Accelerating immigrant integration and economic advancement through education, training, employment and entrepreneurship since 2003.
Dear Friends,

Welcoming is as important as ever. Despite federal policies aimed at reducing the number of immigrants who may call the United States of America home, our region continues to attract international newcomers whose successful integration into the economic, civic, and cultural fabric of society drives our daily purpose. Because of your support, the Welcoming Center has improved the lives of thousands of people since we opened our doors in 2003. Our 2017 fiscal year continued this work, with an emphasis on learning, collaboration, and innovation.

During our 2017 fiscal year, we developed a new strategic plan and made several key adjustments as we help more people successfully integrate into the workforce and build family-sustaining enterprises. Our programming helps immigrants build the skills, knowledge, and networks needed to attain jobs, start or grow their businesses, pursue higher education, and become naturalized citizens. When asked how we measure success, we now point to the growing number of participants who are giving back and paying it forward as volunteers and mentors to other newcomers and stepping up to form our Participant Advisory Council where they help us shape public policy and new programming at the Welcoming Center.

In October 2016, in the spirit of learning, collaborating, and innovating, we co-hosted the Welcoming Economies Global Network annual convening with the City of Philadelphia, bringing 300 people from around the country together for three days of exchanging best practices in the economic integration of immigrants. We also launched a new website in June 2017 to coincide with Immigrant Heritage Month, providing a modern platform for sharing information and real stories that inspire.

In an effort to diversify funding streams, over the past few years we have been piloting an initiative that taps into the local immigrant community to access global market opportunities and spur foreign direct investment. In the spring of 2017, we reached a few key milestones when the U.S. State Department designated the Welcoming Center as a J-1 Visa Sponsor Agency, and the International Business Innovation Association certified our Global Soft Landing Program. Additionally, we partnered with the University City Science Center to win the i6 Challenge Grant with the U.S. Economic Development Administration to launch a Global Startup Accelerator.

As we approach our fifteenth year, on behalf of the board, staff, volunteers, and participants of the Welcoming Center, we are grateful to you for standing with us as we build a more diverse, collaborative community that values the contributions and engagement of all people, regardless of country of origin. You play a vital role in our community and your commitment is crucial to our success. Whether you donate regularly, volunteer your time and talent, or show your support through our Solas Awards, your contributions make a transformative impact in the lives of immigrants, their families and the broader community. Thank you!

At the core of all our work is ensuring all people are treated with dignity and respect and that they feel welcomed, valued, and engaged. With your support, we will continue helping newcomers overcome the language, cultural, and social barriers so they may succeed and all of us may thrive together.

Sincerely,

Peter Gonzales
President & CEO

Anuj Gupta
Board Chair

"Being an immigrant myself and seeing the obstacles that individuals face to return to a sustainable reality, I have always had an interest in immigrant integration. Being able to see dozens of people from all walks of life work together for a common goal has always been one of the highlights of teaching. I hope to increase the opportunities available which allow for our participants to become a part of their communities." — Amelia Ramesan, Instructor
Welcoming Center for New Pennsylvanians' total revenue in FY 2017 was $2,242,661. We are supported by a diverse revenue stream including generous donations from individuals, corporate sponsors, foundation funders, and government contracts. At our annual Solas Awards, the Welcoming Center’s premiere gala event, we raised over $315,000, which accounted for 14% of the annual operating budget.

**Get Involved**

Join Welcoming Center for New Pennsylvanians in supporting immigrants in Philadelphia by making a contribution to our annual fund.

Donating has never been easier! Donate online using PayPal through our website, welcomingcenter.org/donate or, write a check written to, Welcoming Center for New Pennsylvanians.

For more information, contact Rebecca Rathje, 215.557.2858, or rebecca@welcomingcenter.org.

Follow us on social media and join the conversation! #WelcomingWorks

In FY 2017, we welcomed 500 new participants from 27 countries.
"How lucky to have found the Welcoming Center! In these challenging times for immigrants, I have been given an opportunity to feel empowered by attempting to make a difference in the lives of some very gracious folks. Everyone has a story to tell but part of that story is a desire to educate themselves and enrich their life and the lives of their families. I love my students!" — Lenore Stern, volunteer and donor

"I came to the Welcoming Center because I heard they could help me to find a job, which they did! I also enrolled in the Professional Writing class which took my English-speaking abilities to the next level. My leadership training and career pathways support helped me to build confidence to talk about my career goals with my employer. Doing so helped me to earn a promotion and to get more out of my job. I also joined the Participant Advisory Council in 2017 where I work alongside other extraordinary immigrants to build leadership skills, influence decision-making, and help shape the future of the Welcoming Center." — Ahmed D., Algeria

"Two years ago, I was struggling to integrate into a culture that seemed so different from my own. I was a physician in Costa Rica, my home country, but the pathway to practicing medicine in the U.S. was very difficult. The Welcoming Center gave me the tools necessary to acclimate to my new environment and their programs helped me to understand the importance of networking when trying to secure a job. The Welcoming Center built up my confidence and helped me to broaden my horizons. Not only did I earn a job as a researcher at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania, but I had the opportunity to meet amazing people from all over the world — immigrants eager to make contributions to this city, our new home." — Maria H., Costa Rica

"I was born and raised in Mauritania. I earned my high school degree in economics from a French private school. Then, after completing my college degree in Africa, I earned my master’s degree in France. I worked in finance in Europe and then returned to Africa to work in the banking industry. During this time, I also started a nonprofit organization. I came to Philadelphia several years ago to join my husband. I learned about the Welcoming Center through searching for resources which could help me to relaunch my career. When I discovered the International Professionals Program, I knew I wanted to join. I participated in the program in the Spring of 2017. It was a great experience and a glimmer of hope which led me to my first professional experience in the U.S. The Welcoming Center developed a fellowship program in partnership with the City of Philadelphia. I was awarded a fellowship with the city’s Commerce Department. I have done exciting work there including, successfully creating and leading an innovative effort for immigrant-owned businesses to take advantage of a 0 percent interest loan program. I also presented research on Islamic Finance as a socially responsible investment to Philadelphia lenders to increase financing opportunities for underserved business owners. I look forward to using my experience to further advance my career in the U.S." — Aichetou S., Mauritania

"I opened my first store in Philadelphia's Kensington neighborhood. I have always had a strong desire to run a business. When I first came to the United States, I did not know anyone. I was living in Northeast Philadelphia when I learned of a corner store which was going out of business so I thought, 'here is my chance!' It was not easy but today, Amancio Dollar Outlet has expanded, serving healthy food, selling fresh produce, and expanding to a larger space in a more populated section of the neighborhood. We also offer sandwich specials and deals to different community-based organizations in the neighborhood. It's my way of giving back. The Welcoming Center really helped me first organize and stabilize my business and then take it to the next level." — Elbys A., Dominican Republic
March 2nd, 2017 Solas Awards
Solas means 'light' in Irish. Each year at the Solas Awards, we honor individuals and businesses that illuminate the positive impact that immigrants make to the regional economy. In 2017, we raised a total of $315,000!

Our inspiring and generous honorees include:

Alberto Ibargüen — Dennis Clark Solas Award
Michael and Diane Chow — Realizing the American Dream Award
Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses — Atlas Award for Advancing Opportunity

Solas Honoree, Alberto Ibargüen, announced that the Knight Foundation would be partnering with the Welcoming Center to develop programming to help immigrants naturalize and deepen civic participation in our city. The Knight Foundation granted the Welcoming Center $250,000 to fund this effort.

“The Welcoming Center has given me the opportunity to combine the two things that matter the most to me — serving a population I deeply care about and pursuing my IT career. It has the best working environment, we all care and appreciate the contributions of each individual.” — Sam Chanzi, IT Manager & Instructor, and former IPP participant.
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