

Dr. Sachiko Tamura Murphy – Japan Sachiko arrived in Des Moines in 1985 to serve one year as a high school exchange teacher from her birthplace Kofu, Japan. Fortunately for the state of Iowa, she decided to stay. Early in Dr. Murphy's career as a high school teacher of Japanese, Sachiko voluntarily developed a program for elementary students to learn about the Japanese language and culture. She continues teaching Japanese at Des Moines Independent Community Schools Central Campus. Sachiko developed an elementary curriculum for teaching Japanese that was used in the Heartland Education Agency's Summer Language Institute, and Heartland's Chinese curriculum was developed using Dr. Murphy's model. For the last ten years, Sachiko has arranged for Des Moines students to accompany her on visits to Japan. She has also created an exchange program where Des Moines students live with Japanese families and vice versa. Dr. Murphy has served as Vice Chair of the Sister-City Commission and the Sister State Committee on Yamanashi, and as chair of the 50th Anniversary celebration with Kofu Japan.

Dr. Rizwan Shah – Pakistan Dr. Rizwan Shah graduated from Medical School at Punjab University at the age of 22, at a time when women were not typically attending university, let alone medical school. Dr. Shah arrived in the U.S. in 1968 in Boston, where she was told she would not be allowed to perform surgeries "because she was a woman." Her colleagues quickly learned not to tell Dr. Shah not to do something because it makes her even more determined to do it. In the U.S. in the 1960s and 70s, there was virtually no acknowledgement that children were being sexually abused. Dr. Shah was one of only five pediatricians in the whole country to begin addressing the treatment of sexually abused children. She not only developed clinics to treat the children; she also has to educate doctors, lawyers and counselors about this widespread area of health care, the existence of which was being denied. She became the Director of Pediatrics at Broadlawns Medical Center in 1979, began the first Child Sexual Abuse Validation Clinic in Iowa in 1981 and later became the Director of the Child Protection Center at Blank Children's Hospital. Dr. Shah was appointed as an Associate Clinical Professor of Pediatrics at University of Iowa Carver College of Medicine and Clinical Professor at Des Moines University. She continues to volunteer her time to sponsor refugees and teach English to newly immigrated families.

Hicham Sibouih – Morocco Born and raised in Rabat, the capital of Morocco, Hicham studied law and international relations. Following graduation, he took a position as a schoolteacher. This position sparked his passion for helping others and he soon opened a club targeting at-risk youth in the sister city of Sale. In 2007 Hicham moved to Iowa to be closer to his wife, Christina's, family. He started his career in Iowa from scratch, beginning with very minimal English skills. He soon became a mentor with the Des Moines Public Schools and taught a work-readiness course at DMACC. In early 2009 Hicham began his work with refugees, first as a case manager with Lutheran Services and currently with Catholic Charities. Hicham is a cultural ambassador, someone who opens his home and his heart to allow people to appreciate Arab, Moroccan, African and Islamic cultures. He has been able to work across cultural and religious linguistic lines and is particularly skilled at assisting the Sudanese and Iraqi communities as well as to refugee populations from Bhutan, Eritrea, and Burma.

Officer Phoukham Tran – Laos Phoukham grew up in Vientiane, Laos, where he worked in the fields while attending school. Following high school, he attended medical school for three years before making the decision to flee Laos. They crossed the Mekong River into Thailand where they spent eight months in a refugee camp. Phoukham and his wife, Chalouaiphone, arrived in the U.S. in 1980. Unable to speak English, Phoukham took work as a dish washer at a hospital. He took ESL classes at every opportunity and set his sights on becoming a police officer. He didn't pass this exam for entrance the first three times due to his English, but on the fourth try, he passed. Officer Tran has played an important role in protecting and serving the Des Moines community. As an Asian officer, he has helped to build positive relations between the police department and the Asian community. Officer Tran has facilitated communication between English-speaking officers and individuals who speak Laotian and Vietnamese. In August 2011, Phoukham was directing traffic at the Iowa State Fair and was tragically hit by a 3-ton pick-up. However, as he always has throughout life, Officer Tran persevered and has recovered. Chief of Police Judy Bradshaw wrote of Phoukham, "...your courage and strength to push forward is remarkable."