



PRESIDENT'S CORNER BY GRANT CURTIS

Quad Citizen and avid QCAIR-supporter, Jean Baptist, received the Spirit Award at the Immigrant Entrepreneur Summit in July and I wanted to use this President's Corner to let everyone know about this admirable man.

Mr. Baptist is a first generation Immigrant who has demonstrated a lifelong commitment to professional excellence and altruistic pursuits. His accomplishments and contributions have had a substantial positive impact on the immigrant and larger community.

Born in Rwanda, Jean Baptiste spent a significant part of his childhood without a country to call home. War broke out when he was eight and his family left Rwanda to escape the eminent danger to their daily lives. With almost no material possessions, Jean and his family traveled by foot from Rwanda to Burundi, the Congo, and Angola, escaping war and violence in each of these countries before finally arriving in Zambia in 1998. Here, he completed high

school and became a community organizer with the United Nations. He used the nine languages and dialects he picked up along to serve as an interpreter and help other refugees get oriented to the refugee camps, navigate life in Zambia or resettle elsewhere.. In 2009, Jean and his mother and four siblings were able to gain resettlement and moved to the Quad Cities.

As soon as he set foot on U.S.soil, Jean knew he was home. The Quad Cities was and is where he belonged: he got an ID, he had a path to citizenship and the freedom of self-determination, where there were boundless opportunities for his work ethic and fortitude to bring him and his loved ones prosperity and meaning. He wasted no time finding a full time job at Tyson while enrolled full time in a nursing program at Scott Community College but soon realized that he needed a more flexible work schedule to accommodate the rigor of his studies. Armed with a letter of recommendation from the United Nations, Jean became a medical interpreter at the local hospital. Over time, he also served as an interpreter for the courts and other organizations serving refugees. In addition to providing interpreting services, he often also helped with transportation to and from appointments at his own expense.

It became apparent to Jean that transportation was a tremendous barrier for many patients from under served communities and that this service gap presented a tremendous business opportunity for Jean and his brother to start a new business transporting patients to their medical appointments. He works directly with insurance company to cover the cost of the transport. Beginning with two vehicles in the Quad Cities, they now have 60 vehicles operating in Iowa and Illinois. The company owns and maintains the vehicles, takes care of permits and insurance, and contracts with individuals as independent drivers. Wherever possible, patients with limited English proficiency are matched with a driver who can speak their mother tongue but everyone can expect prompt and friendly service as well as an empathetic and helpful driver.

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COMMUNITY GARDENING AND TOMATO CANNING IN ROCK ISLAND



This past summer, six refugee families from Rwanda and Burundi, began a garden at St. John's Lutheran Church in Rock Island. Pastor Stacy Fidler provided the land and mulch as well as prayers. For the culmination of their project, the University of Illinois and Iowa State Extension Offices co-taught a class on canning tomatoes. Canning will be vital to the group, who grew an abundance of tomatoes but have limited freezer space for them.

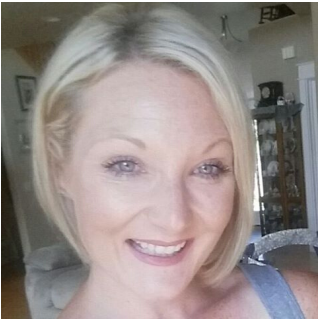
The Asbury Garden Ministry in Davenport donated tomatoes and onions for the training, parishioners provided jars (and tops), and volunteer interpreters translated recipes in French and Swahili.

The training ended by sharing delicious food from different cultures and more importantly, by developing lasting friendships.



LAURA FONTAINE NAMED NEW DIRECTOR OF THE MOLINE WORLD VISION OFFICE

World Relief recently named Laura Veronica Fontaine as the new Director of the Moline office. She has been with World Relief since April 2017, working in Immigration Legal Services. Her vision is to create a more welcoming, loving, and inclusive Quad Cities Community through community partnerships, education, and open dialogue with all organizations and churches. She is excited to work in collaboration with QCAIR, starting with a joint forum on the public charge held in September as well as the two groups working together to meet the dental needs for twin refugee girls that needed emergency procedures. World Relief Moline is looking forward to the two organizations working together more in the future. Laura urges the Quad Cities to envision that every refugee and vulnerable immigrant is welcomed by our community, rooted in this community, and empowered for all communities.



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Since October 1, 2018

GRANTS RECEIVED

For Iowa Citizenship Education Outreach

- Wells Fargo Foundation - \$5,000
- Catholic Diocese of Davenport - \$1,500
- Thrift Center - \$700
- Rock Island Community Foundation - \$1,400

For Illinois Citizenship Outreach Education

- Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights - \$32,325

OTHER WAYS TO GIVE

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(Mexico)
Sabina Paulin (Nepal)

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS - WORKERS COMPENSATION BY ANDREW BRIBRIESCO, BRIBRIESCO LAW FIRM

Your shoulder is hurting when you do your job at work and it seems to be getting worse. It doesn't matter how much ibuprofen you take, or how much you rest at home, you are having difficulty doing your job because of the pain. Your work injury is not going away, and you know you are supposed to report it to your supervisor at work.

I imagine that you have not reported your work injury yet because you are afraid of what will happen. You worry that you will lose your job, or something even worse will happen because you are an immigrant. This is a common fear that many of our clients have. Our explanation of the law in Iowa and Illinois is simple: the immigration status of a worker does NOT matter when seeking workers' compensation benefits for a work injury. Asylees/refugees, permanent residents, and people without documentation (and/or no work permits) are still permitted to receive workers' compensation benefits - such as medical care for a work injury - just the same as citizens.

If you have an attorney representing you, and it seems like they are sharing information regarding immigration status with your employer or the workers' compensation insurance company, you should be concerned. A worker's immigration status, social security number, and most other confidential information pertaining to immigration status do not need to be disclosed to the workers' compensation insurance company or the employer.

Sometimes, employers will spread false information to their workers. For example, employers might say that only citizens can claim workers' compensation benefits. This is false. Sometimes, employers will threaten workers with the possibility of calling the U.S.

Immigration and Customs Enforcement ("ICE") on you. These type of threats are against the public policy of Iowa and Illinois and you have certain rights as a worker. If you think you are in any of the situations described, many attorneys who represent injured workers are willing to provide a free consultation, including our law firm.



Attorneys

Anthony, William, and Andrew Bribriesco

Our mission today is the same as it has been since we first opened our doors many years ago—to use everything in our power to represent our clients with the utmost integrity.

Contact:

In the Quad Cities: 2407 18th Street, Suite 200
Bettendorf, IA 52722, 563-359-8266

In Iowa City: 1700 S. 1st Avenue, Suite 26
Iowa City, IA 52240 (Located inside the
Eastdale Plaza).

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Financing for Immigration Services: Newcomers Initiative finances low-cost immigration services through select partners listed on ascentra.org/newcomers.



ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL IMMIGRANT ENTREPRENEURS SUMMIT HELD IN MOLINE



Immigrant Entrepreneurs Summit (IES) held its second Regional Summit on Saturday, July 20 at the Tax Slayer Center. With the support of the city, generous corporate sponsors, and partnering local organizations, the Summit was a great success – with **138 immigrant entrepreneurs from 20 different countries attending**. An awards ceremony honored Dale Owen from Ascentra Credit Union (Champion Award); Ramon Rosales from Rosales Lawn Care (Outstanding Business Award); and Jean Baptiste from Innovative Transport Enterprises (Spirit Award).

In the last 10 years, IES has helped more than 1,000 individuals form businesses and create more than 2,500 jobs in Iowa alone. The businesses helped to contribute more than \$337,594,372.12 in total sales to Iowa's economy.

IES will celebrate its 12th Anniversary at this year's event on Saturday, November 23. The full-day conference will be held for entrepreneurs throughout the day with access to more than 21 different workshops, feature an awards assembly over the lunch and finish the day's event with Shark Tank-like pitch contest. If you're interested in attending this event in Ankeny, IA, please contact QCAIR for free tickets!



Quad Cities Alliance For Immigrants and Refugees

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