**December 2024 Spotlight**

**IIB would not be able to make WNY a better place for, and because of, immigrants and refugees were it not for the great people on our team, in the community, and those we serve.**

**Employment Services**

This is Mustafa Amiri, he arrived from Afghanistan with his parents and sister in the middle of September. Mustafa was a plumber back in his country where he started his own business with the skills he learned from working with his dad.

Mustafa finished the IIB employment job club and went to the IIB job fair where he met representatives of Volland Electric. His employment case manager helped him apply for the job and immediately got an interview. Mustafa interviewed and was hired on the spot. The company did not have a position for him, but wanted him so badly they said they would figure it out!

In his second month on the job, Mustafa reports that he loves his work, has made friends, and has become much more confident in his English skills.

**I and T**

**Jun Wang-Tiedemann - Chinese Mandarin Interpreter**

Jun was born in Anhui, China but has lived in the U.S. for 18 years. She obtained her bachelors in English Literature and Education in China then traveled to the US to pursue her master’s degree. Jun is currently the Chairperson of the Board of the Buffalo-Niagara chapter of the Asian Pacific American Public Affairs Association (APAPA) and has been involved in translation and interpretation since 2009.

“The most fulfilling moments occur when clients find my services beneficial to their experiences, whether it's for students' exams, parent-teacher meetings, clients' medical visits, legal cases for plaintiffs or defendants, or even just everyday phone calls,” says Jun. ”I had no idea how challenging life could be until I began this work, and I realized how a simple translation or interpretation can significantly alter someone's tough circumstances.”

Jun is currently working to preserve the stories, culture, and history of region’s Chinese community. "Beyond Dim Sum: The Legacy of Chinese in Western New York," has been officially awarded funding by the New York State Council on the Arts and is seeking people willing to share their stories—whether personal experiences, family memories, or reflections.

**Volunteers**

Thanks for volunteers from the advertising agency, Crowley Webb (including our board member Molly Chvala in the center of both photos) and Sigma Theta Tau – Gamma Kappa Chapter (UB’s Nursing Honor Society) students who helped at more than ten home setups with us in the last year with advisor Maritess Bernardo (pictured at the far right).

A shoutout to our extraordinarily artistic clients, Mustafa, 11 and Zahra, 13, who we resettled in November. They are originally from Afghanistan but who lived in Pakistan for several years. Their case worker, Summer, recognized their talent after looking at their portfolios of drawings and paintings, each with over 30 pieces.

She organized an audition for them at the Buffalo Academy for Visual and Performing Arts (BAVPA) and got a Dari interpreter who offered to interpret at the audition for free! The good news is both Mustafa and Zahra were accepted as students at BAVPA.