

Local nonprofits aiding immigrants need community's support

BY NINA NEEDLEMAN

Ever wonder how your exposure to community needs through sources like the *Jewish Light*, Spirit of St. Louis Women's Fund, Greater St. Louis Community Foundation, United Way and other nonprofits can help guide your personal philanthropy?

Now is the time. It's time to leverage your philanthropy education and the spirit of *tikkun olam* to help our community.

Organizations supporting immigrants as well as ones that address food insecurity, economic empowerment, diversity, equity and more are at risk of losing federal funding. Although a judge put a stay on the executive order canceling previously approved congressional funding, sources have told me their reimbursements have been delayed and many are being forced to furlough employees and/or stop programs helping immigrants, families, seniors, the poor and more.

These community pillars and social safety net agencies could all use extra support now. If you have some additional income or money sitting in your Donor Advised Fund, it's time for you to make a contribution — now. This could be the most impactful thing you do this year.

Here are a few of the many terrific agencies and programs helping immigrants and refugees in the St. Louis area:

Casa de Salud (www.casadesalud.org)

Casa de Salud provides high quality health services to immigrants and refugees, both insured and uninsured, in the St. Louis area. It provides health services, mental health services and GUIA guides (Spanish translations of a large range of healthcare resources). The organization served more than 2,500 people last year with over 8000 services.

Nina Needleman is a retired financial planner. She spent the first three-decades of her career in the financial services industry. Now she uses her business skills to help nonprofit organizations with capacity building and more importantly, as an educator, teaching people about personal finance and philanthropy.



Immigrant & Refugee Women's Program (www.nld.org/immigrant-refugee-womens-program)

Now called Immigrant Home English or I-Help, this agency provides one-on-one English language and system navigation skills to immigrants and refugees lacking access to transportation and/or childcare, or issues that would prevent them from attending traditional English classes. Classes are held in the student's home.

International Institute of St. Louis (www.iistl.org)

The International Institute is the first and key resource pillar for new foreign-born arrivals to America. Its vast array of services include initial resettlement and housing; health and wellness (case management, mental health assistance with stress of immigration), education (ESL and citizenship training), youth services (after-school mentoring) and workforce solutions (from resume writing to interview skills, job search, coaching for job expectations and success). Including both initial 90-day services and beyond, IISTL serves over 8,000 individuals a year.

MICA-Migrant and Immigrant Community Action

(www.mica-project.org)

The Migrant and Immigrant Community Action Project (MICA Project) is a community organization that helps low-income immigrants overcome barriers to justice. The MICA Project utilizes legal services, organizing, advocacy and education to promote the voice and human dignity of immigrant communities.

Monarch Immigrant Services

(www.monarchstl.org)

Monarch's mission is strengthening immigrant and refugee communities through equitable access to transformative services. It provides multilingual social, mental health and educational services. The organization offers an international senior center with transportation along with English tutoring, citizenship and naturalization test prep; therapists in multiple languages and more.

Mosaic Project

(www.stlmosaicproject.org)

The St. Louis Mosaic Project is a regional initiative within the St. Louis Economic Development Partnership and the World Trade Center St. Louis. It is called The Mosaic Project because St. Louis aims to be a cultural mosaic that believes immigrants invigorate our region. Programs include ambassador relationships with companies hiring international talent, internships, international student resources for hiring and entrepreneur resources.

For names of local agencies doing other impactful work in the areas of food insecurity, healthcare and housing, email me at nina_needl@yahoo.com.