



PRESIDENT'S CORNER BY GRANT CURTIS

During the last six months, our nation has faced several huge issues. As we entered the new year, the COVID-19 virus reared its ugly head in China, and by February, cases had begun showing up in the United States. Then on May 25th, George Floyd was killed in Minneapolis, sparking protests that spread throughout the US and the world. Some demonstrations turned violent while some peaceful protesters were tear-gassed or beaten with clubs. While covering these events, some reporters have been arrested for doing their jobs.

You may ask, "What do these things have in common, and why do we need to pay attention to them? How do these events impact immigrants and refugees?"

The answer to these questions is simple. Each event shares a common element – **FEAR**.

We fear catching COVID; we fear dying. Is it an unreasonable response? No, fear of death is a human response. And sometimes when we are afraid, we try to blame others! Why are there people who are not wearing masks when out in public, why? A common response I've heard is that I'm too young to catch the virus or die from it! What happens when that person catches it and then gives the virus to a parent or grandparent, who later dies? Will they acknowledge their responsibility? The same is true for our response to George Floyd's killing; we fear that we may be next. Why do we carry this fear? I'm not a psychologist, but I suspect that it is because we are not willing or not encouraged to take responsibility for ourselves. We are afraid of what may happen to each of us.

I attended a Black Lives Matter rally in early June and was impressed by the speakers. The first speaker started with, "ALL LIVES MATTER; however, we are here today to talk about black lives." This simple statement comforted many attendees because it gave them the freedom to more fully embrace the purpose of the rally. Another impactful statement was, "To watch something being done that is wrong and do nothing makes you as guilty as the person who committed the act!" Personally, I don't believe truer words have ever been spoken! But the most important call to action was, "You need to vote!" If we are going to change the prejudices of our society, we need to hold our leaders accountable. Politicians are held accountable at the voting booth.

These issues also affect immigrants and refugees as well because we live in a polarized environment; some people fear or hate immigrants, while others want to nurture them and encourage them to grow into everything they can be. Unfortunately, we are encouraged not to be open or receptive to things that are different from what we know. Immigrants and refugees are just like each of us who want the American Dream. They also include a broad spectrum of people, just like all Americans do. I think of the immigrants and refugees whom I have been blessed to know. I believe that we should all follow one of the commandments to "Love your neighbor as yourself." Let's start LOVING and encouraging each other rather than tearing each other down.

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BOARD SPOTLIGHT: NANA OURO-AGORO, QCAIR VICE PRESIDENT



Why do you support QCAIR and what do you like about it?

In 2012, refugees and immigrants had so many issues with housing, jobs, police, health, and languages and it was difficult for them to navigate the Quad Cities. At one point, there were so many complaints from local citizens that the City of Rock Island, where most refugees live, decided to create study groups to help find ways of helping immigrants and refugees in the Quad Cities. QCAIR was founded out of these study groups. Then, I was hired as the Program Director for the New Americans Initiative (NAI).

I also like supporting QCAIR because I am an immigrant myself. Although I am not a refugee, I understand the struggles refugees are experiencing and I feel that I can be helpful some ways or another. QCAIR because it helps immigrants and refugees feel like they have an organization they can rely on to help and advocate for them.

What brought you and your family to the United States?

I came to the United States in 2008, with my husband, after winning a lottery visa back in my home country of Togo (West Africa). Before coming to the United States, I worked at the Ministry of Commerce. We decided to come to the US for more opportunities.

What are your hopes and desires for QCAIR in the future?

My hope is to see QCAIR expand and be able to do even more for immigrants and refugees.

2019 CITIZENSHIP HONORS DINNER HIGHLIGHTS

QCAIR held its fourth annual Citizenship Honors dinner and silent auction on November 9th, 2019, at the QCAIR center (1411 Brady St., Davenport). This event recognizes and honors immigrants and refugees who have chosen to become US citizens. It was the most successful honors dinner so far, with more than 100 people in attendance.

The four speakers were: Zanner Babu, from India; Mun Luangruang, from Thailand; Elvia Aguliara, from Mexico; and Isaac Carr, from Liberia. Each speaker shared their unique journey in coming to the United States and why they chose to take the path to citizenship.

The MC for the event was Rebecca David, a US citizen whose parents were missionaries in Ghana while she was growing up. The dinner featured three distinctly delicious cuisines: Indian, Mexican, and Ethiopian, and there were no leftovers at the end of the evening!

We look forward to the 2020 Citizenship Honors Dinner this fall.



IOWA AND ILLINOIS SCHOOL DISTRICTS TO OFFER FREE MEALS ALL SUMMER FOR CHILDREN

Davenport School District is providing children ages 1-18 with a free breakfast and a lunch until July 30th.

Pickup locations, Monday-Thursday,
11 AM - 1:00 PM

- Achievement Service Center, 1702 N. Main St.
- Sudlow Intermediate School, 1414 East Locust St.
- Williams Intermediate School, 3040 North Division
- Frank L. Smart Intermediate School, 1934 West 5th St.
- Wood Intermediate School, 5701 North Division
- Buffalo Elementary School, 1000 Jefferson St., Buffalo
- Progressive Baptist Church, 1302 E. 12th St.
- Fairmount Library, 3000 N. Fairmount St.
- Jefferson Elementary School, 1027 N. Marquette St.



Anyone in Moline (not just MDV#40 students) can get one fresh produce box and one dairy box once each week from June 12th - August 12th.

Pickup location on Wednesdays from 10 AM -12:30 PM

- John Deere Middle School, 2035 11th St.

McAlister's Deli (3929 41st Ave. Dr., Moline) is offering free sack lunches all summer long for Illinois school-aged kids. You can pick up the lunch Monday-Friday from 11 AM-1 PM

The Rock Island/Milan School District is offering district students under 18, 3-day meal kits with breakfast and lunch through July 30th.

Pickup locations are Mondays and Thursdays from 9:00 AM-11:00 AM
Rock Island

- Earl Hanson, 4000 9th St.
- Frances Willard, 2503 9th St.
- Longfellow, 4198 7th Ave.
- Ridgewood, 9607 14th St W.
- Rock Island Academy, 930 14th St.
- Rock Island Center for Math & Science, 2101 16th Ave.
- Rock Island High School, 1400 25th Ave.

Milan

- Thomas Jefferson, 1307 4th St W.

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

*QCAIR would like to thank the
 International Culture Club
 Employee Resource Group at
 John Deere for donating time to
 work on our website!*



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GRANTS RECIEVED

For Iowa Citizenship Education Outreach

- Wells Fargo Foundation - \$5,000

For Illinois Citizenship Outreach Education

- Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights - \$9,409.72

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QCAIR BOARD MEMBERS

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Open At-Large Position

Open At-Large Position

EVENT CHANGES DUE TO COVID

COVID has caused many events to change their usual format. Here are two key QCAIR events that have been affected.

- The John Deere Classic has been canceled, BUT the **Birdies for Charity will continue**. Donations will be accepted through July 12th, 2020. Go to www.birdiesforcharity.com and designate QCAIR #2150 for your contribution, and Deere will increase your donation by 5 percent.
- The Summer 2020 **Immigrant Entrepreneurs Summit has been changed to a virtual event** on August 14th from 9 AM - 3 PM. The event provides training and support to immigrant entrepreneurs and showcases their businesses. The cost for the event is \$15. To buy tickets and review the agenda, visit www.iesusa.org.

FREE VIRTUAL COOKING CLASSES OFFERED FOR FAMILIES



Due to the pandemic, many families find themselves eating at home more often. Parents may find this frustrating, as cooking feels time-consuming. Kids can often be picky eaters. In addition, cooking is challenging due to the rise in food prices and the difficulty of finding certain ingredients. To help with these issues, the Iowa State University Extension and Outreach out of Scott County is offering a program called “Buy. Eat. Live Healthy”. The program includes free virtual cooking classes for adults and families with children. A series of eight free courses are available over Zoom or FaceTime and can be tailored to suit a family’s schedule and needs. The classes can be taught in English, Spanish, or French.

This program is available to anyone in Illinois or Iowa who meets specific income requirements. If the family qualifies for benefits like WIC, Head Start, or food assistance, they would be eligible for this program. Anyone interested in this program will receive cooking help, recipes, time and money-saving tips, support with cooking meals that kids enjoy, and some kitchen tools. To get set up for the program, please contact Gale Francione by text or by phone (563-726-3237) or by email at galefran@iastate.edu.

QUAD CITIES TO HOLD FALL "WORLD CUP" SOCCER TOURNAMENT



Between the pandemic and the protests, we could all use more opportunities for positive, cross-cultural interactions. Isaac Carr, a QCAIR board member, has a vision to hold a fall Quad Cities "World Cup" soccer/football tournament. Because the game that is played worldwide, the idea is that this will bring immigrants, refugees, and natural-born US citizens together to spur our community towards positive change.

Teams will be made up of members of the immigrant communities present in the Quad Cities who are from Asian, African, and Middle Eastern countries, and Mexico. The tournament will be free to play in and free to attend. Spectators will be encouraged to share their countries' food and showcase their traditional attire on a stage set up at the event. Local DJ's and musicians will share music. There will be booths set up to assist people with the Census2020 and voter registration for the November election.

Isaac and members of Quad Cities Interfaith are planning the all-day tournament for Saturday, October 17th, 2020. The location is still being determined, and as the date gets closer, the planning team will decide whether to postpone the event due to COVID-19 concerns.

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Financing for Immigration Services:

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



Quad Cities Alliance For Immigrants and Refugees

1411 Brady St. Davenport, IA 52803
(563) 594 - 0854 qcair@qcair.org
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