault Awareness Month and National Child Abuse Awareness Month. This month was an opportunity to educate the community on the issues and encourage everyone to work together all year, stop these abuses, and be a resource for survivors.

IIB's Survivor Support Services program provides trauma-informed services with low barriers to access to survivors of domestic violence and human trafficking. This month, we highlight the positions on staff who provide specialized services for survivors who are already clients.

Our Housing Case Manager and Specialized Employment Counselor, funded by the Department of Justice, serve all youth, adult, foreign national, and U.S. citizen survivors of human trafficking who are clients of IIB and need housing support and/or occupational assistance.

The Housing Case Manager seeks out housing options that enrolled survivors identify as safe and non-triggering. They then work with landlords to pay security deposits and initial rent payments on leases executed in survivors' names.

Our Specialized Employment Counselor provides complementary services that prepare enrolled survivors to gradually take over financial responsibility for their living expenses by providing occupational assessments and training. These classes offer employment skills related to interviewing and securing employment, job retention counseling, and workforce re-entry.

Remember that we offer safe, free, and confidential services for survivors of domestic violence and human trafficking. [If you or someone you know needs help, please contact us.](#)

Donate to help survivors of Human Trafficking and Domestic Abuse



Have you thought about changing your career for a more meaningful opportunity to help make Western New York a better place for, and because of, immigrants and refugees?

We have a few open positions that you or someone you know might be interested in!

Check out our Career Services webpage!



### Volunteers

Last week was Volunteer Appreciation Week, and we have some of the best volunteers in the world! We appreciate all that they selflessly do on behalf of IIB.

This month, 38 of our volunteers (including members of Parkside Lutheran Church and returned Peace Corp Volunteers) participated in home setups. They also helped with our Community Orientation, Great Decisions, and HELLO programs. [Here is more information on how you can become a volunteer or intern!](#)

**"The International Institute of Buffalo makes Western New York a better place for, and because of, immigrants and refugees."**

Make a donation to support the International Institute of Buffalo!

### Follow Us

