

2008

# highlights



Executive Director Sister Lena Deevy receives her honorary doctorate.

In May, Stonehill College awarded Sister Lena Deevy an Honorary Doctor of Humanities degree in recognition of her commitment to the immigrant community and for her “message of acceptance and multicultural understanding.”

## Sister Lena Deevy Awarded Honorary Doctorate

Professor Richard Finnegan presented the award to Sr. Deevy, long-time IIC Executive Director, in front of a crowd of over 600.

For more than 20 years, Sr. Deevy has worked to help newcomers adapt and succeed in their new lives in New England.

Her leadership has grown IIC from a group of Irish volunteers helping Irish immigrants to a multi-service center of support for all immigrants.

At the ceremony, Prof. Finnegan praised Sr. Deevy for her tireless work and dedication.

“To say that you are involved in opening doors is an understatement,” he said, explaining that she has “widened the thresholds of possibility” for the immigrant community and that her “collaborative spirit allows [her] to look beyond potential barriers of race, language, and place of origin.”

## Walsh Visa Program Ends, with an Eye to the Future

IIC was privileged to contribute to the Northern Irish peace process by administering the Walsh Visa Program from 2001-2008. We provided two years of work and training in Boston to unemployed young adults from both sides

of Northern Ireland’s divide before they returned home to put their experience to work.

It was an honor to witness the personal growth and professional development of 250 program participants. Our

final participants graduated in September and returned to Ireland to make a difference in their local communities.

We now hope to bring the program to other parts of the world.



Participants out and about in Boston.

## IIC Takes Lead in Innovative New Project

IIC is part of an innovative project in Lawrence, MA bringing together the government, community and business sectors to help immi-

grants become U.S. citizens.

Our own Abby Colbert is the immigration attorney for the Lawrence Citizenship

Initiative, a pilot program funded by the Fish Foundation to enable employees of Salvatore’s Italian Restaurants to become citizens.

We are delighted to take our expertise out into the community and hope to make this program a model for other businesses to follow.



IIC clients are among the 3,000 new citizens sworn in at Fenway Park.

## IIC Helps Make Dreams of Citizenship a Reality

IIC clients were proud to be among the 3,000 new citizens sworn in at Fenway Park in September and the 2,800 at Hynes Convention Center in November. In 2008, IIC helped immigrants from Ireland and

a host of other countries complete their often arduous journey from newcomer to new American.

It is a great privilege to stand by our clients and the gradu-

ates of our citizenship classes as they say the pledge to their new country for the first time. We congratulate them and we thank you for making it possible for us to help make their dream a reality.

## New Program Director Brings Fresh Vision to the Immigrant Community

Alexandra Piñeros-Shields, a long-time champion of immigrant rights with over 20 years of experience, joined us in July as Director of Immigrant Programs.

She was drawn to IIC by its “uniquely dual mission” of helping immigrants through direct services – such as

legal clinics and ESOL classes – while simultaneously advocating for change at the local, state, and national levels. The bilingual wife of an Irish-American, Alexandra is excited to enhance the reach of our services to the immigrant community.

“It is fitting that such a

dynamic immigration specialist join IIC on the eve of our 20th anniversary,” Executive Director Sr. Deevy said. “As we continue to grow and adapt to the needs of the Boston immigrant community, people like Alexandra are essential to helping us remain innovative in our approach.”



Alexandra Piñeros-Shields with IIC friend Bill McCormack, Executive Director Lena Deevy, and Citizenship Coordinator John Rattigan.



IIC staff and volunteers at a voter registration drive in Dorchester.

## IIC Contributes to Record Voter Turnout

The November election saw record voter turnout, and immigrant voters played an important role in making that happen.

In the months leading up to the landmark election, IIC

was one of many immigrant advocacy organizations running get-out-the-vote campaigns, manning voter registration tables, encouraging those eligible to become citizens and register to vote, and advocating for increased

immigrant participation.

Our volunteers were part of naturalization and voter registration efforts throughout the state and we thank our partners and volunteers for working alongside us.

## Free Health Clinics Offer Much-Needed Care

Many immigrants and their families are unable to obtain the healthcare they need on their own. Financial limitations or fear of seeking help can keep even the most basic services out of reach.

IIC is here to fill that preventa-

tive healthcare gap. We hosted four walk-in health clinics this year, more than in any previous year. Around 15 people attended each clinic.

Volunteer doctors and dentists provided critical care such as dental checkups and

blood pressure and cholesterol screenings, all at no charge.

We thank our volunteer medical professionals, Cathedral Cares, and the representatives from Healthcare for All, whose assistance makes these clinics possible.



A doctor consults with a patient at an IIC health screening in June.

## John Rattigan and Neil Hurley Honored for Citizenship Work

IIC has been helping immigrants become citizens for over 10 years, and two of IIC’s facilitators of this important

work were recently recognized for their “tireless efforts and dedication in assisting immigrants and refugees in

attaining U.S. citizenship.” The Massachusetts Immigrant and Advocacy Coalition awarded the certificates to John Rat-

tigan, IIC Citizenship Coordinator and Neil Hurley, one of our longest serving volunteers, in November.



Solas emcee Peter Meade is joined by Richard Taylor, Beth Williams, Sr. Lena Deevy, Milton Benjamin, and Cahal Stephens.

## A Night to Remember: Solas ‘08

The annual Solas Awards Dinner recognizes inspiring leaders in our community who give energy, hope and guidance to others.

This year’s gala, held on Nov. 10, drew nearly 400 guests to the Fairmont Copley Plaza to

pay tribute to the honorees and celebrate another successful year for IIC. In special recognition of Black & White Boston, IIC honored Roxbury Technology CEO Beth Williams and Staples founder Tom Stemberg, who represent the kind of corporate partnership

the organization promoted.

Cahal Stephens received an appreciation award for dedicating his time and talent as Solas Chair for the past three years. It was an honor to recognize a man who has done so much for IIC.