



**BILINGUAL
INTERNATIONAL**

BILINGUAL INTERNATIONAL

2016-17

**ANNUAL
REPORT**

A VOICE FOR THE UNDERSERVED
SINCE 2002

A YEAR IN REVIEW

Dear Reader,

2016-17 marked an exciting and tumultuous year for **Bilingual International Assistant Services**. In August, our visionary founder, **Julia Ostropolsky, LCSW**, stepped back to a support role after 15 years at the agency's helm, and I had the honor of being handed the baton. It is not a role I take lightly, having spent the last five years working alongside her to grow and expand clinical services for foreign-born populations in our region. After merging with the Center for Survivors of Torture and War Trauma in April 2016, we welcomed **Ron Klutho and Places for People's refugee service team** in October and cemented the agency's ability to provide wrap-around, holistic, linguistically and culturally appropriate services to New Americans and survivors of torture. We also expanded our successful children's mental health programming, and worked to integrate our Mental Health department into a family services model. With our established Macklind International Senior Center and our team of multilingual professional Community Access Workers, with 14 languages on staff and access to a much larger professional interpreter pool, with our health education efforts focused on insurance counseling for underserved populations, we have had an incredibly successful - and incredibly busy - year.

It was not without challenges, however. State budget cuts threatened to put an end to our long-running and successful citizenship program for elderly foreign-born individuals. Thanks to our dedicated staff that refused to abandon their clients and compassionate funders that stepped in to assist, we were able to continue services to enrolled individuals in the St. Louis area, who would not otherwise be able to enjoy the protections of US citizenship.

We are a unique organization - one as diverse as the clients we serve. We live our mission of direct service and pivot to meet new challenges as they arise. With your support, we will continue our work until everyone in our community – regardless of country of origin or language ability - has equal access to the services they need to become healthy, productive members of this great nation.

Jason Baker
PhD, Executive Director

Refugee Services Team Lead
Ron Klutho and Executive
Director **Jason Baker** open a
refugee speaker's panel on the
International Day in Support of
Survivors of Torture



Mental Health & Wellness

As a Missouri Department of Mental Health certified service provider, we work with adults and children to help our clients lead healthier, better adjusted lives. **We believe that access to mental health services is a right - not a privilege** - and that it exists in a symbiotic relationship with physical health, which is why we work with clients across a number of clinical approaches to attain individualized goals. Our talented Licensed Clinical Social Workers, professional counselors, and psychotherapists specialize in culturally competent service provision and working with interpreters as necessary.

420

CANA/ORR
Cases

ST. LOUIS PARTNERSHIP - CARE ACCESS FOR NEW AMERICANS AND SERVICES FOR SURVIVORS OF TORTURE AND WAR TRAUMA

For over a decade, Bilingual International has provided clinical mental health therapy to immigrants and refugees in the St. Louis area. Our CANA/Survivors program helps families and individuals who are traumatized, isolated, and struggling to adapt to life in the United States. We understand that those who have experienced war, torture, or forced migration need more than mental health and psychiatric counseling, which is why we also provide legal services for citizenship and asylum cases, and case management to connect individuals to housing, medical care, and employment. Our aim is to help the whole family achieve their goals for a better life in the U.S.

We also provide group therapy for immigrant and refugee women as a forum for personal growth and healing. In the process, many participants become more open to the idea of individual therapy and empowered to take charge of their wellness. In FY17, we facilitated groups of Congolese and Albanian/Kosovar women.

84

STEPS
Participants

STEPS to BETTER HEALTH

It's no secret that physical health and mental health are connected, which is why our STEPS program provides home-based therapeutic and clinical services for St. Louis City-based African Americans aged 45+ and Limited English Speakers. We provide education and support to bring about recovery and positive change as our clients combat comorbid mental health and chronic illness, namely diabetes and/or obesity. Along with better management of symptoms of mental health conditions, clients experience physical success such as increased exercise, weight loss, BMI reductions, lower blood pressure, etc. Many clients are able to sustain these successes through modified behavior after the intervention.

78

Peer Health
Clients

PEER HEALTH COACHING

The American healthcare system is confusing - even for those of us born here. Our peer health coaching program helps foreign-born individuals in the St. Louis area navigate the U.S. healthcare system, manage chronic health conditions, and manage prescription medications. Trained same-language health coaches assist with making doctor appointments and screenings, keeping appointments, and arranging transportation. They even accompany clients on the visits if so desired to help with communication and helping implement doctor recommendations. Coaches also work with clients to adopt healthier lifestyle habits such as better diet, increased physical activity, and stress management by providing education during weekly sessions.

Children's Programing



PROJECT SAFE SPACE

Licensed Bilingual International clinicians provided individual therapy services for over 125 ELL (English Language Learner) students in St. Louis City (St. Louis Public Schools, several Charter Schools) and County (Ritenour and Bayless School Districts). The heavily somatic-based and trauma reprocessing interventions aim to decrease physiological hyper-arousal and dissociative symptoms in children who have experienced trauma. Both quantitative and qualitative evaluation point to improvements in the classroom, as students are better able to decrease internal agitation, learn, and adapt to their new environment.

OPEN DOOR REFUGEE YOUTH PROGRAM

Helps recently arrived refugee children aged 5-17 through a 12-week group mental health curriculum designed to help participants self-regulate, employ coping techniques, identify and appropriately manage emotions, and develop the ability to employ positive social skills, empathy, and self-awareness. In 2016-17, Nahed Chapman New American Academy hosted the Open Door program.

TRAUMA-INFORMED CONSULTING

With an influx of immigrant/refugees students, Bilingual International offers in-depth consulting to schools in order to help them create a more trauma-informed environment for their immigrant/refugee students - many of whom have experienced pronounced trauma in their young lives that inhibits self-regulation and the ability to learn. Our consulting focuses on implementation of trauma-informed recommendations.

"At first, I had a temper, but now I am able to stay much calmer. I use the movements and techniques we've done in group. I practice them at home. When I feel angry, I ask myself why I feel that way and how it would help to act on that anger." – M.A., Open Door participant, age 15



Social Services

The frail, people with disabilities, foreign-born elderly, marginalized communities: Since our inception, Bilingual International has provided multilingual social services that enhance our ability to assist underserved populations with access to culturally competent care and tangible benefits.

FIVE STATS OF SOCIAL SERVICES

671

ENROLLED IN ACA

1,333

ACA COUNSELING SESSIONS

1,304

REASSESSMENTS

444

MEDICARE SESSIONS

798

BENEFITS SESSIONS

INSURANCE COUNSELING

Our certified Navigators help people weigh the benefits of different types of health insurance and assist with counseling and enrollment in the Health Care Marketplace as requested. Due to our unique language and cultural access, we are able to help people from racially and ethnically diverse communities get the information they need to make critical decisions about health care coverage.

MEDICAID AND MEDICARE

Our team of trained and experienced multilingual Medicaid Reassessors are contracted by partners to meet annually with St. Louis area Medicaid recipients, determine if their needs are being met, and verify that Medicaid is being properly used. Bilingual International has been part of the Missouri CLAIM network for over a decade, explaining the intricacies of Medicare to foreign-born seniors and assisting with enrollment for eligible parties.

BENEFITS COUNSELING

In addition to our healthcare programs, our multilingual Community Access Workers also provide counseling and enrollment for means-tested benefits such as SNAP and LIHEAP for low-income clients. We have always insisted that basic needs being met are a prerequisite for physical and mental health.

Bilingual International Case Worker helping Mrs. M with health insurance paper work.



Senior Center

Life in a new country can be lonely, especially for older adults. In 2013, Bilingual International - in partnership with St. Louis Area Agency on Aging (SLAAA) - created the state's first dedicated multicultural senior center, Macklind International. On any given day, senior groups are bussed in to enjoy a culturally appropriate, nutritious hot meal cooked on-site, socialize, receive health education, and participate in activity programming. In 2016-17, we hosted regular **Afghan, Albanian, Bhutanese Nepali, Bosnian, Iraqi, Somali, and Vietnamese** groups in addition to seasonal **Chinese, Korean, and Russian Jewish** groups.

EVENTS/FIELD TRIPS

Many of our seniors rarely leave a narrow radius of their homes. To better connect them to our community, we regularly host field trips to local gems such as Forest Park, the St. Louis Art Museum, Botanical Gardens, and the World Aquarium Saint Louis. We also bring groups together for events such as Lunar New Year (Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese) and participate with U.S.-born seniors at other centers and regional events (Village of Many Colors, Spring Jubilee).

PRESENTATIONS

Wonderful community organizations frequently present at our center and provide various activities such as low impact exercise (Tai Chi, chair yoga), health screenings (hearing, vision, breast cancer), health education (Medicare fraud prevention, fall awareness, Alzheimers and dementia information), multi-session crafting/art projects (St. Louis Art Museum, Perennial), and civic/cultural activities (English lessons, St. Louis Symphony). Our center programming provides participants with a dynamic (and delicious) experience to socialize and lead healthier, richer lives.



4,142
Meals Served



3,067
Transports



259
Seniors Served



Language Services

In order to serve our diverse international populations, **Bilingual International has always maintained language resources as a core competency.** We utilize our professional interpretation and translation services for in-house programming, and also contract with major governmental, health, educational, and legal entities - in addition to the State of Missouri. We pride ourselves on our accessibility, support, and follow-through - especially in the areas of mental health and social service provision.



2016 LANGUAGES PROVIDED

Albanian, Amharic, Arabic, Burmese, Bosnian, Cantonese, Croatian, Dinka, Dari, Ewe, Farsi, French, Hindi, Karen, Kinyamulenge, Kinyarwanda, Kirundi, Kiswahili, Kunama, Liberian, Mandarin, May May, Nepali, Pashto, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian, Spanish, Serbian, Swahili, Somali, Tigrinya, Ukrainian, Urdu, Vietnamese

INTERPRETATIONS

Every interpreter is coached in confidentiality, neutrality, and professional and ethical standards prior to work assignments. We adopt a non-advocacy model of interpretation, allowing the provider to take charge of each session and empowering the consumer to practice their right to self-determination.

TRANSLATIONS

Our professional translators are fluent in both the source and the target language of your project. All translated documents are proofread and edited to ensure consistency, grammar, spelling, proper terminology, and formatting.

TRAINING WORKSHOPS

Three workshops were held for Bilingual International interpreters as well as outside community interpreters in FY17. The workshops cover the code of ethics for interpreters, professional development, styles and manners of interpreting, and legal ramifications of the craft.

COMMUNITY PRESENTATIONS

We delivered four presentations to community organizations to help foster their confidence and skills to effectively communicate through an interpreter. The contents of the presentations included "How to Work with an Interpreter" and "Language Access for Immigrants and Refugees in St. Louis."

Mrs. T with her Certificate of Citizenship

We Couldn't Do It Without You!

At Bilingual International, **we are proud to help over 3,200 clients annually.** Our amazing team depends on the crucial support of friends, donors, volunteers, and funders to make this hard but rewarding work possible. On behalf of the Bilingual International team: Thank you! ¡Gracias! شكرًا! Mahadsanid! مننه! Cảm ơn bạn! Merci! धन्यवाद! Hvala! Asante! 謝謝! Спасибо! Faleminderit! 고맙습니다! Vielen Dank! ありがとう!



Our Mission to ensure equal access to healthcare, mental health, and social services for all, regardless of national origin or language ability, through the advocacy, education, and direct multilingual services that we provide.

Our Partners in 2016-17 underwrote this mission with their support:

Saint Louis Mental Health Board
St. Louis Area Agency on Aging
Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services
Missouri Foundation for Health
St. Louis County Children's Service Fund
Daughters of Charity Foundation
Lutheran Foundation of St. Louis
Foundation for Barnes-Jewish Hospital
Episcopal Presbyterian Health Trust
CLAIM/Primaris
St. Louis Public Schools Foundation
St. Louis Philanthropic Organization
Trio Foundation of St. Louis
Enterprise Holdings Foundation
St. Joseph Parish- Cottleville Tithing Outreach Program
School Sisters of Notre Dame
Community Health Charities
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