



INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF BUFFALO

A Time for Many Firsts

July 2023



We had great opportunities to engage with many different people in our community. For the first time, we were part of Taste of Buffalo. While it would have been exciting for us to serve my family's recipe for pasta sauce or to have an International Institute of Buffalo signature drink, we were the

first organization to sponsor the Community Table in Niagara Square. The organizers thought it would be a place for community members to engage with each other as they took a respite from the sun and crowds enjoying the event. It was a fantastic opportunity to meet many old friends and greet new ones too!

As I reported last month, the first group of migrants and asylum seekers transported from New York City made their way to Buffalo. Another cohort has come too. As they process requesting asylum, we will support their efforts on the ground by providing engagement activities, including education, fitness, and employment readiness classes.

[You can donate money to our general fund if you want to help us](#) assist these asylum seekers and our other new American clients. Since we did not expect their arrival, we could use any financial help you can provide.

If you are confused by the terms used to define different types of migrants, you are not alone! Not too long ago, I did an interview with WGRZ and described the important distinctions between them. This video didn't make it to the broadcast, but they did include it on their website. It goes a long way to clear up the confusion. [Feel free to take a look at this 12-minute video](#) for clarity on the designations and please pass it along to someone you know who could use a primer.

I also discussed the issue at length on a recent episode of [In Our Community with Penny Wolfgang](#) on WECK.

I am also happy to let you know that IIB will be presenting another first as far as our fundraising events go. See below for information about a unique evening of comedy. I hope that you can join us!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jennifer Rizzo-Choi". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Donate to IIB

Save the Date for a Fun(ny) Fundraiser! Thursday, September 28



[From Refugee to Comedy: An Evening with Thom Tran](#). Thursday, September 28, 2023, from 6 pm-8:30 pm at the WNEB Studios, 140 Lower Terrace, in downtown Buffalo.

We are putting the finishing details on a fantastic event! Comedian and actor Thom Tran came to Buffalo as a refugee from Vietnam in the 1980s. He now lives in Los Angeles and is enjoying a successful career in movies, television, radio, and comedy; he is returning to town to help us raise money for our programs.

[Learn More](#)





Donations

In addition to cash contributions, we can always use help with donations of goods too.

Aside from the household items we usually request, we are doing a special call out for games, toys, and sports gear for kids of any age or gender to play with during the summer months.

[Click here if you can help!](#)



A New Home for a Unique Article of Clothing

We recently donated a traditional Korean garment to an older woman born in South Korea. She sought the hanbok for decades, and we were able to help her complete her search.

[Learn more about this story and the origins of the hanbok.](#)

New American Integration



Arrivals for July have been steady, and we are helping clients from Burma, Colombia, Congo, and Syria.

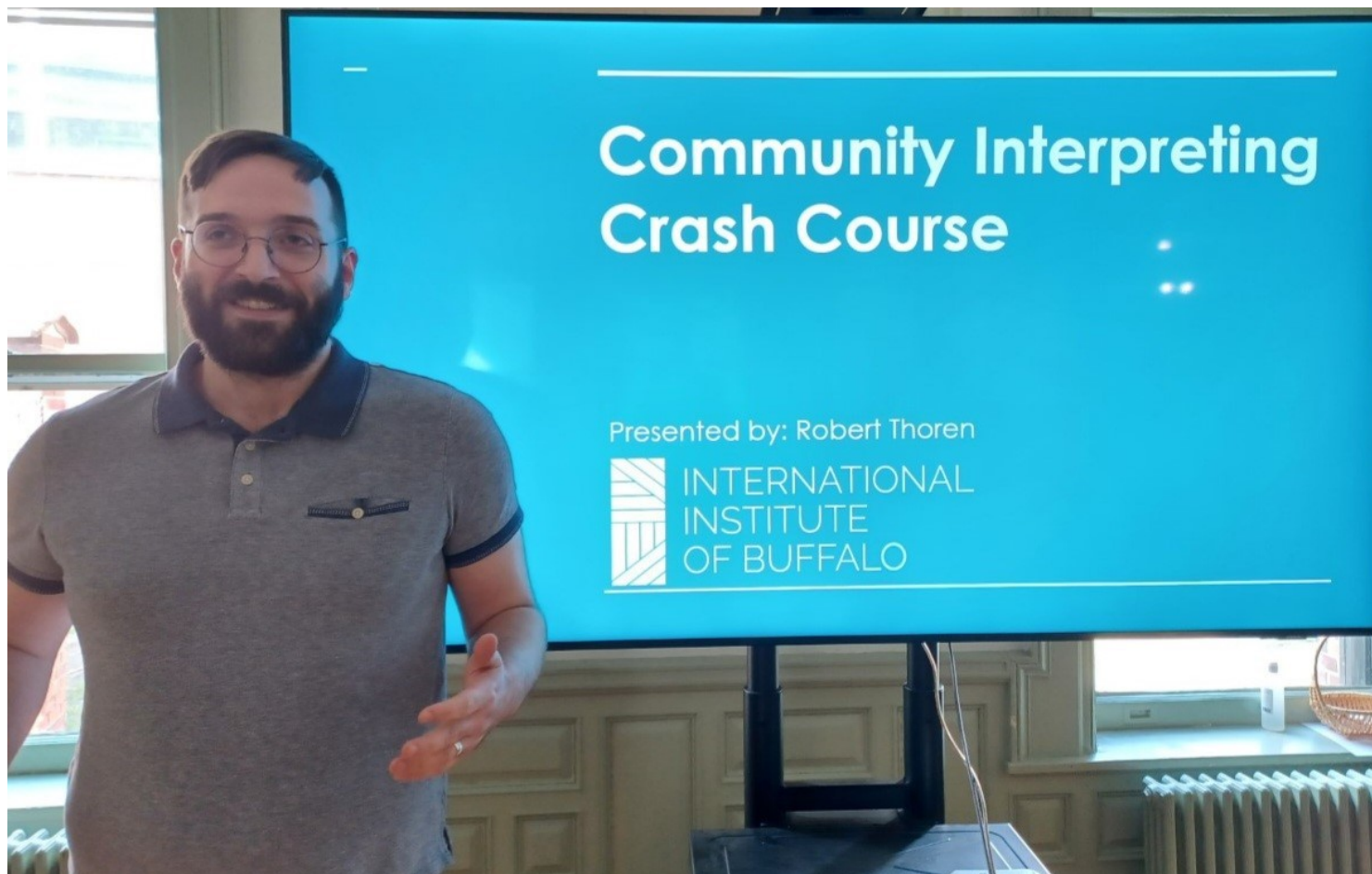
Housing continues to be a challenge, so please contact us if you know of good landlords with safe and affordable housing available! Please call 716-883-1900 and ask to speak with a resettlement case manager.

After we settle refugee families into their new homes, we do our best to prepare them to be productive members of the American workforce. Our Job Club is a 16-hour, comprehensive program where participants learn about the American workplace and how to succeed despite cultural differences.

The workshops include resume building, mock interviews, and attaining and advancing employment opportunities. Other classes offer insights into financial management and workers' rights. We recently had a special Job Club meeting for people recently arriving from Ukraine and we look forward to continuing those!

[Learn more about how we help our New American neighbors get successful careers.](#)

Interpreting & Translation



Last month, the Interpreting team received 1,758 requests to provide interpreting services in 48 different languages. The most requested languages were Arabic, Bengali, Burmese, Dari, Pashto, Rohingya, Somali, Spanish, and Swahili.

The Interpreting team continues offering onsite interpretation and on-demand phone and audio/video remote services in over 85 languages. We provide these services to various industries, including schools, medical healthcare providers, courts, law firms, and government agencies. These invaluable services provide comprehensive language access to limited English speakers in WNY and beyond. Email interpretation@iibuff.org to request interpreting services.

The Translation team completed 99 individual projects last month. Most of these projects were translated into Buffalo's top ten languages for the area's richly diverse schools, government agencies, tourist attractions, and local employers throughout WNY. Individual projects included but were not limited to personal documents, human resource documents such as employee onboarding materials, legal documents, and genealogy research. Send an email to translation@iibuff.org to request translation services.

Our Recruiting and Training staff heavily supports the Interpreting and Translation department. We can better serve the community through first-rate language access for appointments by continuing to source talented interpreters and translators. Are you multilingual and interested in joining our team of linguists? We are always looking to add quality linguists. [Apply here!](#)

[View our workshop calendar](#) or [visit our website to learn more about the Interpreting & Translation department.](#)

International Exchanges and Education



The International Exchanges and Education department has been very busy! In July, we welcomed three groups of international visitors through the International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP):

- Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development: 14 visitors from Spanish-speaking countries in the Western Hemisphere (above see a workshop they attended led by the Telesco Creative Group)
- Interfaith Dialogue and Religious Freedom: 9 visitors from Arabic-speaking countries in the Middle East and North Africa
- U.S. Federal, State, and Local Government: 5 visitors from Israel

We are also planning the expansion of our educational programming for the fall, including cultural competency training for educators, businesses, service providers, healthcare organizations, and

others. In the works, we will be promoting our Global Kids sessions, and the International Visitor Leadership Program Alumni in the Classroom sessions.

The last program is a wonderful educational opportunity for many different types of classes and students to learn about international people, places, and things, without leaving their classrooms! The IVLP alums can be guest speakers in any class, thanks to Zoom!

[Learn more about how our International Exchanges and Education department connects our community with the rest of the world.](#)

Survivor Support



Did you know that we have specialized programming to identify and support victims of labor trafficking? This sub-community of survivors is often exploited through forced criminalization, including drug trade, shoplifting, and robbery.

Services are provided free of charge regardless of immigration status, age, sex, religion, or gender identity.

We can help with the following needs:

- Crime Victim Help, including Safety Planning
- Legal Advocacy, including Pro Bono Referrals and Court Accompaniment
- Housing, Medical, and Employment Case Management and Referral Services
- Covering costs for Basic Needs and Services (clothing, food, personal items)
- Public Benefits Application Assistance
- Mental Health and Substance Abuse Recovery Referrals
- Trauma-Informed, Culturally Competent Advocacy and Case Management Services

Learn more about our [Survivor Support department](#).

Are You Happy in Your Career?



HIRING!

If you or someone you know wants a rewarding career, making WNY a better place for, and because of, immigrants and refugees, please look at all the interesting [jobs on our Careers page](#).

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



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International Institute of Buffalo
864 Delaware Ave
Buffalo, NY 14209
United States

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