



Iowa International Center Newsflash - July 2016 - Special Edition!



Please join us for: Passport to Prosperity 2016!



2015 Passport to Prosperity Honorees

Passport to Prosperity recognizes immigrants and refugees who make Iowa a better place to live through their significant contributions to the economic, social and cultural fabric of our communities. This event has, to date, honored fifty-seven global Iowans for their significant contributions to our communities and the state of Iowa.

Proceeds from the event will support the ongoing work of the Iowa International Center, and the organization's Ray Resource Initiative Campaign to provide free multilingual resources and educational opportunities for new Iowans – with former Governor Robert Ray's work with refugees from Southeast Asia 40 years ago as inspiration.

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Donate today to support our work in welcoming the world to Iowa.



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Saturday, September 24

Olmsted Parents Hall at Drake University

Reception at 6 p.m. with Dinner and Program to follow

[Please visit our website for more information about this special event, sponsorships, opportunities and benefits.](#)

Record Number of Nominees!

Thank you to all of our nominators for the time and effort you put into each application! The selection was challenging and the committee was amazed at how lucky Iowa is to be presented with that kind of challenge. The stories were impactful and inspirational. The bountiful numbers of applications is proof at how privileged Iowa is to be the home of so many outstanding immigrants and refugees with their abundance of gifts and talents.

Here are the FIVE Outstanding Honorees for 2016!



Dr. Jane Agyeman

Home Country: Ghana

Dr. Jane Agyeman came to the U.S. over thirty years ago to continue her education at Iowa State University. She was able to bring her five year old son with her but had to wait almost ten years in order for her oldest son to get his visa. Soon after her arrival, Jane found herself in an abusive situation; Jane not only managed to protect herself and her son, she worked part-time at the sexual assault center helping other women who were victims of domestic violence. As a single mother she worked three part-time jobs and was able to maintain a full-time schedule at college.

She earned bachelors, masters and doctoral degrees from ISU and then was hired in the TRIO Upward Bound and Educational Talent Search offices. Dr. Jane Agyeman is the Director of the TRIO programs and works with students who are first-generation and income-eligible and helps them plan and prepare for college. Jane's own story is similar to the students to whom she has provided leadership. She is an advocate for all students who need the extra help and support to attain a college degree and she understands the burdens that are placed on first-generation and income eligible students and their families. She has been a very strong voice for Iowa's youth and education when working with our members of Congress and she is very active in civic and community activities.

Jane also personally meets with the parents of all new Upward Bound students during home visits to explain the opportunities and benefits of the program and with the TRIO programs annually serving over 1050 students, that's an impressive number of home visits! As a native of Ghana, Dr. Agyeman is able to use her unique experiences and perspective in mentoring individuals of all backgrounds, both students and staff.



Kenia Calderon

Home Country: El Salvador

Kenia has been a tireless advocate for Latinas and Latinos, for the undocumented community and those with DACA status (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, also known as Dreamers). Kenia fled the brutal violence in El Salvador as an undocumented immigrant in 2005. Along

with her parents and younger brother and sister, Kenia survived a harrowing journey through Mexico and across the Arizona desert to their new home in Iowa. Today Kenia is a senior Management Student at Drake University, an Immigrant Organizer and part-time bilingual administrative assistant at American Friends Service Committee (AFSC).

Kenia is a founding member of La Fuerza Latina on Drake's campus, an organization that encourages middle and high school Latinas and Latinos to pursue higher education. She meets with Dreamers and their families on a regular basis to offer support. She is an Equity and Inclusion Senator-At-Large at Drake, where her goal is to bridge the gap between communities of color. Kenia's advocacy work has garnered substantial local and national media attention over the past three years. In 2015 she was named one of the "15 people to Watch in 2015" by the Des Moines Register. We will continue to watch the courageous advocacy efforts of Kenia on behalf of all people of color.



Alex Duong

Home Country: Vietnam

When Alex moved to Clinton, Iowa from Vietnam at the age of 12, he spoke no English. He started in school two grades behind what his age called for because of the language challenge. Alex quickly addressed that challenge, became an Honor Roll and National Honor Society student and was elected class president all four years of high school. Alex graduated from Drake University as a Finance major with a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration. He is fluent in six languages: English, Vietnamese, Mandarin Chinese, Taiwanese, Cantonese and Chiu Chow.

Alex manages a comprehensive marketing strategy and internal communications for Mediacom's largest regional territory. He manages the sales performance and sales training for over 250 employees and under his leadership front counter sales increased by 68%. Giving back to the community is an integral part of who Alex is. He serves on the Des Moines Public Library Foundation Board of Directors, on the Greater Des Moines Young Professionals Connection Board, on the Market committee for Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Iowa, the Iowa Asian Alliance and the 2016 CelebrAsian Leadership Team. He has volunteered for Orchard Place, Young Variety, the Children's Charity of Iowa, Meals from the Heartland, and Toys for Tots. Alex is a member of the Business Record's Forty Under 40 Class of 2016 and YPC honored

him with the 2016 Ashley Oakland Community Service Award.



Lomoro Moses Santino

Home Country: South Sudan

Lomoro was born in 1985 in Sudan. As a very young child, Lomoro would walk on foot a hundred miles in order to go to school, returning only briefly to see his family over holidays. The Civil War caused the family to flee to a Refugee Camp in Uganda. Lomoro applied for a scholarship and was selected to attend high school in Costa Rica. In 2009, Lomoro came to Iowa and attended college at Wartburg. He graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in both Chemistry and Physics and is applying his knowledge at T.P.I Co. in Newton where he is involved in the design and building of windmill structures that produce wind power.

Throughout his student and adult life, Lomoro has continuously contributed to the needs of others. While at Wartburg he applied for and received a \$10,000 grant to build latrines in South Sudan. He was especially concerned about girls who typically dropped out of school at puberty because there were no accommodations for their menstrual cycle. Next he applied and received a grant to help women buy sewing machines, believing as he does in the importance of women achieving their own economic independence. Here in Iowa Lomoro is continuously giving of his time to help others, as a volunteer coordinator for his church garden, producing fruits and vegetables for local food pantries, serving as an Arabic interpreter for those who cannot speak English, taking people to doctor appointments, helping others to prepare for their driver's license exams and their citizenship exams.



Samra Uzunovic

Home Country: Bosnia

In 1992, Samra Uzunovic and her family escaped to Germany from the ethnic wars that disintegrated Yugoslavia. Later, in 2000, unable to return to their home country due to the unstable conditions, Samra and her family moved as refugees to Des Moines with very few financial resources or possessions. Samra was twelve years old and barely knew any English. She was enrolled in daylong ESL classes (and today speaks three languages, Bosnian,

German and English) and later tested for the Gifted and Talented Program. Samra has always been an exceptional student; she received her Bachelor's degree from Grandview University and recently completed her Master's degree in Public Health at Des Moines University. While a student at DMU, Samra's work concerned issues critical for healthy mental development. Her focus was on rural Iowans, who are at a greater risk of mental health disorders because of a lack of services. She developed a screening tool for providers that saves physicians significant time and improves communication with patients and families.

Samra's dream has been to become a family physician and toward that goal she has pushed herself continuously. Samra will enter West Virginia College of Osteopathic Medicine this fall and upon graduation will return to Iowa as a family physician, providing essential services to those rural Iowans in greatest need.

2016 Passport Event Committee

A Very Special Thank You to our Honorary Chair
& Honorary Event Committee Members!

Honorary Chair

Suku Radia - Passport Honoree (2009)
Bankers Trust CEO

Honorary Event Committee

Jane Brimmer - Chair
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Consultant

Eleanor Zeff - IIC Board of Directors
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Event Committee

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Kerry Goodson - Director of Development & Marketing

Nicole Dohm - Marketing & Communications Intern

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