

# Riverview

## INTERNATIONAL CENTER

### Annissa's Story of Belonging & Giving Back



Annissa, her husband and 4 children arrived in Columbus from Algeria in June of 2023. One of the first things her family did was go to the RIC for school enrollment and job help. Annissa attend two fun RIC events, including our Community Festival and a group outing to the John Beltz Farm, hosted by RIC and "Love the City."

Now, she is a part of the Monday night Women's Empowerment group, hosted by our staff member Hamida. Annissa told us that she especially appreciates this group for the friendships she has made. She has received valuable guidance on her rights as an immigrant, for example, how insurance works, and how to interact with the schools her children attend. She even learned about self-care and is starting to 'give back' by supporting other women who come to her with stressful situations.

Annissa told us the story of one woman who came to the empowerment group one night, crying. This woman's landlord did not rent her the apartment she was initially promised, but exchanged it for one less desirable. Annissa was able to share her own apartment woes with the crying woman, and then Hamida helped contact the rental company to resolve the situation. Annissa is so appreciative of the RIC and her friends in the empowerment group. In her own words,

*"Thank you for everything"*

Currently, Annissa is working part time as a babysitter for other working mothers on Riverview Drive and was recently hired part time at the Marriott as a Lobby Attendant. We are proud of where Annissa has come from and where she is going!

## Volunteers, Donors, Staff, and Partner Impact in 2023

**205**

VOLUNTEERS

— gave —

**2400 HRS**



**1500**

INDIVIDUALS

— served from —

**46 COUNTRIES**



**10,000**

OFFICE VISITS

— for —

**SERVICES &  
PROGRAMS**



**RIC Partnership Spotlight: Our Helpers**



*Dr. Dorothy Hassan, seated in the center, helps our neighbors sign up for ESL classes*

Our partnership with the local nonprofit *Our Helpers* began in spring 2023, when we collaborated to help more than 40 Riverview neighbors receive emergency rent assistance, provided by the City of Columbus.

Because that collaboration was so successful, *Our Helpers*' Director, Dr. Dorothy Hassan, reached out again in late 2023 to offer to provide new, high-quality English classes to our neighbors. *Our Helpers* had grant funding to offer this programming and were looking for a site to host and support the enrolling students. In January of this year, we launched weekend English as a Second Language classes for women. Our classroom was full with 12 students attending the first session!

Beginning in April, we will offer mixed classes for men and women four days per week! These unique classes focus on English for employment and advancement, and include materials and access to a learning app that students can use to practice at home. One staff member went downstairs to check on the new class and commented, "It's like a college class, everyone was quiet [and paying attention]. The students were so happy!"

## Good News on the Street



On one **Women's Empowerment** meeting night, Hamida noticed that a woman who has regularly attended was not there and hadn't told anyone she was going to miss. Hamida recounts, "I called her and said, *Why didn't you come to the women's group today?* The woman laughed and said, *I was at the hospital having my baby boy!*"

5 people got jobs at **Marriott**—a wonderful workforce and employer partnership, just down the street! This collaboration has opened doors for individuals seeking new opportunities and marks a step in our joint commitment to community development. The newly employed members are

excited to embark on this step in their employment journey.



Friendships and crafts were built during this month's community Valentine's craft night! Children and families alike came to create penguins and make cards; we even had two women come on their own, just to enjoy community time. You're invited to our next craft night on Wednesday, March 13!



Our heartfelt thanks goes to **Marina Zahran**, our volunteer yoga instructor, for bringing much-needed stress relief and a sense of tranquility to the women in our community through her weekly yoga classes. Marina is not only a wellness professional but also the founder of **Stardust Standard**, a platform dedicated to enhancing well-being. The power of deep breaths and gentle stretches she introduces is weaving calm into busy lives. To explore more about her approach to wellness, follow her on Instagram [@neenastardust](https://www.instagram.com/neenastardust)

### More good news:

A **first grader** from the Riverview community received affirmation during a parent teacher conference at school that lately he has seemed much happier and less scared. The parent and teacher realized that this change in behavior was the result of news that **his father can now apply to come to the US!** It brought so much joy to this 6-year-old that his whole attitude at school has changed. We celebrate this good news with them!

## Volunteer Needs

The RIC thrives on the spirit of volunteerism, and we have many opportunities for you to make a difference in the lives of our neighbors. Whether you're looking to engage directly with the community or support from behind, we have a place for you:

### In-Person Opportunities:

1. **Homework Helper** (Immediate Need): Assist the neighborhood kids with their school work and foster social connections. Be a part of their academic journey Monday through Wednesday from 5:30-7:30PM. [Sign up here](#)
2. **Conversation Partner**: Support our neighbors' growing English language skills by pairing up as a conversation partner. Help build their confidence while engaging in friendly, low pressure discussions.
3. **Office Support**: We need helping hands for 1-2 hours a week in the office. Your assistance with service data entry, greeting visitors/neighbors, answering basic questions, and scheduling appointments will keep our operations running smoothly.

## Remote Opportunities:

1. **Craft Preparation:** Love crafting but prefer to do it from home? Help us prepare for events by cutting materials, organizing supplies, and crafting sample products. All tools and supplies will be provided.
2. **Grant Writing Assistance:** If you have a way with words and a passion for philanthropy, assist us in grant writing to secure the necessary funds for our programs.

Interested in joining the RIC family? [Contact Angelica!](#)

VOLUNTEER HERE

## Come visit us!

Step inside the world of the RIC and experience the pulse of our community firsthand. Come meet with us — see our space, hear from one of our neighbors, and learn about immigration in Ohio. You are welcome here!

### *Our doors are wide open on the following dates:*

- Wednesday, **March 13**, 6:00–7:00 PM
- Wednesday, **March 27**, 12:00-1PM
- Wednesday, **April 10**, 6:00–7:00 PM

[Email Diane](#) to choose a date to visit.



### Our Contact Information

\*{{Organization Name}}\*  
\*{{Organization Address}}\*  
\*{{Organization Phone}}\*  
\*{{Organization Website}}\*

\*{{Unsubscribe}}\*



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