



## PRESIDENT'S CORNER BY GRANT CURTIS

So far 2021 has been an interesting year. I'll admit, I didn't think it could get worse than 2020. The first few months are trying to prove me wrong! The year started with the insurrection at the Capitol. March brought the shooting and killing of eight Asians in Atlanta, followed, in the next several weeks, by more shootings in other parts of the country. Then someone drove their car into one of the barricades in the capitol, injuring one of the officers and killing another one. He then got out of the car brandishing a knife and when he failed to drop it, he was shot and died. I keep wondering what this country has come to. It makes me wonder if what I heard on a news cast a few weeks ago is true, "Have we forgotten how to forgive?" A couple friends of mine; I'll call them G&V have an admirable attitude towards forgiveness I would like to share.

One of G&V's daughters was murdered by her boyfriend. The killer was found and sentenced to life in prison. G&V's journey over the last 30 years has been a great example that tragedy is not about forgetting, but about forgiving. "Dealing with the murder of our 15 yr. old daughter Jennifer by her boyfriend was undeniably difficult and the weight of the grief felt like years were taken off our lives. After nine years and much prayer we decided to set up a meeting with the murderer, who was serving a life sentence to face our demon and face the object of our anger and pain. Our message was "we forgive you". As soon as we did this, a tremendous burden was lifted off our shoulders and the anger evaporated. Not only did we feel better and stronger now but the effect on the inmate was also dramatic which marveled the prison personnel who saw the positive changes in this young man from that point on."

We each have to make the decision for ourselves: are we willing release the anger we feel? Are we ready to take action and choose forgiveness, no matter how much we dislike the decision? It's not about our being right or forgetting; it's about our forgiving both the perpetrator and ourselves. Are you up to the task?

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## QCAIR CONDEMNS VIOLENCE AGAINST ASIANS

QCAIR calls on every Quad Citizen to stand against hate in all its forms - racism, violence, discrimination, and staying silent. From the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 to the Japanese detention in internment camps in the 1940s, people of Asian ancestry have been overtly discriminated against throughout our history. Since the beginning of the pandemic, there has been a 150% increase in hate crimes against Asians. The root of all racism, Asian American and otherwise, is both found in ignorance and fear. Part of QCAIR's mission is dispel this ignorance through education of all cultures. Since QCAIR's inception, have stood for equality with respect to all immigrants and refugees, wherever they have come from, and whatever path led them to us. If you have been a victim of a hate crime, please reach out to us. We will listen and if your are comfortable, we will help you seek justice.

QCAIR is a 501(c)(3) non-profit.

Our mission is to assist immigrants and refugees to integrate into the Quad Cities community by advocating for immigrants and refugees and collaborating with appropriate service providers.

## BOARD MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: GENET MORAETES

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

I'm part of QCAIR because I am an immigrant and understand how difficult and hard it is to be in a new country. I also know that America was built and is continuously shaped by immigrants and refugees. I also appreciate that QCAIR is a local organization that provide services and resources to individuals/families at urgent and vulnerable time.

### When did you come to the US? What do you do the Quad Cities?

I was born and raised in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. I moved to America in November 1985 because Ethiopia was going through civil war, ethnic conflict, violence, and persecution and it was not safe for me or my family to live there. I met my husband George in 1991 when he was an active soldier stationed in Maryland. We got married in 1994 and my husband was moved around the country alot. Eventually the Army assigned him to Seoul, Korea. I started my government career in Seoul, and we moved to the Quad Cities in May 2005. My last 15 years of government service was at the Rock Island Arsenal until I retired in January 2020.

In May 2016, I started Taste of Ethiopia with my husband because community potlucks and family get-togethers showed a demand for our amazing food! We started with partners but afer a year, we took over and run it as a family business out of the Farmer's Market and with occasional catering jobs. In July 2019, we opened Taste of Ethiopia at the Express Building located at the Union Station in Davenport.

### What are your hopes for the future of QCAIR?

One thing I really want is to see more volunteers for QCAIR. Now more than ever, immigrants and refugees from around the world are in need of allies and supporters who will advocate for their rights, especially here in the Quad Cities.



## MAKING A DIFFERENCE: THE ILLINOIS FAMLY SUPPORT PROGRAM



Amy DeHaven learned about the Illinois Family Support Program (IFSP) as a QCAIR volunteer. The program is funded by the State of Illinois and run by the Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights. TIFSP' goal is to assist immigrants who have been financially impacted by COVID-19 and have not received other COVID-assistance from the government, such as the stimulus checks.

In the fall of 2020, Amy and other QCAIR volunteers, began sharing information with the public about IFSP. Word spread around quickly that immigrants who apply could receive a grant for a \$1-3,000 for emergency costs related to the pandemic. There was a lot of interest in the program so Amy was hired on as QCAIR staff to help people fill applications for IFSP.

The results of the program have been nothing but positive.

"Helping people pay their bills is inspiring," Amy says. "So many are out of work and are using up their savings. Such a small amount really does make a difference but more is needed." The application deadline has ended and the program is set to expire in July 2021

Thank you, Amy, for the work you do for our community with this program! You are making a difference.



## NEED GROCERIES? HEAD TO THE US & AFRICAN FOOD MARKET IN ROCK ISLAND



The US & African Food Market in Rock Island is a wonderful place to shop. The owner, Cishahayo "Chicago" Christopher, was born in the Congo to Burundian parents, grew up in Tanzania, and came to Illinois in 2010. He opened the US & African Food Market in 2012.

When you step into the store, you'll find that he is serving the needs of his target market. The store sells a variety of snacks, spices, fresh, and frozen items. An item that stands out is the specialty smoked fish called *mukeke* that comes from Lake Tanganyika in Burundi. Chicago also sells many fresh fruits and vegetables as well, like the yuca, which is also called cassava, depending on where you might be from. The market also sells bottles of the traditional cooking oil of several African countries. You won't be disappointed!

US & African Food Market, 4126 11th St, Rock Island, IL  
Ph: 309-235-9541.

Open Monday-Saturday 9:30 AM - 8:30 PM, and Sunday 4 PM- 8 PM.

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## MERCADO ON FIFTH OPENS JUNE 4TH!

It's been a long time since crowds have been able to gather on summertime Friday nights at Mercado on Fifth (at 5th Avenue and 12th Street in Moline). Perhaps you've been missing the amazing food from a

variety of vendors, or the chance to gather around a table with friends outside, or have missed the music. Whatever it is you're missing, get ready for the opening on Friday, June 4th, 2021! The Mercado has recently hired a new director, Anamaria Rocha, who is passionate about growing the organization. If you or anyone you know is interested in becoming a vendor at the Mercado on Fifth, please email [anamaria@mercadoonfifth.org](mailto:anamaria@mercadoonfifth.org) or call 305-934-5297.



The logo for Lemongrass Cafe features the word "LEMONGRASS" in a large, black, serif font. Below it, the word "CAFE" is written in a smaller, white, sans-serif font on a black background. To the left of "CAFE" are three circular icons: a green fork, an orange spoon, and a red knife.

(309) 797-4100  
[lemongrasscafequadcities.com](http://lemongrasscafequadcities.com)  
1419 Fifth Ave.  
Moline, IL 61625  
Open Mon-Thurs 11 AM - 9 PM, Fri-Sat 11 AM - 10 PM

## TAPESTRY FARMS GARDEN PLOT COMING TO 3RD AND BROWN ST. IN DAVENPORT

Third and Brown Street in downtown Davenport will now be the home to one of Tapestry Farms' "urban farm plots". What is Tapestry Farms and what is their mission? As stated on their website, "The Tapestry Farms urban farm system reclaims underutilized local land to grow fresh vegetables, fruit, herbs, and flowers in Quad Cities food deserts. Refugees are employed to put their agricultural experience, skills, and talents to work, benefiting their new community and their families. Produce is distributed using an income-based Community Supported Agriculture model - people with

limited income pay little to nothing for shares, while people with more income pay more to support the work of Tapestry Farms. "Tapestry Farms is investing in our community by investing in the lives of immigrants and refugees who are our neighbors. To find out more about Tapestry Farms, read their blog, sign up to be a volunteer, sign up for their CSA, or give to their cause, **visit: [www.tapestryfarms.org](http://www.tapestryfarms.org)!**



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## JAMAICAN RESTAURANT COOKS WITH LOVE

Taste 876, Davenport's Jamaican restaurant, opened in January 2020 just before the pandemic. In spite of the many obstacles, the restaurant's manager, Melissa Johnston, remains optimistic. This optimism is something she carried with her at age 9, when she moved from Jamaica to Westchester, NY, where she became a US citizen. When she was older, she came to Davenport and began a Jamaican catering business. After a while, so many people kept asking for more of their food that she decided to open up the restaurant with two other family members.



The restaurant's bright green walls and green and yellow curtains are an ode to Jamaica. The outdoor seating will be nice in the summertime and their location on River Drive makes it a convenient spot. The manager's husband visits Jamaica every three months to bring back fresh spices for their recipes, like the Jerk Chicken or the Curry Goat.

The manager spoke lovingly of her Jamaican upbringing and how everyone grew up learning how to cook together because they had to. "You grew your own food. You washed the vegetables, you made rice, you killed a chicken and cooked it with fresh herbs from the garden." Melissa grew up hearing her grandmother say, "If you don't cook with love, it won't taste good." Years later, and time has found Melissa in a kitchen of her own, at a restaurant like no other in the Quad Cities, and one in which, truly, the food is being cooked with love. Love, and a whole lot of perseverance.

Taste 876 Jamaica, 114 Myrtle St. Unit A, Davenport, IA, Ph: 563-949-4025

**Hours:** Mon: Closed, Tues-Wed: 2-8 PM, Thurs: 10-8 PM, Fri/Sat: 10-9 PM, Sun: 11-7 PM

[www.taste876.com](http://www.taste876.com)

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## STONE TO SEED: HESS'S STORY

WITH SPECIAL THANKS TO WORLD RELIEF AND ERICA PARRIGIN FOR ALLOWING US TO SHARE HESS' STORY

Hess grew up in one of Thailand's seven refugee camps. It was crowded, hot --"like a slum." Small bamboo houses with leaf roofing were packed in tight, numbered sections, each section containing up to 400. Thousands of people were enclosed by the wire fences that bordered the camp. "The population was roughly 70,000 or 80,000, give or take," he said.

The camp's inhabitants couldn't afford to think in the long-term; all that mattered was getting through the next day. 15-year-old Hess was no exception. Living day by day felt hopeless, and he never thought about his career or what he would do as an adult. Hess and his schoolmates found comfort in soccer. Its intensity was a welcome change of pace and quickly became his favorite outlet.

He loved to imagine himself as a soccer player making it big in the tournaments one day, but he was also grounded by his desire to go to school and "get good grades." Driven to succeed, he surrounded himself with friends. They had as much fun competing against one another in the classroom as they did while playing soccer, despite his school's limited resources.

Hess' family applied to resettle in late 2007. But starting a new chapter in life often means ending the previous one--when they were selected in 2008, Hess realized he would have to leave his friends behind. The flight to the US carried the hefty burden of homesickness. (continued on next page)

## HESS' STORY (CONTINUED)



When his family arrived, the culture and climate were unlike anything he had experienced before. Everyone around him spoke too quickly for him to understand, and it was stressful. "I felt homesick. I had no friends. I'm like, I feel like an alien in the streets! And it was very cold, hard to adjust. The food, environment, culture--all a challenge," he recalls. And when WRQC staff stepped in to help lift the weight from his family's shoulders, providing an apartment, coordinating appointments, and helping with medical visits, he felt a little better. He was even more relieved by the opportunity to learn the language.

Hess re-enrolled in high school as a freshman, and his homesickness couldn't dampen his outgoing personality for long. Forming bonds became easier as time passed. And while they would never replace his love for his friends back home, new friends helped restore the energy in his soul.

Impossibilities slowly became accomplishments. Hess started to knock on doors without fear, but faith that they would open for him. He's now a part-time interpreter and full-time social worker at Karen Community in Rock Island and meets clients with the same warm embrace that helped him feel accepted in his time of need. Without hopelessness clouding his vision, he has "a lot of plans".

"I hope to go back to my homeland and open up a business, to help educate children in my home country and influence them to see the world better," Hess said.

The homesickness that once sat like a stone in his chest became a seed. Once nourished by friendships and watered with kindness, Hess grew to heights his teenage self would never have expected -- and flourishes with every opportunity to give back.

## GUEST CORNER

QCAIR's Guest Corner features an article by local civic or business leaders in the Quad Cities. If you would like to write for the Guest Corner, please email [qcair@qcair.org](mailto:qcair@qcair.org).

### 4 STEPS TO EMPOWER YOUR SELF-BELIEF TO SIZE SUCCESS

by Bachir Djehcihe, Imam at Islamic Center of the Quad Cities, Moline

Empowering self-beliefs is the foundation of success. At the same time, beliefs are what trap most people in their problems. As Dr. Richard Bandler, co-creator of neuro linguistic programming (NLP) stated that when people limit their beliefs, they are only limiting themselves. It is common for people to be nurtured into the idea that specific goals and ideas are unattainable since birth. Here are four steps to help eliminate these limitations, empower you-self-beliefs, unleash the giant within you, and achieve your dreams.

#### Step 1. I Believe I am Possible

Some people are blessed with an ideal living situation, giving them a superior mind frame when it comes to what they may achieve. Humankind is blessed and honored with a mind that is a powerful machine and is granted superiority among all creations, enabling man/woman to achieve almost anything. However, there must be the belief that this is possible. Tony Robbins uses a fantastic slogan to motivate his audience; "Now I am the voice. I will lead, not follow. I will believe, not doubt. I will create, not destroy. I am a Force for Good. I am a Leader. Defy the odds! Set a new standard! Step up." When you believe in what you want, ask, and you may receive. Although, it may come in different phases. King Solomon, the prophet (peace be upon him), asked God generously, as the Quran stated: "He turned to Us and prayed: 'Lord forgive me! Grant me such power as no one after me will have—You are the Most Generous Provider.'" Immediately, He got what he asked for. "So, we gave him power over the wind, which gently ran wherever he willed, and the jinn, every kind of builder and diver, and others chained in fetters. It is Our gift, so give or withhold as you wish without an account" (The Quran: 38:36–39). Self-affirming beliefs drive success, therefore moving past self-limiting beliefs is paramount to progressing toward one's aspirations. (continued on next page)

## GUEST CORNER (CONTINUED)

### Step 2. Get Over Your Past Limiting Beliefs

Getting Over Your Past Limiting Beliefs is your path towards greater happiness and success. As it is scientifically proven that 80% of success is psychology and 20% is mechanics, here is a systemic exercise that you can adopt and use to get over your past limiting beliefs. This exercise is based on my mentor, Dr. Richard Bandler, the co-founder of NLP, and is titled Reversing Feeling Exercise.

1. Think about something that makes you fearful or phobic, and check where that feeling is located.
2. Imagine this feeling as a wheel and notice its movement. If it spins, in which direction? Clockwise/Counterclockwise, Forward/Backward? Could you give it a repulsive color? Increase the speed.
3. Now, stop the spinning. Using your hands, imagine removing this wheel of feelings from within yourself, turn it around, and provide it with an attractive color.
4. Replace it inside your body, spinning in the opposite direction. As it spins faster, reminisce about the best moments in your life.
5. Keep this wheel spinning as you imagine that everything is delightful. Think about your present and future situation. Foresee life with a smile, retaining this feeling of joy and comfort.

### Step 3. Get Through Your Present Challenges

The prerequisite to getting through present challenges and facing reality is eliminating past problems. Once a person realizes the depth of detrimental habits and attempts to recover, they are often unsuccessful. As a result, these attempts result in disappointments. By abandoning rehabilitation, a new manner is established subconsciously that will weaken the person, preventing steadfastness from overcoming obstacles. Mark Victor Hansen stated, "Do not wait until everything is just right. It will never be perfect." Our focus should be directed toward developing more skills rather than wishing for fewer problems. Life is a test, as God "created death and life to test you [people] and reveal which of you does best" (Al-Quran, Al-Mulk [The Dominion, 67], Verse 2). Abiding by this, we may succeed. Each success is part of global human success.

### Step 4. Get to Manifest Your Desired Goals

The primary key to your future is YOU. Be courageous; courage is a far more valuable asset than capital, as it is the fuel for making decisions. Unlike doubt, the thief of opportunity, courage is the mastery of fear. The courageous person is not the one who is not fearful; he is the one who turns fear into freedom and achieves tremendous success by perceiving failure as feedback.

Expand your network and relationships, and always seek new opportunities with everyone you meet. Be generous and provide positivity with a smile; it is a charity. Establish positivity by being courteous, compassionate, and stick to your word. "You who believe, why do you say things and then do not do them? It is most hateful to God that you say things and then do not do them" (The Quran: As-Saff, 61, Verses 2-3).

Nothing is going to change unless you change yourself. Remember there is no failure, only feedback, and failure is the best meal of champions, so work on your set of positive beliefs and move on, you're not a tree. See you at the top.

### OTHER WAYS TO GIVE TO QCAIR



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## COVID-19 FUNERAL ASSISTANCE FROM FEMA

### Eligibility requirements:

- The death must have occurred in the U.S., including the U.S. territories and the District of Columbia.
- The death certificate must attribute the death to COVID-19.
- The applicant must be a U.S. citizen, non-citizen national, or qualified alien who incurred funeral expenses after January 20, 2020.
- There is no requirement for the deceased person to have been a U.S. citizen, non-citizen national, or qualified alien.

FEMA will begin accepting applications in April 2021. If you or someone you know meets these requirements, please keep all the documentation of the COVID-19 funeral expenses such as receipts and funeral home contract as well as proof of funds from other sources for the funeral.

More information can be found at: [www.fema.gov/disasters/coronavirus/economic/funeral-assistance](https://www.fema.gov/disasters/coronavirus/economic/funeral-assistance)

## COVID-19 FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR IOWANS

### Do you live in Iowa?

**Have you been negatively financially impacted by COVID-19?**

**Are you having difficulties paying your rent, mortgage, or utilities?**

**Are you at risk of homelessness, foreclosure, or eviction?**

If you answered yes to any of these questions, please go to <https://www.iowafinance.com/about/covid-19-ifa-recovery-assistance/> to learn more about resources that are available to you.

You may be eligible for rent, mortgage, or utilities assistance. You also can receive free legal services as you apply for the financial assistance. The website has links to job postings, food assistance sites, and other resources for those who continue to be negatively affected by COVID-19.

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## Quad Cities Alliance For Immigrants and Refugees

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