

One Student Shares Her Story

"Hello. How are you?" "I am fine, thanks." That was the extent of the initial conversation between Tooran Roozbahan and her teacher, Patty Rosenbaum, in December 2005. In April 2008, after hard work through many hours of study, Tooran shared her story with 100 third-grade students in the Rockwood School District.



Tooran Roozbahan

During two presentations, Tooran told the students and their teachers what it was like to live in her city of Chirvaz, Iran. They enjoyed a video of her beloved city while Tooran spoke. "The temperature was always so very pleasant," she commented. "The fruit trees grew abundantly, giving off a wonderful fragrance. The city had new buildings and was kept neat and clean." Students enjoyed seeing children across the globe playing and eating ice cream. They laughed while watching the sheep cross the road and the shepherds tend to their flocks.

The children asked Tooran many questions, eager to learn about their form of money and what sports were played in her country. They looked for other differences as well as similarities between her culture and theirs. It was an enriching experience.

Tooran told the children how she and her husband, Shoojet, had businesses they worked in every day. She was a beautician and Shoojet a carpenter who made furniture and beautiful violins. The children were happy and could go to the school of their choice. Most importantly, the Roozbahan family could worship and practice their religion of Bahá'í without being arrested or killed.

Things changed in the area, and it became too dangerous for Tooran, Shoojet, and their three daughters to live there. She explained how she felt when they had to leave their home and way of life. "I was scared when the plane landed in New York. It was not the romantic land I pictured, and since I spoke no English, I could not talk to people."

Tooran and her family eventually moved to St. Louis. Still feeling very frightened and not knowing the English language or American ways, Tooran was introduced to the Immigrant & Refugee Women's Program. With Patty's assistance, Tooran started learning English. "She's a great student," said Patty. "Tooran works hard on her homework and is always anxious to see what new sentences she will practice writing."



Tooran and Patty

As the students listened, Tooran explained her personal accomplishments of learning the English language and about America. She told them that when she was studying American history, she felt like one of the Pilgrims. Some day soon Tooran will become an American citizen. She will return to the workforce and will be a part of American history – and the story that makes America strong.

Our mission is

to increase the independence and reduce the isolation of immigrant and refugee women by teaching them basic English and practical living skills in the security of their own homes.

From the Director

Since July 1, 2007, 63 volunteers with the Immigrant & Refugee Women's Program have helped 75 women from 17 countries with English and practical living skills. Our volunteers give an hour of their time twice a week to make a difference in the lives of another. We are fortunate that this year so many women in the community have joined us to provide a special group of women the opportunity to become more independent. We greatly appreciate our new volunteers, and we also applaud those volunteers who have been teaching with IRWP for as many as nine years!

As IRWP has grown and attracted more volunteers, we are also learning each week of other immigrant and refugee women isolated in the community who desire to learn English. Recently, IRWP was contacted by an agency to teach English to Burundi women in their neighborhood. When we explained that IRWP had no volunteers available in that area, the agency contacted a church that had been assisting the neighborhood through community outreach. Three women from the church have stepped forward and are now helping educate our Burundi friends. IRWP held an orientation and training at the church, provided materials, and offer on-going support.

Over 40 women are currently waiting for a volunteer to teach basic English to these women in the security of their own homes. If your church or women's group would like to learn more about how their members can make a direct, long-lasting impact in someone's life, please contact me at 314-771-1104. I would be happy to do a presentation or orientation at your location. Together we can truly make a difference.

- Pat Joshu - Executive Director

Board of Directors

Cynthia Biehle
Eva Enoch
Karen Heitzman
Ann Maassen
Sr. Josephine Oldani, DC
Sr. Carleen Reck, SSND

Famous Words

"We cannot hold a torch to light another's path without brightening our own."

—Ben Sweetland

Congratulations to ...

Mari Ahmadi, a teacher from Afghanistan who risked teaching during the Taliban presence there. For over two years, she has been a student with IRWP. Mari reached her personal goal on March 21, 2008 when she attended her naturalization ceremony and was sworn in as a new citizen. Mari is the head and sole supporter of her family. She is an excellent cook who often treated Irene Kalnins, Mari's volunteer teacher, and the IRWP staff to incredibly tasty Afghan foods. During the summer, she works in food services at

Busch Stadium. Irene said, "Mari has overcome many difficulties in her life. She has worked very hard to provide for her family."

Congratulations, Mari!



Mari and Irene

Try a Taste of the One World Neighborhood Café



One World Neighborhood Café, will serve as a food vendor at Webster Groves' Annual Art & Air Fair. The fair, held on the grounds of Eden Theological Seminary, is a three-day festival celebrating fine art, music and food. This year's event will be held June 6 from 6-10 p.m., June 7 from 11 a.m.-10 p.m. and June 8 from 12-5 p.m.

Only seven local restaurants including One World Neighborhood Café were selected to serve as food vendors. One World will offer four delicious menu options at the event: ratatouille with focaccia bread (\$6), falafel in a pita (\$5), curry chicken salad in a pita (\$6), and Bosnian lemon cake (\$1.50).

For more information, please visit these websites: www.oneworldneighborhoodcafe.com and www.artandair.com.

IRWP 1st Irish Hoolie

More than 250 people celebrated St. Patrick's Day on March 16 at the Immigrant & Refugee Women's Program's First Irish Hoolie. The Dubliner, located at the corner of Washington and 11th Street, provided guests an authentic Irish atmosphere and fantastic appetizers. The music of the Irish Xiles kept the children and adults dancing.

Guests also stayed busy choosing where to place their raffle tickets. Shannon Shop, Irish Crystal Company, John D. McGurks, O'Byrne Religious Goods, Catholic Supply of St. Louis, the Angelus Community of SSND, Sister Pastorik, the Dream House Tea Room, and Damien Duffy all contributed special items for the raffle.



Sr. Linda Jansen, Sr. Vincent Walz,
Sr. Michelle Emmerich,
Sr. Deanne Stratmann, Sr. Janice Fennewald

Thank you to all our friends who joined in the fun and helped raise over \$2,000 to support volunteers and students. The IRWP board members, staff and volunteers enjoyed catching up with so many acquaintances. We hope to see you all again next year!

Visit www.xiles.biz for upcoming performances by the Irish Xiles.



Steve Duffy and Declan Duffy



Kieran Malloy and Tommy Martin
"The Fleadh Brothers"

Thank you to our friends who supported IRWP this year. You have made it possible for many of our students to read to their children, start new jobs, and become citizens.

Foundations

Incarnate Word Foundation
School Sisters of Notre Dame
Dollar General Literacy Foundation
Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent De Paul
Joseph H. and Florence A. Roblee Foundation
Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet
Norman J. Stupp Foundation

The Trio Foundation of St. Louis
Square One Foundation
The TJX Foundation
Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate
Employees Community Fund of Boeing St. Louis
The Marianists Province of the United States

Kevin Abel
Randee Bach
Cynthia Biehle
Marie Brauer
Sr. Joyce Buckler
Polly Burtelow
Charles and Katherine Clagget
Copying Concepts Employees
Kathleen Counts
Mary Digenan
John and Lisa Dinga
Pablo and Emelia De Legarreta
Patrick and Beverly Dougherty
Eva Enoch
Tozia and Neil George
Lillian Goodman
Helen Guentel

Karen Heitzman
Teresa Mayhew Hess
Marlyne Huenneke
Neil and Wendy Jaffe
Irene Kalnins
Lea Koesterer
Emily Labarge
Laura Lambrix
Don and Alice Lancaster
Jack and Boni Lang
Kathy Lass
Helen Lombardo
Gary and Ann Maassen
Margaret McCalpin
Michael and Anna Mullins
Sr. Miriam Nolan
Sr. Josephine Oldani

Robert and Rosemarie Parsons
Carol Ponciroli
Sr. Carleen Reck
Sharon Schaefer
Anita Seeley
Sr. Elise Silvestri
Beverly Simmerman
Sisters of Charity B.V.M.
Patrick and Mary Sly
Jelena Todic
Tyco Matching Gifts Program
Ursuline Sisters
Christine Vonder Haar
Sr. Joanne Whalen
Jim and Marian Wobbe
Jack and Claudia Wright
Tom and Mary Zlatic

Restaurant for a Day

Gaby is an IRWP student and mother of two small children. She works at two restaurants - in the kitchen at one and bussing tables at the other. Her teacher informed the IRWP staff that Gaby wants to be a waitress, but she needed the practice to increase her confidence. Soon after, the office was transformed into a restaurant for a special luncheon.

Gaby and her teacher planned and printed the menu of Tinga (shredded pork) or Tuna with tostados, Fideos con Chorizo (Mexican spaghetti), and flan. Although she usually does not do the shopping, the two took a community trip to shop for their ingredients and then prepared lunch.

After greeting us as our hostess and seating her six guests, Gaby served as our waitress. With a beautiful smile she explained the ingredients of each dish and how it was prepared. After serving us, she joined us for the most delicious meal ever served at IRWP.

Visit our website at www.irwp.net to read more stories from IRWP.



**3672B Arsenal Street
St. Louis, MO 63116
314-771-1104
www.irwp.net**

IRWP is a 501(c)3 not-for-profit organization.

Trivia Night Returns to St. Catherine Laboure!

Do you know...

- 1) Who is the only female athlete to have a star on the St. Louis Walk of Fame?
- 2) What was the country of Myanmar previously known as?
- 3) How many Emmy Awards has Bill Cosby won?



If you know the answer to these questions, or have other tidbits of interesting information floating around in your head, you should be playing Trivia! Join us Saturday, November 8 at St. Catherine Laboure Parish Hall, 9740 Sappington Road, for a fun night of questions and answers. Tables of 8 are \$20 per person. An early registration discount is available.

Doors open at 6:30 and play begins at 7:00. Arrive early to check out the Silent Auction items!

Call Ann Maassen at 314-849-1980 for more information and reservations.

Answers: 1) Jackie Joyner-Kersey 2) Burma 3) Four

NONPROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
ST. LOUIS, MO
PERMIT NO. 495