New International Residents: Immigrant & Refugee Communities in the South Hills

General Overview & Refugees:
Kheir Mugwaneza- Director, Refugee Resettlement Program, Northern Area Multi Service Center
Bhutanese Refugees:
Upendra Dahal- Program Director, Bhutanese Community Association of Pittsburgh
Latino Immigrants:
Rosamaria Cristello- Site Director, Latino Family Center, Allegheny Intermediate Unit
Since 2000, Allegheny County’s foreign born population grew by 18.5% and continues to grow. The Asian community grew by 52%, the Latino community grew by 50%, and the African community grew by 58%. Estimated 40% of recent refugees live in the South Hills area. Allegheny County is receiving more Refugees: From 2011 to 2014, approximately 1900 refugees were directly settled in the Pittsburgh area.

*Source: DHS-Immigrants and International Resources & PA State Refugee Program*
Refugees

Definition:

- A refugee is someone who has fled from his or her home country and cannot return because he or she has a well-founded fear of persecution based on religion, race, nationality, political opinion or membership in a particular social group.

- Many refugees spend years and sometimes decades in substandard refugee camps. Less than 1% of all refugees get the chance to leave a camp and resettle in the U.S., Canada, Sweden, Australia, or another country which resettles refugees.
Refugees in Pittsburgh

Recent Arrivals in Pittsburgh:
- Bhutanese
- Iraqi
- Burmese-Chin
- Congolese

Challenges:
- Language
- Literacy
- Cultural barriers
- Health related issues (mental, behavioral, others)
Bhutanese

- First batch of Bhutanese refugees came to Pittsburgh in March 2008.
- Estimated to be over 5,000 in the Allegheny county spread in over 10 neighborhoods.
- Mostly in the South Hills.
- Speak Nepali language and share many cultural aspects with Nepalese from Nepal.
- Mostly vulnerable and no prior education.
- Language and cultural barriers a challenge for them to navigate life in the U.S.
- Peace Loving, quiet, and non-confrontationist,
BCAP

✓ Established in June 2012 as a community organization to serve the community better by mobilizing resources in the region and preserving and sharing the cultures.
✓ Obtained its Tax Exempt Status in 2014.
✓ Have a first office and a few paid staff in Dec 2014!
  Obtained an ORR grant in 2014 and Jefferson Regional Grant recently.
✓ Also received mini-grants twice from Vibrant Pittsburgh while JFCS served as our lead agency and fiduciary partner.
✓ Our projects: ESL/Civic Education to Elders, Parent-Child Clubs, Women Leadership Trainings, Youth Programming, RoboCalls, Career Counselling to Students, Community gardening and Referral and Family Intervention.
Latino Community

- Youngest and fastest growing population nationally
- Estimated to be 1.6% of the population in Allegheny county and 2.3% in the city of Pittsburgh (*however there is reason to believe these numbers are not accurate due to undocumented immigrants*)
- Mixed Status Families:
  - **Undocumented**: Individuals (Fathers, mothers, children) who do not have the proper documentation to live and work in the United States.
- Latinos in Allegheny County are *coming* primarily from: México, Guatemala, Puerto Rico, Honduras, and El Salvador.
- There is no “barrio” in Allegheny County as the Latino community is spread out throughout the county, however there are some concentrations in: Beechview, Brookline, East Liberty, Highland Park, Monroeville, Robinson).
- Concerns: Language barriers, fear of deportation, domestic violence
Latino Family Center

- Opened in 2009 at the request of Latino families and the support of DHS
- **Programs:**
  - Home visiting program- child development
  - ISAC- Service Coordination
- **Classes:** Pre-natal (Birth Circles), Nutrition (Adagio Power Up), Adult ESL, Sewing, Latino Parents United in Action (A+ Schools/Vibrant Pittsburgh), Chats with Dr. Diego (Salud Para Niños), Learning Together, and monthly Family Fun Nights!
- **Moving to Hazelwood on July 1st!**
THANK YOU!

New International Residents: Immigrant & Refugee Communities in the South Hills