



PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL REPORT BY GRANT CURTIS

As I look back at FY2021, I am truly amazed at the QCAIR's growth during COVID. While we (like everyone else) had to cancel all of our community events, we grew our programs in other ways and hired two employees! For the past several years, QCAIR was an all-volunteer run organization.

Our first hire, a case manager funded through a grant from ICIRR and the State of Illinois, helped individuals apply for COVID assistance programs. Since she began working in December she has helped 340 families (1,000+ individuals) access funds for rent and other needs during the pandemic. Our second hire, a program coordinator joined her in May. She has been getting up to speed on the assistance programs we work with and reaching out to other organizations to learn about their programs so we can make referrals more efficiently. She is beginning to plan in-person events again, such as the Annual US Citizenship Honors Dinner scheduled for November 6, 2021 and our spring world cultures event.

Another major QCAIR program is the US Citizenship Education Outreach effort. We have been funded by ICIRR and the State of Illinois to conduct programming in Rock Island County and had successful funded an expansion into Iowa when COVID shut down in-person events. The Illinois program was forced to shift from in-person group trainings to Zoom consultations. Our goal was to educate 382 Illinois immigrants or refugees on how to apply for citizenships and we surpassed this by reaching more than 400 people!

As we look forward to our new FY, we have set new goals. We will re-start our efforts to expand the Citizenship Education Outreach into Iowa and continue with programs in Illinois. In fact, we are already working with our partner, World Relief, on planning for the arrival of our allies and their families from Afghanistan. We have also set a goal for the case manager to help more than 1,000 families access assistance programs. We have also begun the process of pursuing BIA/DOJ recognition and accreditation that will allow QCAIR to assist immigrants and refugees in applying for US Citizenship. We also plan on offering educational workshops, which, while aimed at immigrants and refugees, will be open to all Quad Citizens. Workshops will cover topics such as how to avoid financial scams, how to build your credit rating, the pros and cons of renting an apartment or owning your own house. Thank you for your support of QCAIR over our last, challenging, fiscal year and we look forward to seeing you in person again soon!

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THE EMERGENCY BROADBAND PROGRAM CAN ASSIST WITH INTERNET COSTS

The Emergency Broadband Program was passed in May 2021 as part of a third stimulus bill in order to assist Americans who cannot afford internet services. So far, more than 2.5 million Americans have signed up for the program.

What does the program provide? The program provides a \$50/month discount for internet services and a 75/month discount for internet services for those who live on Native American lands. The program also provides a one-time discount of up to \$100 for a laptop, desktop computer, or a tablet if you purchase it through a participating provider.

Who qualifies for the Emergency Broadband Program? Anyone who is eligible for federal assistance programs, such as Medicaid, SNAP, SSI benefits; anyone who has had a substantial loss of income since February 29, 2020 and a total household income below \$99,000 for single filers and \$198,000 for joint filers.

If you qualify, how can you apply for the EBB program? Go to getemergencybroadband.org. You can also contact your internet provider or get a mail-in application by calling 1-833-511-0311.

The program will end when the money is spent, so apply as soon as you can!



QCAIR HIRES NEW PROGRAM COORDINATOR



Emerald Johnson began as the QCAIR Program Coordinator in May. Emerald brings a lot of energy and passion to the team. Her experience working with foreign exchange students to help them adjust to life in Iowa provides a great foundation for her job at QCAIR, as we help people adjust to life and connect to resources available in our community. Many people who walk through the doors are struggling financially and have a need of affordable housing, English classes, childcare, and employment and she has been exploring the many resources available to address these needs.

Emerald previously led on QCAIR's Social Conversations project as a volunteer. The goal of that project was to provide English language learners the opportunity to practice their speaking skills. In her new role, Emerald jumped right in and began building a "Master file" of QC assistance resources so that we can more efficiently address the needs of individuals coming in for assistance. She also has volunteers reaching out to local churches in the Quad Cities to discover what they are doing to help immigrants and what gaps exist that need to be filled.

"Collaboration, not competition," Emerald says. She would like to see QCAIR work more with other existing organizations in the area who are doing important work. Connecting people with resources seems to be a passion and a skillset of hers. This could be part of her success as a local realtor as well - connecting people with new homes.

Emerald is looking forward to planning future programs and outreach so that the work of QCAIR can expand.

If you would like to volunteer with QCAIR or have any ideas for future projects or ways we can serve the community, please email Emerald at ejohnson@QCAIR.org.



Why are you a part of QCAIR and what do you like about it?

I recently joined QCAIR and became a board member. The main reason I joined was because this is a cause I deeply care about. I realized how important this organization is and how it changes lives. I want to take part in helping someone set their life. As an immigrant myself I understand the struggle and the pain so to know that I helped make someone else's journey easier provides me great joy.

When did you come to the US and what brought you here?

I came to the USA soon after getting married. My husband has spent his entire life here but I moved after marrying him. Originally I'm from Lahore, Pakistan but I've lived everywhere in the USA from Peoria to Detroit to Boston and now Bettendorf.

What are your hopes for the future of QCAIR?

I hope that this organization continues to work for the people and grows and continues helping immigrants on their new journey.

What is a fun or interesting fact about you?

A fun fact about me is that I'm a skilled home cook but ask me to bake simple box brownies and I'll be lost by the second step.

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QCAIR RECEIVES FUNDS FROM ROCK ISLAND COMMUNITY FOUNDATION



On August 31st, The Rock Island Community Foundation gifted QCAIR with a check. The money will be used to continue QCAIR's efforts with supporting our immigrant and refugee populations.

We want to thank the Rock Island Community Foundation for their support and for all they do for our communities.

QUICK WAYS YOU CAN SUPPORT QCAIR



MAWUA FOOD MARKET OPENS IN DAVENPORT

Although there are several Asian and Mexican grocery stores, Davenport did not have an ethnic grocery that sells foods and ingredients from African countries... Until now!

Introducing Mawua Food Market in Davenport, which opened summer 2021. Redeemer Toko and her husband John own the market. They immigrated from Togo in West Africa and are US citizens who now raise their five kids here. They wanted to open a market that serves African foods so that people do not always have to drive to Moline or Rock Island for ingredients. However, they strive to serve all ethnicities and have a variety of snacks and foods from other countries. From a wide variety of Asian sauces, to fresh foods like African sweet potatoes and cassava, to frozen fish and chicken, to Mexican sodas and juices, to toiletries, diapers, and African spice grinders--they have a little bit of everything! Mawua even offers a hair braiding service called Mawua Hair Braiding and Styling.

Mawua is a word that means God, but not just God. It translates to "God surprised you in an unexpected way", which describes how Redeemer felt when she started wanting to open the grocery store. She says God kept providing and opening doors for her to open the store.



Mawua Food Market owner
Redeemer Toko

Redeemer is excited to serve the people of the Quad Cities, no matter where you may live. Come check out what Mawua Food Market has to offer!

Mawua Food Market: 1601 E. Locust Street, Davenport, IA, 52803.

Open Monday: 12 PM - 8 PM, Tuesday- Saturday: 9 AM - 7:30 PM, and Sunday: 9 AM - 11:30 AM and 4 PM - 8 PM.

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1500 Plaza Place Muscatine, IA 52761



Exotic Thai

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Davenport: (563)344-0909 Moline: (309)797-9998

exoticthaiqc.com

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3922 38th Ave. Moline, IL 61265

Open Wednesday-Monday 11 AM - 2 PM, 4 PM - 9 PM

PANDEMIC HEALTH NAVIGATION PROGRAM

QCAIR's Vice President, Nana Ouro-Agoro, has been serving as the Supervisor for Region 2 of the Pandemic Health Navigation Program in Illinois. The aims of this program are to assist with the impacts of COVID, such as food and rent assistance; help with contact tracing by working with the Rock Island Health Department; and help with outreach activities such as COVID education, prevention, vaccination, and healthcare connection. In this role, Nana was a part of several outreach and vaccination events over the summer held at local community health centers, such as Community Health Care in Moline. She also oversees six community health workers. Nana approached her role as one of significant purpose.

COVID has presented a unique challenge to immigrants and refugees due to the language barrier that sometimes exists, vaccine hesitancy, and confusion over inconsistent information being provided by the CDC and local and state leaders. We want to thank Nana for her courageous work in these efforts! To get in touch with Nana about her work with the Pandemic Health Navigation Project, email nana.ouro-agoro@uniteafricans.org.



Community Health Workers

Help. Guide. Thrive.

Funding provided by the Illinois Department of Public Health.



TRY SOMETHING NEW AND DELICIOUS: VISIT TASTE OF ETHIOPIA

As the oldest girl in her family, Genet Moraetes grew up cooking for her siblings. "In Ethiopia," she says, "they prepare you to be a perfect wife." Genet stopped cooking once she moved to the United States. She met an American man, worked at the Arsenal as an HR specialist for many years, and then was about to retire and something changed. Genet started bringing traditional Ethiopian dishes to potlucks with friends and realized there was a demand in the Quad Cities for Ethiopian food. Other people complained that if they wanted Ethiopian food, they would have to drive all the way to Chicago to get it. The idea for an Ethiopian restaurant in Davenport was born.

After a few challenges with finding a building for the restaurant, Genet Moraetes found the historical location along Davenport's riverfront and "Taste of Ethiopia" opened at 102 S. Harrison St. in 2019. The record Mississippi River flood of 2019 and even the pandemic of 2020 have not deterred Genet from her task of making delicious Ethiopian food for the Quad Cities community.

"I cook what I eat," she says. She personally chops all of the vegetables, the beets, the beans, the lentils, the meat. She knows the work she puts into making her food taste good. The fact that Ethiopian food has to be made fresh and cannot be bought from a store is what makes it unique, delicious, and good for you.

As for her customers, Genet says, "I want them to have something they've never eaten before and realize that they love lentils, beets, curry. I want them to have a new and different experience with their food. People know Ethiopia as a poor country. It is mentioned in the Bible 66 times, but most people do not know where it is. I want people to know that our country has a lot to offer. We need more diversity in our area, and we can help provide that."

Taste of Ethiopia Restaurant:
102 S. Harrison St., Davenport
Hours:
Friday - Sunday 11 AM - 2 PM
Wednesday - Sunday 5 PM - 8 PM
(Friday nights are open until 9 PM)



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SEEKING EVENT PLANNING VOLUNTEERS!

QCAIR'S annual Citizenship Honors Dinner will be held on **November 6, 2021**. If you or anyone you know would be interested in being on the planning committee for this exciting event, please contact Emerald Johnson at ejohnson@QCAIR.org.

CALLING ALL VOLUNTEERS!

QCAIR is starting a **Client Need Response Team**. When people need help and are unable to find resources in the community, the response team would help respond to those needs. Please email Emerald Johnson at ejohnson@QCAIR.org if you are interested.

QCAIR's new office in Moline got some updates in September. With help from some international scholarship students from Iowa Resource for International service, we removed wallpaper and painted the office. Thank you so much for your hard work Hamza, Yafa, Leart & Fatima! Solutions Management Group (SMG) generously donated a printer to our office also.



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Financing for Immigration Services:

Newcomers Initiative finances low-cost immigration services through select partners listed on ascentra.org/newcomers.



September 24th, 2021

IMMIGRANT ENTREPRENEURS SUMMIT

QUAD CITIES

Eastern Iowa & Western Illinois
Virtual Summit

TICKETS: \$30

The Immigrant Entrepreneurs Summit's mission is to bring businesses of diverse backgrounds together to share, learn, and celebrate the immigrant entrepreneurship experience and contribution to the overall community.

The Summit exhibits the success stories of immigrant entrepreneurs. The event strives to create true understanding among different ethnic groups, and business growth tips are shared among immigrant business owners. Keys to success are shared in a creative, collaborative, and supportive environment.

To register for this exciting event and see the seminar schedule, please visit:

<https://www.accelevents.com/e/ies2021qc>



SAVE THE DATE!
November 6, 2021



ANNUAL CITIZENSHIP HONORS DINNER and Open House 1800 7th Avenue, Moline

Follow us for more information:





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