

## Getting Everyone on Board: Building a Support Network



### **Multiple Cultures, Multiple Voices Conference: Effectively Educating All Children June 18 – 20, 2007**

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The mission of public education is to effectively educate each and every child by...

**1. Providing personal, culturally sensitive, efficient enrollment and orientation procedures at each school.**

Upon arrival students and their families need to be welcomed in each school where a child will attend. With the help of an interpreter, conduct an interview to determine grade level placement and appropriate English as a Second Language (ESL) classes. Escort the family on a guided tour of the school and share school procedures, provide a school calendar, and give forms for absences and early dismissals written in a language the parent can understand.

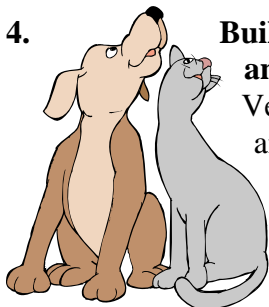
**2. Ensuring academic achievement among English Language Learners**

Strategies include the following: New students are placed either in an appropriate grade level class. English as a Second Language instruction begins almost immediately. An emphasis on core subjects such as Reading and Mathematics ensures academic progress. Before and after-school homework assistance and tutoring opportunities are available to many of the students. Summer academic programs are also offered in locations convenient to the students' homes. Teachers and other school staff receive on-going training in educational strategies for English language learners and information on various cultures.

**3. Providing information and social support to immigrant families**

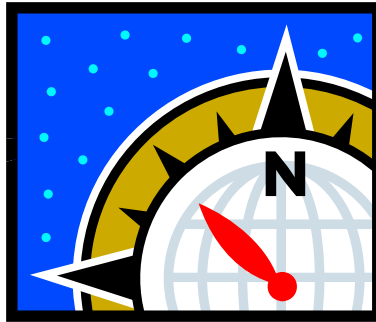
The school must provide translation services to families. Design an on-going process to translate school documents and to build a translator database for interpretation at parent/teacher conferences and school events such as Open House, ESL Parent Orientation, ESL Family Library Night and Curriculum Night. Invite parents to become active in the Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) by establishing an Outreach Committee and identifying a Friend Family for each ELL family. Finally, establish partnerships with agencies and organizations. We have built a network throughout the Pittsburgh region to support the social transition of immigrant families into Pittsburgh and our school community.

**4. Building partnerships that make a difference in the lives of children and their families.** Relationships are key to making that difference. Very different groups as well as individuals can bring special interests and talents to meet specific needs of individual immigrants. As we work together for the benefit of children we are ambassadors for our nation, our city and our community.



## Guiding Principles

If you want to get everyone “on board” there are some principles that serve as a compass pointing to true north. When we speak of “everyone” this includes immigrant children, immigrant parents, American children, American parents, teachers, tutors, social service agencies, school support personnel, community organizations and social groups.



- As educators we recognize that we work with the whole child. The whole child includes the student’s family, and sometimes this means extended family. Parental and family involvement is critical for academic, social and physical well-being.
- Family support is relationship-based. Only through trusting relationships will you be able to foster partnerships between and among parents, students and professional service providers. Relationships require people, not money, not things, not programs...PEOPLE!
- Family support is designed, governed and improved by the participants. We work and do things together not “to” another. We are equal members with an equal voice.
- Family support builds on what is rather than what isn’t. There are family, community, and cultural abilities, attributes and vitalities that must be honored, recognized, celebrated and preserved.
- Family support services are based in the broader community to serve the entire family. We recognize the role of choice, individual will, family priorities, and self-determination.
- Family support services are enhanced as we evaluate our processes, actions, and interventions. We are seeking continuous program improvement. The alignment of mission with actions is critical. We continually ask, is this in the best interest of providing the best educational possible for each and every child?

## Partnerships support desired outcomes.

Outcome 1: Seamless, comprehensive, and readily accessed network of services for children and families through collaborations with agencies and organizations that can help families meet their goals.

Outcome 2: Positive child development through effective parenting, early intervention and outreach activities. This includes child development assessments, referrals for early intervention, school readiness programs and experiences, parenting education, and home-school support.

Outcome 3: Healthy child development and health care services for children including immunizations, dental care, vision screening, referrals for prenatal care, referrals for pre-school programs, and nutritional counseling.

Outcome 4: Preserving the family unit as the foundation for values, training, and personal responsibility.

Outcome 5: Economic self-sufficiency for families including help with employment, referrals to adult education programs, assistance with housing, explanations and modeling of financial accountability and appropriate fiscal management.



Numerous factors contribute to an English Language Learner's academic success. It is especially critical that partners gather information from parents about their backgrounds. Of particular importance are the students' native languages, cultures, the length and quality of prior formal education in their native language and any previous education they have received in US schools. Students who arrive in the US with appropriate grade-level achievement in their native language will make the transition to learning in English more easily. Even though a student has lived in the United States for some time, or was born in the United States, his family may only speak its native language at home or in his neighborhood.

*Classroom Instruction that works with English Language Learners*  
Jane D. Hill and Kathleen M. Flynn (2006)

Six types of Parent and Community Involvement

This research-based model of parent and community involvement was developed by Joyce Epstein at Johns Hopkins University. (Epstein, Coates, Salinas, Sanders, and Simon, 1997)

<b>Type of Involvement</b>	<b>Sample Practices</b>
<p><b>Parenting</b> Help all families establish home environments to support their children as students.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Parent education and other courses or training for parents, i.e. GED, family literacy</li> <li>2. Family support programs to assist families with health, nutrition, and other services</li> <li>3. Home visits at transition points to preschool, elementary, middle and high school</li> </ol>
<p><b>Communicating</b> Design effective forms of school to home and home to school communications about school programs and children's progress</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Conferences with every parent at least once a year</li> <li>2. Language translators to assist parents as needed</li> <li>3. Regular schedule of <u>useful</u> and <u>comprehensible</u> notices, memos, phone calls, newsletters, and other communications</li> </ol>
<p><b>Volunteering</b> Recruit and organize parent help and support.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. School and classroom volunteer program to help teachers, administrators, students, and other parents.</li> <li>2. Parent room or family center for volunteer work, meetings, and resources for families.</li> <li>3. Annual survey to identify all available talents, times, and locations of volunteers.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Learning at Home</b> Provide information and ideas to families about how to help students at home with homework and other academic activities, decisions and planning.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Information for families on skills required for students in all subjects at each grade.</li> <li>2. Information on homework policies and how to monitor and practice school work at home.</li> <li>3. Family participation in setting student goals each year.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Decision Making</b> Include parents in school decisions and in the development of parent leaders and representatives.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Include parents in PTA, advisory councils or committees for parent leadership and participation.</li> <li>2. Establish networks to link all families with parent representatives.</li> <li>3. Establish a newcomer's welcome group.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Collaborating with the community</b> Identify and integrate resources and services from the community to strengthen school programs, family practices, and student learning/development.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Information for students and families on community health; cultural, recreational or social support, and other programs or services.</li> <li>2. Information on community activities that are linked to learning skills and talents, including summer programs for students.</li> <li>3. Service to the community by students, families and schools i.e. recycling, art, music, drama and other activities for seniors and others.</li> </ol>



## Begin with the School

- Make it evident through visuals that different languages and cultures are represented in the school.
- Post signs that say “Welcome” in a variety of languages.
- Display artwork representing other cultures.
- Buy books written in other languages and about different cultures.
- Purchase classroom materials that broaden all students’ understand and appreciation of different cultures.
- Consider creating international classrooms, one room at a time, to promote diversity and culture awareness.
- Use bilingual translators and interpreters for PTA meetings, parent conferences, enrollment, Open House, etc.
- Translate handbooks, frequently used forms, and critical announcements and fliers into the languages students and parents read.
- Involve the community searching out people who share the same native language or ethnic heritage to connect with newcomers.
- Ask parents what they need to know and/or want to learn about the school, their children, the programs, and the community.
- Connect parents with adult ESL classes or individual tutors.

# Pittsburgh Partners

## Allegheny County Department of Human Services

One Smithfield Street Pittsburgh, PA 15122

Telephone: 412-350-5805 Fax: 412-350-2785

Website: <http://www.county.allegheny.pa.us/dhs/>

Contact Person: Amy Snider E-mail: [asnider@dhs.county.allegheny.pa.us](mailto:asnider@dhs.county.allegheny.pa.us)

### Brief History:

The Department of Human Services (DHS) is responsible for providing and administering human services to county residents. The Department is dedicated to meeting these human services needs, most particularly to vulnerable populations, through an extensive range of prevention, early intervention, crisis management and after-care services.

### Programs Offered:

DHS services include: Programs serving the elderly, mental health services (includes 24-hour crisis counseling); drug and alcohol services; child protective services; at-risk child development and education; hunger services; emergency shelters and housing for the homeless; energy assistance; non-emergency medical transportation; job training and placement for youth and adults; and services for individuals with mental retardation and developmental disabilities.



## Allegheny Intermediate Unit: Adult ESL

1401 Forbes Avenue, Suite 225, Pittsburgh, PA 15219

Telephone: 412-394-5803 Fax: 412-394-5990 Website: [www.aiu3.net/](http://www.aiu3.net/)

Contact Person: Danis Kubiak, Program Coordinator E-mail: [kubiak@aiu3.net](mailto:kubiak@aiu3.net)

### Brief History:

For over 20 years, the ESL program has served adult learners wishing to improve their English proficiency skills. Annually, the program serves over 1,200 students from over 50 countries worldwide. Paid, well-trained and experienced instructors teach our multi-level classes. Instruction is free and materials are provided. For more information, please call Danis Kubiak at 412-281-7937.

### Programs Offered:

The ESL program seeks to help any non-English-speaking adult to learn American English. Students may enroll in the program at any time of the year. Classes are held at Baldwin High School, in downtown Pittsburgh, and in the Oakland area. Morning, afternoon and evening classes are available. Instruction takes place in classes and in tutoring sessions. The focus is on communication and daily living skills. These include:

- \* **Survival Skills:** using the telephone, post office, public transportation; reading a bus schedule, opening a checking account, buying food, finding community resources, etc.
- \* **Skill Building and Grammar:** practice with the structure of the English language, syntax, pronunciation, conversation and listening, spelling, punctuation, idioms, etc.

**Fees:** There is no charge to students and materials are provided.



## **Allegheny Intermediate Unit: K-12 ESL**

**1400 Penn Ave. Suite 201; Pittsburgh, PA 15222**  
**Telephone: 412-281-7937 Fax: 412-281-7939 Website: [www.iau3.net/](http://www.iau3.net/)**

**Contact Person: Mrs. Jennifer Beagan E-mail: [beagan@iau3.net](mailto:beagan@iau3.net)**

### **Brief History:**

The Allegheny Intermediate Unit offers English as a Second Language Services to 42 school districts in Allegheny County and surrounding areas. Over 500 children are serviced by 50 by trained ESL teachers. Full services from evaluation, consultation, and academic instruction are offered.

### **Programs Offered:**

: K-12 English as a Second Language instruction.

### **Fees:**

Fee structure is based on in county or out of county school districts.



## **Mt. Lebanon Public Library**

**Castle Shannon Blvd at Washington Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15227**

**Telephone: 412-531-1912**

**Website: <http://www.mtlebanonlibrary.org>**

### **Brief History:**

The Mt. Lebanon Public Library is a publicly funded, non-profit lending library of books, tapes, and other educational materials.

### **Programs Offered:**

Adult English as a Second Language instruction in cooperation with the Greater Pittsburgh Literacy Council. Pre-school story time, K-12 learning activities, interest classes, and adult book studies. Intergenerational literacy activities.

**Fees:** Nominal fee for some programs.

## **Catholic Charities Diocese of Pittsburgh**

### **Refugee Services Program**

**3212 Ninth St. Pittsburgh, PA 15222**

**Telephone: 412-456-6999**

**Website: <http://www.ccpgh.org/Website/home.htm>**

**Contact Person : Mr. John Miller, Director Refugee Resettlement**

**E-mail: [jmiller@ccpgh.org](mailto:jmiller@ccpgh.org)**

### **Brief History:**

Since 1910 Catholic Charities has provided assistance to those in need. Current programs include counseling, community programs, refugee resettlement, emergency relief, housing and tangible assistance, child care, mother and infant programs, youth activities, elderly and parish services. The agency serves over 80,000 individuals, regardless of race, ethnicity or religion, in six counties of southwestern Pennsylvania.

### **Programs Offered:**

Catholic Charities Refugee Services Program provides resettlement services for refugees brought to Pittsburgh through the U.S. Department of State and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. Services include housing assistance, employment services, access to social and health services, acculturation and orientation school registration.

### **Fees:**

None



**Mt. Lebanon United Presbyterian Church**  
**Women's FRIENDS Ministry**  
Scott Road at Washington Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15216  
[www.mlupc.org](http://www.mlupc.org)

**Contact Person:** Dr. Robert Maravalli **E-mail:** [rjm@mlupc.org](mailto:rjm@mlupc.org)

**Brief History:**

The vision at Mt. Lebanon United Presbyterian Church is to become a Bright Beacon in a Dark World! Scripture says Jesus Christ is the Light of Life that shines in the darkness. Christians are called to live as children of God in a dark world, shining like beacon lights, holding out the Word of Life. (John 1; Philippians 2 Living Bible) The Women's Ministry Group at Mt. Lebanon United Presbyterian Church began partnering with the District in July of 2005 by establishing a FRIENDS network.

**Programs Offered:**

The Church's work expanded to include individuals from other churches in the Mt. Lebanon area, meeting regularly with families to develop friendships and a mentoring relationship.

The FRIENDS group has provided food, clothing, material goods, transportation, and personal relationships to the refugee families. Churches have also sponsored children to provide scholarships for summer programs, community soccer leagues, and other memberships.

Individuals from many congregations have befriended many of the immigrant families, providing homework help, information about community activities, and participation in community sports.

**Fees:**

None

**Family Resources**

**University of Pittsburgh Student Union Pittsburgh, PA 15260**  
**Telephone: 412-363-1702 Fax: 412-363-1724**  
**Website: <http://www.familyresourcesofpa.org/>**

**Contact Person: Jim MacMillan E-mail: [jimmac@pitt.edu](mailto:jimmac@pitt.edu)**

**Brief History:**

Since 1986, Family Resources has distinguished itself as a leader in combating child abuse and providing support and treatment services to families in Western Pennsylvania.

FR offers innovative programs that have a measurable impact in preventing abuse. Where abuse occurs, we treat the whole family -- the perpetrators of violence as well as the victims.

FR continues to work with health care providers and other social service organizations to become even more effective in providing parents and other caregivers with the support they need to raise happy, healthy children.

**Programs Offered:**

FR offers families a wide range of options to meet their needs -- from telephone counseling, information and referral, to home visiting, support groups, psychological counseling, and tangible help in time of crisis. Many services are available in the privacy of your own home. Others are available at convenient locations. Child care is often provided.





## Greater Pittsburgh Literacy Council (GPLC)

100 Sheridan Square 4th Floor Pittsburgh, PA 15206

Telephone: 412-661-7323 Fax: 412-661-3040

Website: <http://www.gplc.org/>

Contact Person: Lori Keefer, Program Director

E-mail: [lkeefer@gplc.org](mailto:lkeefer@gplc.org)

### Brief History:

Greater Pittsburgh Literacy Council (GPLC) was founded in 1976 to provide adult literacy and adult basic education services to the least educated and most in need citizens of the Greater Pittsburgh area. GPLC was at that time an all-volunteer agency. Since 1982, when it outgrew its all-volunteer structure, GPLC has expanded to employ a staff of thirty-five with an annual student base of well over one thousand. The basic mission of GPLC has remained the same, but with a staff knowledgeable in adult education, curriculum design, volunteer management, and community organizing, it has been able both to refine and extend its service. GPLC maintains nine neighborhood offices in addition to our main office in East Liberty. Staff in these offices assist the approximately 400 active volunteers who serve our students annually.

### Programs Offered:

Current services include basic literacy instruction, GED preparation, English as a second language instruction, skills brush-up classes for adults wishing to enter post secondary training, workplace education classes, basic computer education classes, and family literacy classes.

### Fees:

All services are offered free to students. Certain workplace classes are offered on a fee-for-service basis and are paid for by employer.



## Jewish Family and Children's Service (JF&CS)

### Refugee and Immigration Service Center (RISC)

5743 Bartlett Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15217

Telephone: 412-422-5627 Fax: 412-422-9540

Website: <http://www.jfcsphg.org/index.asp>

Contact Person: Charlotte Zabusky E-mail: [cfz@telerama.com](mailto:cfz@telerama.com)

### Brief History:

JF&CS was originally founded to help immigrants learn English, acquire job skills, and to become acculturated into their adopted country. Later, JFCS added many social services, including counseling, senior services, adoption, guardianship, vocational services, and resettlement.

RISC was established in 1988 to resettle refugees from the former Soviet Union, later from Bosnia, Iran, and other countries.

The Immigration Program was recognized by the Board of Immigration Appeals of the Department of Justice to provide low-cost immigration services to people with limited financial resources, who could not afford the services of an immigration attorney.

### Programs Offered:

- \* Refugee resettlement, including case management, acculturation workshops, job development, English as a Second Language, etc.
- \* Citizenship Assistance, including filling out applications, classes, legal representation if needed.
- \* Immigration Assistance, including consultations, filling out forms, family-based petitions, diversity lottery, visa extensions, travel documents, certificates of citizenship, affidavits of support, some asylum services, and referrals as needed.
- \* Educational presentations on immigration laws and regulations.
- \* Culturally-sensitive Job Skills Workshops.
- \* Referrals for ESL, vocational services, counseling, and other social services.

### Fees:

Nominal fees for all immigration related services. Schedule available. Sliding scale based on income for other services.



## South Hills Interfaith Ministries (SHIM)

1900 Sleepy Hollow Road, South Park, PA 15129

Telephone: 412-854-9120 Fax: 412-854-9123

Website: <http://www.shim-center.org/>

Contact Person: Carol D. Popp, Executive Director

E-mail: [cpopp@shim-center.org](mailto:cpopp@shim-center.org)

### Brief History:

In 1968, SHIM began as an outreach ministry to the area's youth with its "Ministry in the Mall" at the South Hills Village Mall. Today, SHIM is a ministry dedicated to meeting a variety of needs for people of all ages including, Family Hospice, Meals on Wheels, Senior Partners in Mt. Lebanon, Interfaith Re-employment Group, and Interfaith Hospitality Network..

### Programs Offered:

#### COUNSELING SERVICES:

SHIM's counseling services meet an increasing need for affordable, accessible, quality mental health care. Services are available on a sliding fee scale, based on the client's income. Most health insurance plans are also accepted. Through the counseling service, SHIM provides parent training classes, family therapy, group therapy, marriage counseling, and individual therapy for depression and anxiety disorders.

#### FAMILY ASSISTANCE CENTER assists families in need by:

- \* Distributing groceries, clothing and small household items on a bi-monthly basis and in emergencies. Yearly we sponsor a school supply distribution, a linen distribution and a holiday gift "store". Only SHIM pantry families and youth mission program families are eligible.
- \* Serving as a screening agency for the Dollar Energy Program.

#### YOUTH MISSION PROGRAMS - SHIM operates the following programs in neighborhoods of need:

- \* Early Childhood Program
- \* After School Tutoring Programs
- \* Summer Recreation Programs
- \* VOLUNTEER GRANDPARENTS: In conjunction with Big Brothers/Big Sisters of Greater Pittsburgh, SHIM's Volunteer Grandparent Program matches adults with children for long-term mentoring.

#### INTERFAITH AND INTERCULTURAL UNDERSTANDING:

SHIM seeks ways to foster understanding and respect between the many diverse faiths, races and cultures in the South Hills community.

### Fees:

None



## Welcome Center for Immigrants & Internationals

5743 Bartlett Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15217

Telephone: 412-586-3779 Fax: 412-422-9540

Website: <http://www.wcii.org>

Contact Person: Nimo Tirimanne E-mail: [ntirimanne@wcii.org](mailto:ntirimanne@wcii.org)

### Brief History:

The Welcome Center helps immigrants and international people to learn English, to find jobs, to navigate the political, social and economic environment in the Pittsburgh area. The Welcome Center connects refugees, immigrants, and other international visitors to other newcomers and helps to establish a social network of support.

The Welcome Center was established in 2005 to assist with immigration, housing, school, and family service needs.

### Programs Offered:

- \*Citizenship assistance, including filling out applications, classes, legal representation if needed.
- \*Immigration Assistance, forms, family-based petitions, travel documents, certificates of citizenship, affidavits of support, counseling and other social services.
- \* Translation and interpreting services; referrals for language instruction, GED, and vocational services.

**Fees:** Free, donations or nominal fees for some services.

## Notes