



Refugee Programs Update

Lawton Chiles, Governor
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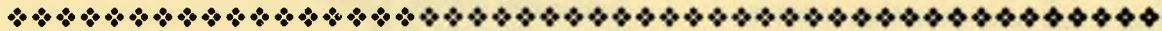
H. James Towey, Secretary
Summer 1993

Note from the Editor:

It has often been said that "What happens in Florida is ultimately shared by all of us." While the ethnic groupings in other parts of the nation may differ, the refugees whose experiences are described in this issue of the *Refugee Programs Update* share a common bond with millions of others throughout the United States.

During this time of renewed interest in immigration policy, immigrant's and refugee's impact on our society have also taken center stage. Refugees and immigrants contribute to our communities in many positive ways. We in turn are fundamental to their successful assimilation into our communities. We have taken the time to compile these selected refugee experiences to allow each of us the opportunity to be better prepared to provide for refugee needs.

Our next issue due out in Fall/Winter 1993, will focus on grantsmanship and ways in which to find and secure funding from private foundations as well as public funding at the local, state, and federal level. We welcome any information that you have found useful in securing funding for your programs.



FLORIDA REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT PROFILES

The Shteyn's Story

By Mikhail Masarskiy, IRCO, Jacksonville

The main task and objective of the International Refugee Center of Oregon (IRCO), in general, and its Jacksonville, Florida branch, in particular, is to provide employment services for the legal refugees coming to the United States from all over the world. Among those served by the IRCO Jacksonville staff during the last 12 months were Laotians, Iraqis, Vietnamese, Ethiopians, Somalis, some East Europeans and many people from different republics of the former Soviet Union. Let us take as an example a more or less typical Soviet refugee family to feature some common problems or challenges facing the newcomers to this country, and to

show how IRCO tries to help its clients to deal with these problems, to solve them.

The Shteyn family arrived in Jacksonville three months ago from the civil war-stricken republic of Moldova, situated between Romania and the Ukraine. They lived there in the town of Bendery near the borderline dividing the territories controlled by two warring factions. The family includes four people: Mark Shteyn, his wife Rita, and their two daughters, Irina and Anna. The head of this family, Mark, was born in 1945 in Siberia where his father was exiled by the Stalin regime just after World War II broke out. Now he clearly recalls the bitter Siberian frosts and that ordinary Russian woman who literally saved his life one day by smearing his severely frostbitten body with bear grease.

The hard days of his childhood spent in post-war Siberia and Moldova, where he moved a few years later, tempered his will and gave him a strong-natured, self-motivated, and creative

personality. It is no mere chance that one of his favorite Russian proverbs says: "Beggars need to be talented." Indeed, he is a highly gifted inventor and skillful mechanic. Using very few tools, his "hands of gold" are able to produce literally anything from nothing. For example, one time he managed to assemble an operating car from spare parts and units salvaged from junk and garbage. He then had it officially registered with the local agency of motor vehicles. Mark's wife Rita and both his daughters are good matches for him as far as diligence and purposefulness are concerned. Rita and Irina are experienced seamstresses capable of dealing with both textiles and leather materials.

Nevertheless, despite their great willingness and eagerness to start working and become self-sufficient as soon as possible, the first attempts to get them employed turned out unsuccessful. The principal reasons for that were an almost complete lack of English and US. work experience. As weeks went by, the clients were getting impatient and even frustrated. They desperately needed a job to earn some money. This money was required to pay their current bills and, what is still more important, to buy a car. It is simply impossible to normally live and work without a car in a city like Jacksonville. In addition, they still were hardly able to utter even a few words in English.

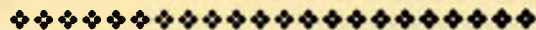
In a final analysis, it seemed as if they started moving in a mysterious vicious circle, where a cause produces an effect which itself reproduces the original cause. Concerted efforts and close cooperation developed by both parties (the IRCO staff and its clients) helped, finally, to break this spellbound circle of apparently insurmountable obstacles challenging the new Americans. Two members of the Shteyn family, Rita and Irina, were placed by IRCO in jobs as sewers and upholsterers at the Jacksonville company producing canvas covers for boats. These jobs are permanent, full-time positions providing medical insurance benefits after the 90-day probationary period expires. They require the employees to have advanced practical skills and at least a minimal English ability sufficient for basic communication purposes. Recent follow-ups showed that both clients are doing well at their jobs.

For the time being, the whole Shteyn family is attending English as a second language classes at an evening high school while the youngest daughter, Anna, is going to take her ESL course at the local college. They talk of buying a car. The vicious circle has been broken and now the family may walk further down the path of establishing themselves and becoming self-sufficient.

Note: The author of this article, Mikhail Masarskiy, arrived in the U.S.A. as a legal refugee from the city of Kazan, Russia, on February 12, 1992. He is a physicist by education. While living in Russia he worked at an engineering company involved in the developing and designing of the pressure and temperature control instruments used in various branches of industry and scientific research. Right now he is employed as job developer at IRCO.

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My Story

By Najla A. Strong,
Gulf Coast Jewish Family Services

My family and I arrived in America from Russia in December of 1991. The most important reason we came here was to escape anti-Semitism in our country.

We knew that to begin a new life in a new country would be very difficult. But, the transition was not so difficult because of help from Gulf Coast Jewish Family and Mental Health Services (GCJFMHS), Inc., and people from Temple Beth-El.

Our flight from Grodno to Tampa was very long, we were tired and a little bit afraid. When

bread company and she was hired as a production worker. She was being paid \$9.00 per hour, but was on call 24 hours a day. She worked there for six weeks, but had a problem with transportation as she did not have her driver's license yet. Subsequently I found her a job at national Linen Service. She was very happy with this new job and received a lot of praise from her boss for being an excellent worker. I was told by her supervisor that she reached 100% production performance on the very first day of work!

We found Fannie Stevens a job with Cintas, Inc. and she too is still working there. She has already received a raise and is now considered a permanent employee.

Alonzo and Sandra were both hired on a temporary basis by the Salvation Army while we were trying to get them a permanent job. They rang bells and took donations at the front of different stores during the three weeks before Christmas. They earned \$5.00 an hour doing this temporary job. They really learned the American way quickly! After the holidays, Alonzo got a job as an inventory worker for a company that does inventory for K-Mart, Walmart, and many supermarkets. Sandra wanted to go to work, even with a new born baby. She was hired as a housekeeper for the Howard Johnson Hotel.

This family has strong feelings about wanting to make it in their newly adopted country and they are all really working hard to achieve this. Alonzo and Fannie have already gotten their driver's licenses. Mama and Sandra are working on getting theirs. Their next goal is to be able to buy a car. In the mean time, they are all still taking the bus to work. As for IRCO, we have such good feelings when we help refugees achieve self-sufficiency while being able to retain their personal pride.

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Chanh Qui Ho's Story

By Xom Vorasane, IRCO, St. Petersburg

Chanh Qui Ho is a former Major in the South Vietnamese Army, having served in the military for 21 years. He is married and has 3 children. His family is still in Vietnam and he looks forward to bringing them to the United States in the near future.

After the Communists took over in 1975, he was arrested and sent to various isolated re-education camps. He was released from the last camp in 1985 and escaped to Thailand from Vietnam in 1989. In the Thailand refugee camp he volunteered to work with the International Rescue Committee's Education Development Center as the Principal of Ban Thad Vietnamese Refugee school. He then worked for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) as a Registration Leader for the Vietnamese Durable Solution Team at the Holding Center. Later, he then worked as an interpreter for the Joint Voluntary Agency (JVA) in Panat Nikhom Processing Center in Chonburi, Thailand.

Ho arrived for resettlement in St. Petersburg, Florida on April 27, 1992 under the sponsorship of his brother, George Lang Nhu Ho, through United States Catholic Conference (USCC) VOLAG. His suffering and experiences in the re-education camps in Vietnam and in the refugee camps in Thailand will never be forgotten. There was no freedom, no liberty, no equality nor any human rights for the people. The Communist guards and the refugee camp authorities treated prisoners badly.

Ho is a very practical person and wanted to become self-sufficient as soon as possible. Just one day after his arrival in the United States, he asked his sponsor to take him to the Social Security Office to apply for his Social Security card. The next day, Chanh Qui Ho came to the International Refugee Center of Oregon (IRCO) Refugee Employment and Training Office in St. Petersburg and registered for employment assistance. He was assisted in our office by the job developers, who completed his registration for employment assistance and explained all of

the instructions and the pre-employment training.

This was all explained in great detail to be sure that Mr. Ho understood. We then tried to convince Ho to rest at home for a couple of weeks to wait for his Social Security card to arrive. He really wanted to work and told us that he would accept any job offered to him. About ten days later, Ho called IRCO's office to tell us that he had just received his Social Security card in the mail and would bring it to us. His sponsor brought him to our office within 30 minutes of receiving his card. The job developer copied his card and asked Ho to come back to the office the next day to be taken to job sites. The next day, Ho arrived at our office on time and was taken to ION Labs, Inc. to apply for the position of Packer and Labeler. He completed the application and submitted to the Personnel Manager. Ho was then called in for an interview and was offered a job as a "clean up person". His first day of work was May 11, 1992, Just 15 days after his arrival, working 7:00 AM to 6:30 PM.

Chanh Qui Ho is a very dependable, hardworking employee. He is an intelligent person and easy to train. He gets along very well with all the other employees and sets a good example for other employees of the company. Ho has gotten three promotions since he began work at ION Labs, Inc. according to his supervisor, Mike Cousin. His current position is Tablet Machine Operator.

Ho is a member of the Vietnamese Community Association and the Former Vietnamese Detainee Association in St. Petersburg. He was elected President of the Vietnamese Community and Vice President of the Former Vietnamese Detainee Association. Ho is now working the second shift at ION Labs, Inc. (from 1:00 PM to 11:30 PM) so he can volunteer some time to helping his community of fellow former Vietnamese detainees and their newly arrived families. Ho believes that it is very important to meet the former detainees and their families at the airport to try to make them feel at home in their new country. He will take them to the grocery store, to Pinellas County Health Department or Clinic, the Social Security Office, etc., and interpret for them as they apply for and obtain legal documents.

Ho's efforts are concentrated on getting his wife and children out of Vietnam. He dreams of the day that they are all a family again, living in the United States. Ho has expressed sincere thanks to IRCO for the assistance they provided in finding him employment and to ION Labs, Inc. for the first American dollar he ever made!

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Chinh Trinh's Story

By Chinh Trinh, IRCO
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I am Chinh Trinh, a former detainee and project coordinator of the Florida Vietnamese Reeducation Detainee Program. I have had first hand experience with re-education camps in Vietnam, being detained for nine years and seven months in several camps, including confined dark cells. I arrived in the United States in April 1990 three years ago as a free case detainee refugee under the US. government's Humanitarian Operation Program.

Our local program is funded by the State of Florida, Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services through a federal grant. I have been in charge of this program since its inception in April 1991, and have acquired extensive experience as it relates to the detainee population. My intention is to share with you some experiences I learned as the result of dealing with the former detainees. It takes considerable skill to help them overcome their difficulties, resolve their problems, relieve them of unfounded concerns, and meet sensible needs.

In order to be of most service to former detainees, we must treat them with compassion, understanding, and respect. It helps to be aware of their mentality, abilities, and nature. The fact is that there is psychologically a difference of

date, this remains a unique resettlement service and has proven to be a very successful and cost-efficient program.

The ultimate goal of SPSP is to foster personal independence and financial self-sufficiency. The service period is one year, and the scope of services includes reception and orientation, counseling for clients and sponsors, employment assistance and job placement, assistance in adjustment of immigration status, and comprehensive casefile documentation of the clients' progress. Because many of the Mariel Cubans have educational, linguistic and employment deficiencies, the case management system is designed to ensure the delivery of a reasonable service plan for the successful reintegration of the individual to US. society.

Conditions of release for these clients are sufficiently stringent, and failure to abide by them can result in revocation from the program. The client is required to report on a weekly basis for the first month and then monthly during the first 6-month phase of the program. Caseworkers also visit clients at their places of employment during the first six months. Individual, family and group counseling is provided to the client as well as the relative or sponsor. Special emphasis is on adjustment, acculturation, and alcohol and drug counseling. Crisis intervention and prevention services are available and, for those individuals suspected of having a substance abuse problem, appropriate referrals are made to community treatment centers or services provided by the diocese. Testing of clients for drug use is conducted at periodic intervals if necessary.

Catholic Community Services of the Archdiocese of Miami is the program affiliate which provides services to Mariel Cubans joining family or sponsors in the Miami area. Other Florida service providers are the Dioceses of St. Petersburg and Palm Beach. In Florida, there are currently 31 clients, and 29 have graduated from Florida programs in FY 1993. The rate of revocations is traditionally low, totaling only six from Florida programs this year. The proportion of clients who complete the program remains high, and the employment percentage is consistently 75% or more. The success of this program is attributable to the superior credentials and high level of experience

and dedication of the diocesan social programs. They continue to work with Florida communities to minimize the transition of Mariel Cubans from incarceration to socially productive lives and to maximize their contributions as a viable, human resource.

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The Rodriguezes' Story

By Roseanne Micallef
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On March 1st, 1993, Manuel Rodriguez Gonzalez along with his family and twenty-seven others left Cuba in hope to reach the United States, in a small power boat. Manuel, age 24, was accompanied with his wife Maray, age 22, who was eight and a half months pregnant, and their two year old son, Magdiel. On March 5th, 1993, the motor boat had broken down. On March 6th, 1993, the boat arrived on the shores of Miami Beach. All 27 arrived safely. The Rodriguez family left many family members in Cuba - parents, aunts, uncles, cousins, nephews, nieces, etc. Maray, who was already in the beginning stages of labor was airlifted to a local hospital. At the hospital they were able to stabilize her condition and on March 23rd, 1993 Maray gave birth to a beautiful baby girl, Mailen.

Church World Services, along with providing the usual community orientation and assistance with immigration documentation, obtaining social security cards, and arranging for health screening, was able to help the family by finding a small apartment. Furniture and clothes were donated by Wesley Hispanic United Methodist Church. A local doctor who freely donated his time to care for Maray, also donated a complete new baby layette. The family also had an aunt and uncle in Miami that were able to help them.

Today, the Rodriguez family is doing well. Manuel has a full time job at a supermarket, while Maray stays home and tends to the two children. The family has been able to move on their own to a more spacious apartment. They have also been able to save money and buy a car. Their future plans include hopes to begin school. Maray wants to be a dental technician and Manuel wants to work with computers. They hope that their children will have everything that every child deserves that in Cuba they could not have.

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BOSNIANS MAKING JACKSONVILLE HOME

By Susan P. Respass

The Florida Times Union, March 3, 1993

Hesein Kesedzic lost his home, his job, his village and his freedom. Then he left his country behind.

The Bosnian refugee is among a group of 14 men, women and children who last year escaped from war-torn Bosnia-Herzegovina, a former province of Yugoslavia.

Now they all have a new country, and Jacksonville is the focus.

It's a long way from the scene in the photo Kesedzic carries showing himself in a line of handcuffed men walking, heads down, to a Serbian prison camp in August.

When Serbian soldiers had come to his door one night, he said, "I had to go out of my house with no questions if I did not want to burn in the house." He spoke through an interpreter from Lutheran Social Services in Jacksonville, which is coordinating the resettlement of the Bosnians. "Everything was burned."

Kesedzic, an architect, and his son Mirzet were captured. Kesedzic's wife and two other children ran to neighbors for shelter. And as those neighbors were burned out, the families kept moving.

"For four days, the prisoners had one bread and one small can of food for all of them," Kesedzic said. "We just took the trees down to make a fire. We never saw our families for six months."

The International Red Cross Intervened, after an international outcry about atrocities in the prison camps. The families were reunited and they resettled temporarily in Switzerland.

Before civil war erupted in Bosnia last year, Muslims made up about half of the population in the refugees' town of 15,000, they said. Only Serbs are left, the refugees said.

There are more than 2.5 million refugees who have fled to other provinces or countries, Lutheran Social Services figures show.

Russell Bloom, refugee resettlement coordinator for the relief agency, said the United States has agreed to accept 1,000 Bosnians.

The Jacksonville group of 14 who arrived Friday night, are the first in Florida and among the first 200 to relocate in the United States.

The refugees are being provided some clothing, an apartment and temporary financial assistance.

The refugees need everything to help them start a home, including appliances, dishes, pots and furniture, Bloom said.

All will begin a six-week intensive course in English next week and the agency will help the adults find jobs and the children find schools.

"These people seem to have it together. They are very normal folks who got caught up in something incomprehensible to us," said Bloom.

Mehmel Fejic, a metal fabricator, dreams of a job. He spent five months in a prison camp before he and his wife, Fatina, a housekeeper at a university, emigrated.

"In America, I hope for a job, to learn a new language and to be free of Serbian soldiers," Fejic said through Mark Dukaj, an Albanian refugee who's been in Jacksonville 19 months. Dukaj, who knows some English, could not easily translate for the new refugees.

"I am Catholic. They are Muslim. I don't care. We have the same God" said Dukaj. "Four years ago, they had everything. It was a normal life. Now they have nothing. They are crying all the time."

Besim Muratagic, his wife, Subha, son Amir and daughters Elvira and Emira are undaunted by their new life.

Dukaj talked with the young sons of the refugees. "They asked me how far to the beach and ocean and about different music," Dukaj said. "They know about Michael Jackson, Tina Turner and U-2."

But Dukaj said he will need to warn all of them about Florida's beaches.

"At home, we go to the beach, uh, by ourselves [unclothed]," Dukaj said. "Here you wear costumes. The boys wear big shorts."

[*Editor's Note:* Special thanks to the *Florida Times-Union* for granting reprint permission. This article appeared in the *Florida Times-Union* on March 3, 1993.]



An Image of Success in America

By Chinh Trinh

Project Coordinator

Vietnamese Reeducation Detainees Program

The Nguyen's family moved into their new home two months ago. It's a nice and comfortable three-bedroom house located in the Orlando Sparling Hills area, and not far from the rented apartment they had been living in after they arrived in the United States two and a half years ago. With money both wife and husband saved from work, the Nguyen's are happy. Having two cars, a beautiful home, and two daughters in school, the Nguyen's quite fulfilled the

American Dream, as related to the situation of a refugee. "I have all I wanted. Freedom, wealth, and a bright future ahead, especially for my children. Life is so beautiful," Nhu Nguyen said.

As a former political detainee, Nhu Nguyen spent seven years in several communist Vietnamese concentration and "reeducation" camps dreaming some day of being released so that he could be reunited with Niem, his wife, and their two daughters, Quynh Tram and Quynh Chau. Although life was hard and cruel under the communist regime, Nguyen dared not dream about the land of freedom he loved so much that it became unattainable. In fact, America was no longer a land he dreamed about but with the Humanitarian Operation program, sponsored by the U.S. government, it became a reality, for Nguyen as well as Vietnamese former detainees and their families. The former battalion commander of the South Vietnamese army was among the first waves of detainee-refugees to arrive in America and breathe the fresh air of freedom. Nguyen settled with his family in Orlando. He saw his life-style change drastically upon moving here.

New in a foreign land with a different cultural heritage and customs, Nguyen and his family members faced enormous obstacles. Nguyen was 54, spoke little English, and had no technical skills. He felt maladjusted and misfitted with the new environment. Loss, sacrifice, isolation, and long years of deprivation of his previous life came back to his mind. He had survived from nightmarish experiences of prolonged detainment. Now the situation had changed, but Nguyen needed more courage and determination to embark on a new life in this strange new world, especially at a time and age when most people were planning for retirement. "I was so scared," Nguyen recalled while being interviewed yesterday. "I was a new arrival. I didn't know anything. There were so many problems. And then you came to visit us," he told me. "You relieved us of so many unresolved concerns."

As the IRCO detainee-refugee resettlement specialist, I first met Nhu Nguyen in July 1991. He was my first client in Orlando, and later became a volunteer coordinator acting as my local contact for former detainees in this

geographic area. He still felt insecure and burdened by problems, even seven months after his arrival in the United States. He did not have a job yet. Everything becomes a matter of concern, transportation, English school, job training, communication, and especially health problems. I am a former detainee myself and this commonality helped create an atmosphere of friendship, sympathy, and understanding that was familiar to fellow-detainees. We are people who have been sharing the same aspirations and ideals since the fall of the Saigon regime, and especially since the first days we met each other in "reeducation" camps, detained by the communists and sharing the same conditions of life.

I spent long hours with Nguyen's family, giving advice, helping them rebuild their confidence, and especially preparing Nguyen and his wife, Niem, for employment. I told them about American values and explained to them how important employment is, and that it is the quickest means to economic independence, self-sufficiency, personal development, and promotion. I talked to their daughters, recommending they quickly brush up their English at school and get ready for college.

Nguyen got a position of houseman at Radisson Inn. It was a hard and tiring job for a man of his age and health background. While he complained about hardship and tried to find another job, his wife failed to obtain a teacher-aid position at a bilingual elementary school. I persuaded Nguyen to firmly keep on the right track and to be patient. Time went on and Nguyen accustomed himself to his new lifestyle. Introduced by her husband, Niem got a housekeeper position and joined Nguyen at the Radisson Inn. It was hard for her, but they have been working together for almost two years already, and I know that they have been sacrificing for the future and well-being of the next generation, Quynh Tram and Quynh Chau, their daughters. To be responsible for their children's future and well-being has been traditionally the duties of the Vietnamese parents. IRCO's goal is to assist and support the refugees to have a successful resettlement and become productive members of the society while maintaining their values and preserving their culture.

Quynh Tram is starting her freshman year at Valencia Community College. Her sister, Quynh Chau is finishing her senior year at Edgewater High School. She will be ready for college next year, and will major in Business Administration, she said. "The American educational system is perfectly suited to young Vietnamese," Nguyen said. He regretted that his age and situation did not permit him to go back to school.

The Nguyens reflect an image of success in America. They may serve as a perfect example of patience, perseverance and hard work, worthy to be followed. They may be also cited as a model for all detainee-refugees who want to fulfill their dreams since the first days they step on to this land of opportunities and freedom.

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Renel and Kenel's Story

By Sylvia Leda Cooks, IRCO, Tampa

They were among the first Haitians who ever walked into my office. At first I thought I had to be seeing double, or perhaps, it was just my untrained eyes? Tall, very slim, with the same mournful expression on their long thin faces, they stood shyly back away from my desk. They were Kenel and Renel Rejouis, twenty-four year old identical twins. When I asked them, in poor French, to have a seat, they flashed delighted smiles. I knew no Creole at the time, but as these two spoke French and Creole, but no English, we could only communicate at a very basic level. They did have an interpreter with them (who later became my assistant), so it was possible to obtain all the needed information. They had been referred to our office from HRS and now needed to register for employment services.

These men were easy to work with - although trying to find jobs for two young men, with no English, or working skills - was no easy task.

They had a special charm about them - so eager to learn EVERYTHING - and with their shy, infectious smiles, it was impossible not to want to help them. Our IRCO office worked hard at helping them become employable. We gave them PET (pre-employment training) which involved learning the language of employment applications and interviews. We taught them the city transit system and how to wade through the maze of bus schedules and city maps. For awhile we became surrogate parents for these two. Later on we would see them through sickness (both physical and the kind that comes from separation from country and loved ones) and the myriad of problems that evolve from taking on a new culture.

There was the day when they were at the office for a "job search". I needed to leave to go have a key made a nearby mall and decided, in a moment of impulse, to take Renel with me. How could I have known what a delightful and enriching experience it could be, to take a refugee from Haiti, on his first journey through a crowded mall, during the city's "lunch break"!!! To my jaded eyes, the mall was its usual jumble of overwhelming color, noise and human bodies. To this "new" American it must have seemed a glittering and exciting dream-fantasy. It was only twenty minutes out of my life, but I believe that the twenty minute walk through PARADISE gave Renel the incentive he needed - to get a job fast! Because he wanted to buy everything in that mall!

Their smiles often masked their sadness and homesickness, which they were feeling most of the time. It was with great reluctance that Kenel finally told us their story. He spoke in Creole, but it was easy to see that he was having difficulty in recounting the story.

Their father had worked for the Bureau under President Aristide. When their father showed his support of the president, he was killed by the group known as "L'amers". This group went through village after village, raping, stealing, and killing. Because Kenel and Renel were the next oldest in the family, they were in danger of being killed next. They escaped to Leogane (sixty miles from their home in Port-au-Prince), but even there they weren't safe. The "L'amers" were rounding up all the young men from fifteen years old and up, to fight against the president.

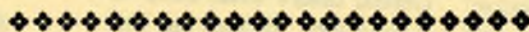
If any of them refused, they were killed. The twins managed to smuggle food to them at night. Because of their immediate danger and imminent danger to their family, it was decided that they had to leave the country. A family friend had made a boat and they, with fifty others, escaped. They were on the small boat for three days when the U.S. Coast Guard found them.

His story of the conditions of the camp at Guantanamo Bay could almost overshadow the horror of their escape from Haiti. He told of living most of the day in the hot sun or rain. Of having very little to eat (and that was food that was foreign to them). Of being crowded into tiny spaces. But, he said, he and his brother are here now. They don't have to "run and hide" and they can "live in peace now".

The twins are working now. They have learned English, learned to drive, have bought a car, dress well, and always manage to save enough from their paychecks to send to their mother in Haiti. They are still homesick - but they are "living in peace now". *"Deye Mon, Gen Mon."*

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Gerard's Story

By Sylvia Leda Cooks
Tampa IRCO Office

He came into our office with a group of Haitians. They always come in that way - in groups - usually LARGE groups. But, he seemed different in some ways. THEY are usually tall, but he was small. THEY are usually smiling, albeit their unhappy histories, but he was unsmiling (unless, he gave a perfunctory smile in return for yours). There was that sense of tragedy about him. It seemed almost impossible for him to force a facade of gaiety, although he tried to be pleasant.

Gerard was referred from HRS which translated means that he was eligible for RAP (Refugee Assistance Program) as soon as it was documented that he had registered for employment services. But once again, he proved to be different. He wanted no welfare. He wanted to go to work immediately! His English skills were nonexistent. He had no other evident skills either. He had been a student in Haiti. That was the extent of his "work history". Finding him a job would be no easy task. With the help of my assistant Bredatte, who speaks Creole, we found ESL classes for him, taught him some basic PET (pre-employment training), coached him in some "stock" interview words and phrases and then set out to find him work. It wasn't too long before our "new" American was working. It wasn't the "perfect" job, working in a restaurant kitchen, but it was a job and he was satisfied to have it.

It wasn't until almost seven months later that I learned-the full extent of Gerard's tragic history. He had come to the office, as he had many times before, to help us with placing some newly arrived Haitians. His English had improved and on his day off he would volunteer his services in finding work for other Haitians. This particular day he had offered to accompany some non-English-speaking Haitians to a new worksite, when a familiar problem arose. The employer was willing to take our refugees if at least one of them spoke English. Would, could Gerard help us? Of course! Gerard didn't even blink at taking a second full-time job. In fact, he was thrilled! It was when he returned from the successful interview - the employer hired all five refugees- that I finally with Bredatte's assistance, learned of Gerard's story.

Gerard had lived with his mother and sister in Port-au-Prince. His mother owned a shop and Gerard and his sister went to school. Although life was not idyllic, it was certainly easy for Gerard, although there were already overtones of danger. About the time that he was preparing for a visit to his grandparents in Leogane (about 68 miles from his home), there were signs of political uprising. Pictures of ousted President Aristide were appearing on shop windows, homes, and cars, along with signs announcing

that faction of the populous wanted him back in power.

Gerard left for his planned vacation but about the time he was departing to go to Port-au-Prince, he received the terrible news that the "L'amers" had murdered his mother and sister. They had taken over his mother's shop and all their land. He was warned not to go back or he, too, would probably be killed. He stayed in Leogane for a few days, not knowing what to do and then "went to the river" to grieve his loss. While there, he met friends and acquaintances who shared some of the same experiences. They talked about how their Haiti would be saved if the Americans could come and save the country from the "L'amers". About that time they saw many people running past them. They stopped an old man who told them "run, run to the mountains". They followed him to the mountains, all fifteen of them. There they hid for three days until they were all warned that everyone in hiding was now in serious danger. The fifteen were directed to try to get to Santo Domingo where they might have a chance to board a boat there. All fifteen did make to the coast where they found a small sailing vessel and with fifty others, sailed out to open waters.

The tiny boat managed to go many miles before it was intercepted by the U.S. Coast Guard and the group was taken to Guantanamo Bay. Of the fifteen in Gerard's original group, eleven were allowed to remain. Gerard later learned that all four who were sent back had been killed soon after their return. He also learned that his grandmother had been killed shortly after he had left Leogane.

Gerard was detained for at Guantanamo Bay for three months, but he survived. After all, he had escaped the ultimate nightmare-the "nightmare" that Haiti had become. And he was still alive!

Gerard has been here for eight months now. In this time, he has learned "survival" English, is working two full time jobs, has bought a car and has his own apartment, a savings account, and although he still misses his homeland, he is finally smiling again! "*Bay Kou Bliye, Potemak Sonje.*"

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The Joseph's Family Story

By Judy Langelier,
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Meet the Joseph family. Andre' and Josseline Joseph are in their early thirties. They were resettled in West Palm Beach in early February 1993 with their five year old twin sons Bernady and Berling, and their one year old daughter, Bacheline. They are the newest generation of Haitian refugees granted political asylum in the United States.

What turn of events brought the Joseph family from their familiar homeland of Haiti to the United States? In order to fully comprehend this, it is important to understand the role that the Joseph family played in their community.

The Joseph's are committed to helping Haitians to better themselves through social change. The fundamental changes that they worked toward are the right to work, the right to good health, the right to education and the right to justice. Their focus was on farmers living in the rural Northwest Department served by the Commune of Jean Rabel. These farmers are commonly referred to as "*peyizan*" or peasants in English.

Andre' Joseph has an equivalent of a bachelor's degree in agricultural engineering. He taught the peasants how to grow food more effectively, raise healthy farm animals as well as the importance of planting trees to retain the soil. Josseline Joseph is an accomplished seamstress who taught the women sewing, nutrition and health maintenance as a member of the Youth Organization for Jean Rabel.

Along with these life enhancing skills came the seeds for grassroots social change. The Josephs instilled in the peasants a sense of dignity and self-respect, hope for a better life and a sense of

empowerment to change the circumstances of their lives. This ray of hope was further strengthened when President Aristide was elected to office. The Josephs aggressively promoted and implemented the president's plan for enhancing the lives of the peasants.

By effecting the lives of the peasants through agriculture, Andre' was also influential in shaping their political outlook. He was fast to make the transition from the old system where there was no hope for these peasants to the new system where profound social change was eminent. For this reason, when Aristide was deposed in September of 1991, Andre' Joseph went underground. He remained in hiding since proponents of social change were not looked upon favorably by the new government. Finally on June 4, 1992, the U.S. Embassy made radio and television announcements that political asylum applications would be taken directly in Haiti with no need to leave Haiti for a third country.

The Joseph family applied for political asylum in June and was accepted in September. When Andre' was notified of his acceptance, the U.S. Embassy employee stated "It is with regret that Haiti will lose you". On February 11, 1993, the Joseph family was accompanied by U.S. Embassy employees to their flight to the United States. The Joseph family was resettled with the help of the Episcopal Migration Ministries as well as uncles and cousins living in West Palm Beach, Florida.

Andre' entered English class immediately upon arrival. He took a three week intensive employability skills course offered by the School Board of Palm Beach County in conjunction with the refugee employment grant, entitled Refugee Employment Linking Initiative and Instruction (Project RELII). Project RELII staff came to his English Employability Skills class to conduct intake and discuss with him an employability plan with short and long term employment and educational goals. Andre' was able to understand that although he was a highly respected professional in Haiti, he would need to begin with an entry level position while he improved his English skills and gained work experience in the United States.

Andre completed the English Employability Skills course on April 22. He was placed on a job in May where he would do landscaping and lawn maintenance. He receives \$6.50 per hour with medical coverage after 30 days. His children attend free subsidized day care which allows his wife to study English at the Adult Education Center. Josseline hopes to begin work soon and looks forward to registering the boys in kindergarten in August.

If Andre' Joseph should send one message out to President Aristide, it would be "Salutation to Mr. Aristide, President of the Republic of Haiti. We anxiously await your return to power and are ready to serve you and your cause to help the Haitian people to learn to better themselves".

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Anthone Moise's Story

By Connie Combs, USCC, Miami

The story of Mr. Anthone Moise begins in desperation and fear and ends in self-sufficiency and hope. As a campaigner for Aristide, and out of fear for his arrest or worse at the hands of the Haitian army, Anthone was forced to live in hiding for two months in Haiti following the coup in September 1991. He left Haiti on a boat November 21, 1991, which was intercepted by the U.S. Coast Guard two days later. He and his fellow passengers were detained on the boat until November 30 at which time they were taken to Guantanamo Bay Naval Base in Cuba. Anthone arrived in Miami on December 29, 1991, and was reunited with his cousins in Coconut Grove on New year's Day 1992 by the Catholic Community Services, Archdiocese of Miami, an affiliate of USCC.

Anthone is a farmer and a fisherman and soon to be a certified mason. When he left Haiti, Anthone had completed 6 years of schooling. After arriving in the U.S. he was initially, though for a very short period of time, dependent on public assistance while taking remedial math and science courses and beginning his English training. But for over a year now, Anthone has been entirely self-sufficient, not only mastering the art of public transportation in Miami and South Florida, but managing to send his earnings to his family living in Jeremie, Haiti - his wife Lurose and seven children, Roger, Agelo, Edris, Clarel, Fabien, Frisne, and Antoinise, ages 9-22.

During harvest season Anthone lives in a temporary shelter with other Haitian men in Immokolee, Florida, working in the fields of melon, pepper, cucumbers, in the orange groves and in the packing plant, while at the same time training in masonry with the Lindsey-Hopkins Vocational Technical Center and studying his English. When he cannot attend the ESL classes, he studies his cassettes and workbooks to achieve English literacy. Anthone has compiled with the legal procedures of applying for political asylum through the USCC/CLINIC Catholic Emergency Legal Aid for Haitians (CELAH), and has consistently maintained valid employment authorizations.

On May 19, 1993, Anthone Moise was granted asylum. Now he can begin to see his future, no longer clouded by doubt. He can plan for his family, his children's education - his future. For now, his legal counsel (CELAH) will petition the court to allow Anthone's wife and children to join him in Miami. For the future, he will decide.

One Haitian's Story

The Cuban/Haitian Primary/Secondary Resettlement Program is one of many special programs conducted by Migration and Refugee Service (MRS) of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops/U.S. Catholic Conference (NCCB/USCC). Migration and Refugee Services (MRS), on behalf of the Roman Catholic Bishops of the United States, is a national and international leader in serving the needs and promoting the human dignity of

migrants, immigrants, refugees, asylum seekers, persons displaced within their own countries, and people on the move.

The Cuban/Haitian Program is funded by the Department of Justice, Community Relations Service, to provide resettlement services to both Cubans and Haitians who are released from immigration custody either in the Krome North Service Processing Center in Miami, or from the Guantanamo Bay Naval Base in Cuba. Some funding is also provided for secondary resettlement through migration or recruitment away from the South Florida area.

The program provides resettlement services for a 90-day period to both family reunification and free case sponsorship cases. Family reunification resettlement services are facilitated by the diocese where the family sponsor lives. For free case clients, the purpose of the program is to offer better resettlement and employment opportunities in other locations than can be found in the heavily impacted area of South Florida.

The program goal is that all clients gain self-sufficiency by acquiring employment and, therefore, the wherewithal to provide for themselves such basic necessities as food and shelter as well as a sense of responsibility and involvement within their respective, new community. The case management system conducted by diocesan programs provides a brief orientation for the client and such things as social security, EAD, etc., and records disbursements of cash assistance as well as referrals to employment and other community services.

Thus far in 1993, USCC/MRS has resettled a total of 751 clients, 143 of which are Haitians. Approximately 84% of these clients are living in the State of Florida in the Archdiocese of Miami and the Dioceses of Palm Beach, Venice, and Orlando. They are added to the existing 5,000 Guantanamo Haitians who were resettled in Florida by USCC in 1992 and who continue to struggle with uncertain futures in the U.S. Hopefully the story of Anthonie Moise is only one of many. But the USCC/MRS Cuban/Haitian Program continues to strive to meet its goal of restoring human dignity to the

Haitian people who land on U.S. shores in search of safety and self-sufficiency.

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Doreus Adieules's Story

By Giny L. Dumas, IRCO, W. Palm Beach

Doreus Adieules spent most of his time outside the hut that he built with his friends deep in the mountains in Haiti while in hiding. He has already been away for a few months, and he did not know how much longer he had to remain hidden. At times, he wondered if it would not be better to just let the soldiers catch him and end his miseries.

Doreus was part of a young political movement that was supporting the Aristide campaign in Anse-Rouge, Haiti. Doreus had always been a leader in his area. Though very young, he wanted to make a difference. Consequently, he wanted to participate in establishing a strong government that would help the youth. But things did not turn out the way Doreus planned them. The authorities did not think Aristide would fit the executive chair and were making sure to eliminate anyone trying to prove otherwise. Because of his political involvements, Doreus had to flee for safety into the mountains. Then he joined a group of friends in their decision to leave the country, uncertain of their destination, but with hopes of freedom, justice, and survival.

On August 28th, Doreus Adieules boarded "*L'Ange Bleu*", a small boat that seemed far too crowded to go anywhere. But that little boat had a long way to go. Throughout his journey, he could not help thinking about those he left behind. He often heard that life in America was like paradise, and he was making himself

comfortable in his line of thoughts. According to his calculations, Doreus figured that he would be in the United States within a week and would start working immediately. By this time, he believed that he would be in good enough financial shape to help his friends and family, and also help them find a way out just like he did.

But the trip was not so pleasant. Doreus, along with the twenty-seven people who boarded the boat, were in such a hurry to leave Haiti that they did not have the forethought to take any food with them; therefore, they went hungry for the whole three days spent at sea.

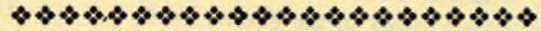
As the boat approached the port, a U.S. Coast Guard cutter met them half-way and Doreus wondered what was going to happen. They had planned to quietly get off the boat in Miami; instead, they were forced to make a stop which turned out to be a long stay in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. There, he was taken care of. He had a complete physical which he had not had for years. He was fed and taken care of for many weeks. Although Doreus no longer had to hide, he felt both free and threatened at the same time, and at times wondered when the end would come.

It was a short trip from Cuba this time and Doreus was both happy and confused when he got off the plane in Miami on January 25, 1992. Finally, he had made it in the land of freedom and prosperity. To him, it was the beginning of a new life; hopefully, a much better one. But adapting to the new life was not all that easy, and Doreus started wondering if it was worth being in America.

Doreus' dream is closer to being realized since he came to IRCO. Because he struggled unsuccessfully since his arrival to find employment, at times his future looked very bleak. But IRCO's staff efforts enabled Doreus to enter the American work force with confidence. Within a few months, he became a new person. He purchased a vehicle and is making contributions to the society that he is now part of. It is rewarding to help our clients change their lives by getting a job, renting their own apartment, paying their bills, and most of all, regaining their pride and self-esteem and feeling just as special as everyone else.

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Samuel Merisier's Story

By Pierre F. Boisrond, IRCO, W. Palm Beach

This is a story about a Haitian refugee named Samuel Merisier. Mr. Merisier left Haiti on May 11, 1992 on a small boat with about 55 other refugees on board. He was accompanied by his wife and six children. Unlike many other Haitians who came to the U.S. by boats, Mr. Merisier's family did not have to spend a long time at sea. On May 12, 1992, the Hamilton, a Coast Guard cutter, rescued them and took them to Guantanamo Bay.

The family stayed at Guantanamo until they received the clearance to enter the United States on July 12, 1992. Mr. Merisier pointed out that life at Guantanamo was not hell; nor was it paradise. However, it was much better than living in fear of repression, tortures, and disappearances which is quite common for so many Haitians living in Haiti today. Before Mr. Merisier came to the United States, he was very involved in the politics of his country on a local level. He was a member of a "Kazek" which is equivalent to a sheriff's department in America. Mr. Merisier was also a member of the "Lavalas Movement" that put Aristide into power. Mr. Merisier left Haiti after Aristide was overthrown. There was no place for Mr. Merisier to go and seek shelter, so he fled Haiti in 1992.

I met Mr. Merisier last year while I was working at the Haitian-American Community Center. During this period, he was a stranger in a new country with no friends, no job, no money, and no hope. His future looked very bleak.

When IRCO-Employment Services Project opened its doors on January 25, 1993, there was a sense of relief for most of the new Haitian refugees in the West Palm Beach area. Because

of the cultural and language barriers, it is very difficult for the new refugees to look for jobs on their own. Since the beginning of the program, have been flooded with new applicants seeking help in finding employment. Each time we place a client in a job, more will show up seeking the same service. A friend would tell a friend, and this is how Samuel Merisier came to us.

When Mr. Merisier came to our office, he was in a desperate situation and needed help immediately. He wondered how we were going to help him because he had never received this kind of assistance before. Samuel had never held a regular job since he came to the United States. To make ends meet, he had to go to Belle Glade or Ft. Pierce to work on the farms as a picker which paid from \$60 to \$150 per week. As a result of working in the fields, one could easily notice cuts and bruises on Samuel's hands. He told us that the cuts never healed, because he goes back to the fields every day to be able to earn some money and feed his family. We gave his case special consideration because of the size of his family. The job search began right after the intake was completed.

The owner of Manero's Restaurant, who was pleased with one of our clients' performance, referred Mr. Allen McMullen of the Ocean Breeze Construction Company to our office. Mr. McMullen was looking for construction workers and wanted to come to our office to find out what services we offer, and observe how we deal with our clients. Normally, we do not expect employers to forgo their daily routine to come to our office.

Samuel Merisier wanted to work; and since our job is to match clients' dispositions with employers' expectations, we knew that he would be a good choice for Ocean Breeze Construction. As a common practice, we asked two other qualified clients to come to the interview so that the employer would have a choice. As desperate people in need of a job would do, all three of our clients were at the office two hours before the time the employer was expected to arrive. Mr. McMullen didn't show up on time, and we asked them to wait a little longer. Samuel indicated that he was willing to wait as long as it takes, since there was hope for him to get a job.

Finally, Mr. McMullen came and was briefed on the background of each interviewee. After the interviews were completed, the employer felt that Samuel was the most qualified person for the position and was hired instantly.

The day Samuel got hired, the employer picked him up from his house to take him to the job site. After arriving at Samuel's house, the employer found a family with little food, few kitchen utensils, and no stove. Anybody who has a family to feed can understand the misery these people were going through. Mr. McMullen gave Samuel's wife some money so that she could buy a stove. Samuel felt that things were starting to change for the best because he didn't just meet a person who offered him a job, but also a caring human being.

The person I knew from last year and the person I know today are two different individuals. You can realize the confidence, the assurance of being worthwhile on Samuel's face. He is a new man, a man who feels that there is hope after all. Now he is learning to live with the pressures of modern life.

We have more "Samuel Merisiers" coming to our office every day with the same needs and the same aspirations. To most of our clients, this program is the best that could have ever been established. Because of their limited communication skills, our clients rely heavily on us to find them jobs; and we try our best to provide them with all the assistance they need.

We do not want to appear boastful or self-congratulatory, but we think we are doing a very good job at IRCO. It is rewarding when you help someone regain his/her self-esteem. Moreover, our reward comes from making it possible for our clients to become self-sufficient and productive members of our society. We are also rewarded when clients call to thank us for the help we have given them, or write a letter as Samuel did. We reach remarkable achievements every day on a small scale, and we are proud of them.

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The Jeudy's New World

By Mary Jane Fine
The Palm Beach Post

In Haiti, there is an expression "kembe coeur". The literal translation is "holding your heart", but what it conveys is being in limbo, with the hopes that things will get better. On June 9, Evelt and Marie Carmel Jeudy fled their home in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, and have been holding their hearts ever since.

The coup that toppled President Jean-Bertrand Aristide made a target of Evelt Jeudy, a driver for Aristide and an active participant in Lavalas, the leftist movement that backed his candidacy.

When the Jeudys, both 29, arrived in Miami with their 2 year-old daughter, Ti Marie, they joined an exclusive group: By some estimates, 99 percent of Haitian asylum applications are denied. The Jeudys were among the 1 percent approved.

Their experience here has produced a tangling of expectations (theirs) and perceptions (other people's). As middle-class Haitians, the Jeudys challenge the assumptions of many Americans, whose image of Haitian refugees is shaped largely by televised accounts of the impoverished and bedraggled thousands routinely turned back by Coast Guard patrols.

What follows is an account of their lives during their first three months in the United States - enduring the delays, overcoming the snafus, untangling the skeins of red tape that await the newly arrived immigrant.

"We know that when you are living outside your own country, you can't expect the same life," Evelt says, through a translator, one month after his arrival. "But we thought it would be better than it is. What I mean by that - that I would find a job soon, a place to stay, to go to school. Some way to help myself. I wouldn't say I have

found what I want" he concludes, then puts it in wry perspective: "But staying alive makes life better."

Tuesday, June 9

The Jeudys and Ti Marie - short for Petite Marie, little Marie - flew on American Airlines from Port-au-Prince International Airport to Miami International Airport. Stuck to their shoulders were tags emblazoned with "ACNS" (American Council for Nationality Service) for easy identification by a resettlement agent.

That agent was Diana Nichar. Big-hearted, fast-talking, hard-working, Nichar is refugee and community case manager for the Christian Community Service Agency. The agency is an affiliate of the New York-based ACNS and one of a half dozen Miami-based organizations charged with refugee resettlement.

A Cuban-American, Nichar is given to talking with her hands, which underscores the sense of energy and controlled frenzy she emits. Her favorite phrase: "I'm running around like a chicken without a head." The terse language of her case log records the meeting: Arrival. No (relatives or friends) at the airport to greet family. Volunteer helped explain to arriving family what was going to be done. Transported to shelter; will stay there until better accommodations are made. Family agreed.

For families met by neither relatives nor sponsors, there are only resettlement agencies. "We have to do everything for them," says Nichar. "We're their mommy for three months."

The chain of events works like this: Word of an emigrating political refugee travels from the American Embassy in Haiti to the State Department in Washington, DC, to ACNS in New York to a local resettlement agency, such as the Christian Community Service Agency in Miami. The agency assumes responsibility for finding refugees housing and jobs; enrolling them in English classes; and getting them money, food stamps, and Medicaid.

After three months, the agency essentially cuts the umbilical cord. "At three months, they have to be working, they have to be self-sufficient,

and they have to be used to this country already," Nichar says. A short laugh acknowledges the absurdity of that, and she adds that clients in need are never ignored. "Some people we never hear from again, but others become friends," she says with a shrug. "And we're always there for them."

Tuesday, June 16

Home is a homeless shelter. Evelt, Marie-Carmel and 'Ti-Marie occupy Room 7 of the New Life Family Center, a motel-turned-crack-house-turned-refuge in Miami's Wynwood section, a low-income, high-crime neighborhood where a number of immigrants have settled. It is, boasts a brochure, "Dade County's first and only transitional house dedicated to keeping the whole family intact." The room measures 10 by 12. Within its stark white walls sit one double bed, one folding cot, a second hand dresser, a clock radio and the two leather suitcases that contain all the family could salvage of their former lives. The Jeudys are New Life's only Haitians right now, isolated from their neighbors and the staff by language. They speak Creole and French; everyone else speaks English or Spanish.

Days after their arrival, a Dominican translator provided by the resettlement agency permits a primitive interview, with questions translated in relay form: from English into Spanish into Creole. The answers come in reverse, Creole to Spanish, Spanish to English.

"He wants to learn English," the translator says after listening to a long, impassioned burst of Creole. "He wants to go to work. He wants to get out of here. His daughter is not eating."

'Ti Marie is 2, shy and pretty and utterly repelled by the unfamiliar food dished up in the shelter's communal dining room. It is solid, basic, American food, bought in bulk, prepared to stretch; beef stews and spaghetti and lots and lots of sandwiches. The Dominican translator, an elderly man, tries to comfort 'Ti Marie by crooning Creole songs. The child looks up briefly from her cot, then turns her attention back to a small plastic blonde doll - her only toy. When the man gently teases her that he would like to take her home with him, 'Ti Marie's wide

eyes grow wider, "No!" she squeals in Creole. "I will stay with Mommy and Daddy!"

Evelt Jeudy is a serious young man, whose demeanor makes him seem older than his 29 years. He smiles rarely, but when he does, his face is transformed. For now, he finds little reason to smile.

He is a man in limbo, a man whose identity is nebulous in this strange and barren world. Evelt unzips a suitcase and extracts a manila folder filled with assorted papers and ID cards, that, like pieces of a jigsaw puzzle, interlock to form a picture: Here, a laminated ID card for the presidential palace, the Palais National; there, Marie-Carmel's teaching certificate; here, a half-dozen horrific color snapshots of street slaughter in Port-au-Prince, collected evidence of the fate he feared. The most heartbreaking - if such things can be quantified - shows a small boy, clad in red shorts and a sleeveless white T-shirt, lying in a vast pool of blood, his legs splayed, a gaping wound in his neck.

Tucked in the folder also is a thin Haitian newspaper, an interior page of which carries a story that explains everything. The headline - "*Appel au meurtre lance par les macoutes: Vous devez les abattre, les eliminer*" translates to "The Macoutes issued this call: 'You must butcher them, eliminate them.'" Beneath it, boxed inside a thin black line, is a list of 97 people targeted for assassination. Evelt Jeudy's name is 24th on the list.

To win asylum requires proof of danger. In late January, the American Embassy began processing applications for people whose ties to the Aristide government left them inarguably vulnerable to persecution.

It was, says Johnny McCalla of the National Coalition for Haitian Refugees, "a token effort by the (Bush) administration." Consular officers set up in-person interviews with applicants, who are only too aware that the embassy sits just a few feet from the country's largest military barracks.

"In the interview, they have to demonstrate that they're credible" - by providing tangible data, such as ID cards or paychecks from Aristide's regime - "and then they are told to go away

while their story is investigated" McCalla says. It was such an investigation that won asylum for Evelt Jeudy.

Monday, June 29

It's Day 22 in the shelter, and Marie is extremely disheartened. The tedium of routine erodes her spirit. Day stretches after day, empty hours filled with little but music and news from a Creole radio station, Haiti Antenna Plus.

"There is only one room and nowhere to move around," Marie says, waving a hand at the walls. "It's not interesting to live a life like that." This morning, she is alone because Evelt has taken Ti Marie to Jackson Memorial Hospital, their second trip since the child caught her finger in the front door. Today's is a follow-up visit, but the first trip, on Friday, was nothing short of a refugee's nightmare.

Evelt took Ti Marie to Jackson Memorial at 4:00 in the afternoon that day. They didn't return for 15 hours. For much of that time, they either wandered the sprawling hospital complex or sat in waiting rooms. They found no Creole-speakers, no one who could tell them where to go or what to do or when someone might help them. At 2 a.m., a French-speaking doctor summoned them, apologized for the delay and treated Ti Marie's inflamed finger. At 6 a.m. Evelt found the bus that took them home, arriving at 7:00 a.m. Neither father nor daughter ate throughout the ordeal.

Marie is speaking in rapid-fire Creole when Diana Nichar peeks through the window, looking harried as usual. "As soon as I get the key, you can move into the house" she says, through the jalousies. "I have furniture. It's already paid for. All I need is the key". Then, like an apparition, she's gone. A translator, hired by *the Palm Beach Post*, explains to the puzzled Marie what she said. Marie raises her eyebrows, a gesture that says she's skeptical.

The numbers keep growing. The 1980 census counted 14,355 Haitians living in Miami. The current estimate is 100,000. The number of jobs do not keep pace, especially for people not fluent in English. Especially for people unaccustomed to menial work. Despite Marie Jeudy's college education and eight years of teaching school, the

only job openings the community service agency's job developer, Mirna Brown, has found are assembly-line work and motel maid on the 11 p.m. to 7 a.m. shift. Lack of transportation eliminated both.

For Brown, job-hunting is basic but not simple, not even with the incentive money paid to employers who hire refugees. "She gets out the Yellow Pages and she starts calling," Diana Nichar says. "Or she goes out into the field and introduces herself."

Evelt's own attempts have met frustration after frustration. He ticks off his efforts: A shopkeeper offered \$5 an hour - but withdrew his offer when he heard how little English Evelt speaks. A deliveryman said his company needed drivers, but Evelt had no driver license yet. He worked for a dry cleaner for two days, but the owner refused to let him learn to operate the presser. "He told me I cannot practice on the customers' pants," Evelt explains. Then he writes, in French, his response: "*C'est en forgeant, qu'on desient forgeron*" - I haven't heard this family ask me even once, "Am I eligible for food stamps? Cash assistance? All they say is 'Work, work, work'. They want to work."

Wednesday, July 8

They want to work, but haven't found jobs yet, so cash assistance is a necessity. An early-morning trip to secure it (\$303 a month for a family of four) short-circuits in disappointment. With only three workers to handle the crowd, the Refugee Assistance Program - which also processes applications for food stamps and Medicaid - is overwhelmed. They can handle only about 10 clients a day.

Before RAP, as it is called, began issuing appointments, refugees would sleep in the corridor in hopes of being first in line the next day. The Jeudy's get an appointment for August 4 at 1:30 p.m.

Diana, rattled but determined, does a hasty about-face, returns to her office and authorizes a \$100 check intended to cover a month's worth of groceries. She zips by the drive-in teller, cashes the check, then zooms northward on I-95 to deliver Evelt and Marie to the modest, two-

bedroom duplex she found for them in Little Haiti.

On their 28th day in the United States, the Jeudy's moved into the duplex. Now, two days later, their relief is palpable. Life in the shelter had weighed heavily.

"The work they make us do over there, it didn't bother me," Evelt says, referring to the dish-washing, cooking and mopping chores shared by the residents. "I know I have to work. It's the way they treat you. They try to humiliate you."

For now, however, what's past is past. For two months, the resettlement agency will pay the \$400-a-month rent; after that, the Jeudys will be on their own.

Emergency money is paid for Marie's first grocery shopping expedition, a welcome return to a Creole diet. Fresh vegetables nearly fill the refrigerator: okra, tomatoes, green peppers, green beans, eggplant, bunches of parsley and scallions. Sharing a shelf space with the vegetables: a box of Jell-O, a package of cookies, a carton of cream of wheat. Life in the U.S. keeps Marie frugal. Come evening, she spoons half a can of baked beans into a pot of rice for the family's dinner.

In Port-au-Prince, Evelt and Marie shared a duplex with another family, a home that Marie describes in loving detail: A two-story house, painted brown and cream. A high fence surrounding a large yard. A wrought-iron balcony. A pleasant neighborhood inhabited by middle-class families. During the months after Aristide's ouster, soldiers - often called Macoutes after the special-force police of the Duvalier regime - ransacked the house and raked it with gunfire. The Jeudys had already gone into hiding, first in the countryside, later with friends in Port-au-Prince. Marie continued to teach school to support the family while Evelt began applying for political exile.

Thursday, July 16

Evelt and Marie-Carmel sit side-by-side on blue vinyl chairs in the resettlement agency's waiting room, clipboards on their laps, studying employment applications. The forms are in English and Spanish, and the Jeudys hunch

forward, as if close scrutiny will unlock the mystery of the foreign words. It is no good. They don't understand the forms. But they are in luck. Dominique, Duclos, a Haitian-born translator hired by *the Palm Beach Post*, lends assistance. Duclos - fluent in English, Creole, French and Spanish - explains, first to Evelt, then to Marie, how to complete each line. Evelt has only one question of job developer Mirna Brown: "When do you think I can work?" "Ah, the bottom line," says Jean Webb, supervisor of employment services, who hovers nearby. Placement will not be easy. With a few Creole-speaking businesses, Evelt probably will have to accept a lesser position than that to which he is accustomed. "We will try to have him working within five days," she says.

The interviews over, Evelt asked Diana in his halting English for a ride to a friend's house. "I'm a taxi, huh", she asked grinning. Undeterred by her lack of Creole, Diana substitutes pure heart, no translation necessary. Evelt smiles, although his mission is a sad one. His mother has died. She was 45. The previous Friday, during a routine call to Haiti, he got the news. Her death was sudden and unexpected. The details were sketchy: What had caused her death? Did she die at home or in a hospital? No one had answers for him. The distance between Miami and Haiti suddenly seemed infinite, unbridgeable.

Now he needs to call home again, to know the funeral arrangements, to know again the sound of his brother's voice.

Marie heads to their house, to retrieve Ti Marie from day care at the Pierre Toussaint Haitian-Catholic Center, the same center where she and Evelt attend English classes four nights a week and where Marie volunteers in the office. She walks quickly along the dingy second-floor corridor, eager to see her child. Always, after dropping her off at day care, Marie turns back to peek into the room for a reassuring glimpse of her daughter playing with the other children. The instant the door opens, Ti Marie launches herself into her mother's arms, buries her face in Marie's shoulder, clings tight to her neck. Marie holds and hugs her daughter in silence for a long minute, then thanks the Haitian day-care workers and wades through the cluster of children awaiting their mothers.

Hand-in-hand, Marie and Ti Marie walk home, along the footpath worn into the lawn of Notre Dame d'Haiti Church, past the loud music piling onto Northeast Second Avenue from a car wash, past the graffiti-splashed wall of Lee Chiki Jay market, past the men in the alley who whistle through their teeth at her, past three scrawny chickens picking through an open pile of garbage. Inside their house, reunited with her mother, this is a different Ti Marie.

"It's very hard for me" says Marie, speaking about day care while her child stomps happily across the terrazzo floor, sandal straps flapping loose, sing-songing in Creole baby talk. "My heart breaks, especially when she's crying. But I know I have no alternative."

At Notre Dame d'Haiti Church, there is a special class for Haitian refugees - a class on survival skills. Financed by the U.S. Catholic Conference, the class attempts to temper dream with reality. This is how to use the bus. This is how to read a map. The sense of dislocation is enormous.

In his office at the church, Father Tom Wenski folds his arms behind his neck and reflects on the plight of his congregation of immigrants. "Being a political refugee doesn't give you a whole lot of entitlements," says the priest, a somewhat beefy man with a practical philosophy and a twinkle in his eye. "They might think the road is a little easier than it is, and it might be somewhat of a rude awakening."

For the middle-class Jeudys, the problem is magnified. Until their English improves, employment options are largely limited to the menial. And one's job, Wenski says, is "so closely tied in with one's sense of worth, one's self-esteem."

But Wenski is, by nature and vocation, a believer.

"As the Cubans learned," he says, "so often, before you go up, you have to go down".

Tuesday, August 4

Good news: The Jeudy's have new neighbors. The Sylverne family has moved in to the other

half of their duplex. Best of all, the families knew one another in Port-au-Prince.

"She (Mrs. Sylverne) was Evelt's friend," Marie says in English, pronouncing each word with great care. "she was receptionist in Palais National. Aristide is godfather of her baby."

Shortly before 1 p.m., Diana arrives to take Evelt and Marie for their appointment at the Refugee Assistance Program. They leave Ti Marie playing happily with 2 1/2 year-old Founa Sylverne.

The RAP office bespeaks bureaucracy. Rows of molded plastic chairs. Walls painted a drab, institutional beige. A small, hand-printed sign asks, "*Por Favor!!! Hablar Bajito. Shh! Gracias.*" (Please!!! Speak Softly. Shh! Thank you.)

"This should take 10 minutes," Diana says. "Why else do they give you an appointment?"

A good question, but at 2:35 p.m. - more than an hour past their scheduled appointment - Evelt and Marie sit patiently, still waiting.

Most of the dozen-plus refugees wear blue jeans, shorts, T-shirts, sandals and expressions ranging from boredom to courage. Marie looks crisp in a white linen suit and black suede high heels; Evelt wears fashionable pleated trousers and a striped sport shirt. They whisper together in Creole and show no hint of annoyance as the afternoon stretches on.

At 2:45, Diana discovers the reason for the delay: the computers are down. Finally, at 3:50, social worker Cecilia Grau calls out, "Evelt Jeudy.: The Jeudys learn that they are eligible to receive \$303 a month in cash assistance, plus \$286 in food stamps.

"Evelt, we gotta get you a job fast," Nichar says, patting his shoulder. "Because the money they're gonna give you? It's not enough to pay the rent."

It is after 5 p.m. when the Jeudys, tired and hungry, finally leave for home, where they change into T-shirts and Bermuda shorts. With friends next door, with English beginning to make sense, with bureaucratic paperwork under control, they seem happier, more relaxed.

Marie turns on the radio in the kitchen and, to the sound of Haitian music, does a little dance.

Epilogue

The promise of that moment in August was fleeting.

Expectation soared, then faltered and dipped. This is reality: If they are hungry or in need of donated clothing, the Christian Community Service Agency will help them, but the financial umbilical was cut in September. Their Refugee Assistance Program money and food stamps will end after several more months.

The Jeudys are hunting for another apartment. They want one in a nicer neighborhood - less garbage on the streets, no drug traffic - but with lower rent.

Marie has a part-time job. She teaches literacy, 20 hours a week, to other Haitians at Notre Dame d'Haiti, earning \$10 an hour. In the classroom, her personality undergoes a subtle transformation: the shy, passive refugee regains the self-assuredness she knew as a teacher in Haiti.

Evelt has not done as well.

In early October, his social worker sent him on two interviews, but jobs at a service station (pumping gas and washing windshields) and a Ford dealership (doing "detail work") fell through because he spoke too little English.

Nor have his own efforts proved successful.

"I buy the newspaper every day," he says, indicating the Miami Herald's classified section, which lies open on a table at Notre Dame d'Haiti, where Evelt dials number after number. Warehouse jobs. Driving jobs. Car wash jobs.

"Hello, I am Evelt Jeudy," he says each time pronouncing his words slowly and carefully. "I call to take an appointment for the job interview.: Out of seven calls, only one persons offers to call back.

A man of enormous dignity, Evelt gives no outward sign of defeat. He will try again. And again.

Kembe coeur. He will continue to hold his heart.

[Editor's Note: Special thanks to the *Palm Beach Post* for granting reprint permission. Copyright 1993, *Palm Beach Post*, Vol. 85, No. 88.]



Vietnamese Radio Program Now Being Broadcast in Florida

Recently a Hillsborough County radio station began broadcasting a radio program to serve the Vietnamese population in the Tampa Bay area. The program is every Sunday evening from 7:00 to 8:00 PM on WBVM 90.5 FM.

One of the program's goals is to keep the Vietnamese community informed on activities or issues that related to individuals or organizations in the community. The program wants to announce News, Notices, announcements, or any message that your office wants to convey to the Vietnamese population in the Tampa Bay area.

After the first broadcast on Sunday, April 25, 1993, the program received many positive comments and praises from people in the community. And they are the most effective media organization that serves the Vietnamese community in the Tampa Bay area. If your office has messages that need to be delivered, we would be very interested in hearing from you.

For more information on this program and help in the translation aspect of the program, contact:

Tin Quang Ngo
Vietnamese Radio Program
P.O. Box 2054
Pinellas Park, Florida 34664-2054.
Telephone/Fax (813) 541-3363,



Educators of Haitian Students Hold Meeting

Everyone was welcomed to the Educators of Haitian Students Open Meeting on Saturday, July 17th, at the Fall Commercial Blvd. Campus, 1515 W. Commercial Blvd, Room 401, Ft. Lauderdale. This meeting focused on plans for a January 1994 Haitian Education Conference. For more information on future meetings, call Elaine Sherr at (305) 351-4112 or (800) 328-6721 or Marc Authur Jean Louis at (305) 757-2768.

At June's meeting, fellowships at the University of Miami to work on a Masters Degree were announced. These fellowships are available to professionals who graduated from college in Haiti and who want to enter the field of education. Interested people can contact Reine Leroy at (305) 573-6243 (w) or (305) 754-5742(h) or Lesley Prudent (305) 759-4994(h) or (305) 635-6725(w).



REFUGEE RELATED READING

VIDEOS: " Family Unity: The Law and Problems with Implementation"; "Bringing Family Unity to Public Attention"; and "Immigrant Visa Issues".

The cost per video is \$10 for nonprofit agencies, and \$20 for all others. For more information, or to place an order, call ILRC at (415) 255-9499.

BOOK: 111 Secrets to Smarter Grantsmanship - 1992. ISBN 0-933544-51-0. Order # F010.

This 62 page report is published by Government Information Services. It helps grantseekers prepare and write proposals for federal and foundation grants. It also reviews the in's and

out's of a successful proposal, why some proposals fail, some common weaknesses of proposals, and pre-proposal writing tips that save time on the part of the grantseeker.

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Phone 1-800-876-0226; FAX (703) 528-6060.
The publication is \$37.95 + \$2.50 shipping/handling.

BOOK: Winning Federal Grants for Minorities and the Disadvantaged. 1991. ISBN 0-933544-36-7. Order # F004.

This 12 page report answers important questions of grantseekers on the needs of grants for minorities and disadvantaged programs. It also tells about special programs to assist the disadvantaged and minorities, and how to approach an agency for assistance on preparing this grant, and how to find out what the agency will and will not fund.

To order, call or write:

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Arlington, VA 22203-1627

Phone 1-800-876-0226; FAX (703) 528-6060.
The publication is \$18.95 + \$2.50 shipping/handling.

[*Editor's Note:* The following information was taken from a National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education Database Search prepared by FAU-MRC.]

1. Cohon, J. Donald. 1986. **Preventive Mental Health in the ESL Classroom: A Handbook for Teachers.** American Council for Nationalities Service, 95 Madison Avenue, New York, NY, 10016. This publication is \$6.50.

2. Felsman, J. Kirk. 1989. **Vietnamese Amerasians: Practical Implications of**

