



# Nationalities Service Center

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Nationalities Service Center Launches Refugee Health Care Initiative

*Nationalities Service Center Awarded Barra Foundation Grant for Philly Refugee Health Care Initiative in Partnership with Thomas Jefferson Hospital*

Philadelphia, PA – December 20, 2008 – The Barra Foundation recently awarded the Nationalities Service Center (NSC) funding to launch a new health care initiative for refugees. The grant enabled NSC to recruit Kim Johnson who now serves as NSC’s Health Coordinator for the Social Service Department Refugee Resettlement services. Ms. Johnson brings with her a wealth of programming and advocacy experience gained while developing, managing, and implementing education and training programs abroad, most recently in Liberia and Thailand.

Ms. Johnson will spearhead NSC’s cooperative efforts with Thomas Jefferson University Hospital, to develop systems and best practices to improve access health care resources for refugees and other immigrants who reside in the Philadelphia area. “The role of the health coordinator is two-fold: one is to coordinate the immediate health needs of incoming refugees who are resettled by NSC,” says Ms. Johnson, “and the other is to advocate for increased levels of engagement at the state level with regards to refugee resettlement and refugee health.”

NSC aims to develop sustainable, linguistically culturally appropriate ways of improving health care services for refugees throughout the Philadelphia area, thereby removing health care barriers that hinder refugees from fully integrating into American society. All new refugee arrivals receive comprehensive screening examination at the Refugee Clinic at the Jefferson Department of Family and Community Medicine, including appropriate follow-up or referral.

In establishing refugee-specific health care best practices, NSC seeks to ensure that refugees feel valued and respected while seeking health care services. This is critical to ensure that refugees continue to seek medical care, particularly in an effort to battle the high rate of malnourishment among newly arriving refugee populations.

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**About Nationalities Service Center:**

Nationalities Service Center (NSC) is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization, that provides social, educational, senior center, translation/interpretation, and legal services to immigrants and refugees in the Greater Philadelphia area. Each year, we help approximately 4,000 individuals from over 90 countries become self-sufficient members of American society.

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For more information about the Nationalities Service Center, or information pertaining to refugee health services and advocacy, please contact Kathrin P. Ivanovic at (215) 893.8400.