



## SENIOR CENTER

# Garden Nourishes Spirit and Body of an Elder

**Nun Preap** has been growing plants for as long as he can remember. He was born in rural Cambodia, in the Kompot Province in 1941. As a young man he was a farmer who spent his days growing rice. He also grew potatoes, corn, bananas, papaya and other vegetables. He used these to feed his family and also to trade in the market for the other essential staples.

Like many other Cambodians of his generation, Nun survived the horrors of the Khmer Rouge regime from 1975-1979. He fled to Thailand in 1980 and lived in a refugee camp until 1985. He was then moved to the Philippines for a few months before coming to New York, and eventually settling in the Olney area of Philadelphia, where he lives now.

In 2009, Nun started attending the Senior Center on the advice of a fellow Cambodian elder and Senior Center participant. He visited everyday simply to be around other elders who spoke Khmer and to get out of the house. He said that he was bored and lonely being at home each day and was not able to get out of the house on his own. Nun now participates in almost every activity that the Senior Center provides, including the ESL instruction



and chair exercises, and the Center's celebrations have become an important part of his life.

When NSC started a garden at our Senior Center in 2010, Nun was one of the first elders to participate, and he has been active there ever since. Nun walks with a cane so being able to garden in raised beds, where he doesn't have to bend over, has made a big difference.

Gardening has also provided emotional sustenance, as Nun's cultivation of familiar foods has helped him feel more connected to his previous life, while making Philadelphia feel more and more like home. He loves being outside and said that having fresh greens and other vegetables has helped him survive by providing affordable produce that would otherwise be unattainable to him.

Rather than feeling alienated and deprived of the foods and feelings of home, the only thing Nun wishes for now is even more space for the garden that continuously nourishes his spirit and body.

## NSC's Mission

**Nationalities Service Center (NSC)** is a non-profit organization that provides social, educational and legal services to immigrants and refugees in the Greater Philadelphia area. Our strength lies in the diversity of our clients and services. Since NSC's founding in 1921, our mission has been to help immigrants and refugees participate fully in American society. Each year, we help approximately 4,000 individuals from over 90 countries. We implement this mission by meeting five main objectives:

- Protecting the legal rights of all immigrants
- Empowering immigrants and refugees, including the most vulnerable, on the path toward social adjustment
- Strengthening immigrant communities
- Advocating for fair and humane policies toward immigrants and refugees
- Promoting the value of diversity in the Philadelphia region

## Help from CIGNA International Volunteer Project

The Volunteer Project helped NSC buy and pack more than **300 comfort kits** for newly arrived refugees and survivors of torture. Many of NSC's clients will benefit from the project with CIGNA and will have a feeling of warm welcome in their new homes in their first days in the U.S.

SOCIAL SERVICES

**Growing Home**

Given the wonderful success of our Senior Center garden in North Philadelphia, which celebrated its first harvest last summer, **NSC is establishing a second community garden in South Philadelphia.** Refugees from Burma and Bhutan are planting spring greens with the support of the long-time residents who live nearby.

Seeds of hope are being planted, and newly arrived refugees from Burma and Bhutan will have a chance to contribute to a neighborhood they are now proud to call home.

The community of some 400 Burmese refugees in South Philadelphia, who were resettled by NSC since 2007, asked for their own garden when they got word of the one in North Philly. The Bhutanese refugees of South Philadelphia, who first arrived in 2009, followed suit. Elders and mothers have continually asked how they can get their hands back in the dirt. Many still speak proudly of their fields and even who grew the hottest peppers. Both the Burmese and Bhutanese refugee elders long for reconnection to their agrarian roots.

Many of these refugees were subsistence farmers before violence forced them from their homes and countries. By the time they arrive in the US, Burmese and Bhutanese refugees have spent many years living in refugee camps with limited access to health care, food, and clean water. Neighborhood food scarcity, combined with malnutrition among refugees, make it imperative that we work to ensure that they have access to fresh produce!

For more information about the North and South Philadelphia NSC gardens, visit our project blog at [www.nscfarming.wordpress.com](http://www.nscfarming.wordpress.com).

**Health Case Aide Honored**

**Gretchen Wendel**, Health Case Aide at NSC, received the Unsung Heroine Agency Award from Women’s Way and the 2011 Powerful Voice Awards committee.



The award recognizes, honors and celebrates Gretchen’s tireless work and dedication to help refugee women gain access to health care. NSC’s efforts contribute to a world where women and girls have the confidence and support to realize their dreams, earn a fair wage, and be free from violence, abuse, and exploitation.

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**NSC WEEK • June 15 - 23**

**WEDNESDAY, JUNE 15**

**Golf Outing:** We Are Philadelphia! Come join us on the golf course or for cocktails and dinner! White Manor Country Club, 831 Providence Road, Malvern, PA 19355. It shouldn’t be rainy this time!

**THURSDAY, JUNE 16**

**We Are Philadelphia! Breakfast** at NSC, 8-9 AM

**Whole Foods at Callowhill shopping day:** 5% of daily proceeds go to NSC.

**FRIDAY, JUNE 17**

Bring your lunch for the **screening of “Meh Sha”**, the documentary made by Villanova students about an NSC client. 12 PM at NSC.

**SUNDAY, JUNE 19**

**Growing Home Refugee Community Garden:** Day on our urban farm in South Philly. Honor Father’s Day together with your fathers and children, and Burmese and Bhutanese refugees in the garden! 732 Emily Street, 10 AM - 2 PM.

**MONDAY, JUNE 20**

**Celebrate World Refugee Day with NSC:** “Welcome to Shelbyville” Film Screening/Panel Discussion, 6 PM at Center for Architecture (first floor of NSC’s building). \$5 suggested donation.

In observance of World Refugee Day, NSC’s Executive Director, Dennis Mulligan, is to speak at the **naturalization ceremony** at noon at USCIS office, 1600 Callowhill St. The ceremony is open to the public.

**TUESDAY, JUNE 21**

**We Are Philadelphia! Happy Hour.** 5:00 PM at Tabu Lounge & Sports Bar, 200 South 12th Street.

**WEDNESDAY, JUNE 22**

**Morning tea and breakfast** in the Senior Center Garden. Join us in the beautiful garden with our elders. 9:30-11:30 AM, Our Lady of Hope Church, 5218 N. Broad Street.

For more information or to RSVP (suggested) for any of the events, contact Leyla Dursunova, at 215-609-1522, or at [ldursunova@nscphila.org](mailto:ldursunova@nscphila.org).

## TRANSLATION & INTERPRETATION

### Languages Available at NSC

NSC's Department of Translation & Interpretation offers services in the following **61 languages**, as well as others by request. The department is connected to a large network of language experts with native proficiency. Please call (215) 893-8400 ext. 1547 or 1548, or send an email to [translation@nscphila.org](mailto:translation@nscphila.org) for further information and rates.

American Sign Language	Greek	Portuguese
Amharic	Gujarati	Punjabi
Arabic	Haitian Creole	Romanian
Armenian	Hebrew	Russian
Bengali	Hindi	Serbian
Bulgarian	Hmong	Somali
Burmese	Hungarian	Spanish
Cambodian (Khmer)	Ibo	Swahili
Cantonese	Indonesian	Swedish
Chinese	Italian	Taiwanese
Croatian	Japanese	Tamil
Cru	Korean	Thai
Danish	Kurdish	Tigrinya
Dari	Laotian	Turkish
Dutch	Malayalam	Twi
Estonian	Mandarin	Ukrainian
Farsi (Persian)	Mandingo	Urdu
Tagalog (Filipino)	Nepali	Uzbek
French	Pashto	Vietnamese
Georgian	Polish	Yiddish



*Dung C. Huynh, Juan Lara, and Mayra Aguirre, Translation and Interpretation team*

NSC is pleased to welcome its new Director of Translation and Interpretation, **Juan Lara**. Juan graduated from Peirce College with a bachelor's degree in Business Administration, and has over 8 years of project management experience. For the last four years at his previous position, Juan worked as a senior project manager for one of the largest translation and interpretation companies in the area. In his spare time, Juan enjoys spending time with his wife and two children, or playing soccer in a local group.

## EDUCATION

### Volunteer Teachers of All Ages Help NSC Students Learn English

NSC trains volunteers of all ages to help provide educational services for our immigrant community. For two years, **third graders from The Philadelphia School** have come to NSC to learn about our services and talk to our ESL students about their backgrounds and experiences in the U.S. These third graders also raise money to support the important services that we provide to our immigrant community! Their Read-a-Thon this year raised \$6,082.01 for NSC.

NSC also works with high school students to help them understand issues affecting Philadelphia's immigrant community. Sarah Katz, from **Friends Central School**, recently worked with 12 ESL students at NSC as a final project to receive her high school diploma. She learned about our students' struggles while helping them improve their English language skills.

In addition, students from the **Agnes Irwin School** recently participated in a conversation exchange where they practiced the languages that they were studying in school, while helping NSC's students with English. Our ESL students were very excited, as many of them have limited opportunities to speak English outside of the classroom. NSC's students enjoy interacting with young adults, and they are happy to share their native language expertise with them.

Interns from **Bryn Mawr College**, the **University of Pennsylvania**, and **Temple University** learn about teaching and working in a non-profit while helping NSC students with their English language skills. Their internships at NSC give them real-life experience working with Philadelphia's immigrant community. This helps interns better understand the struggles of leaving one's home country and adjusting to a new language and culture.

NSC trains community volunteer of all ages, from 20 through 70, to teach ESL at our center city location. Some are themselves students, others work in various fields, and some are retirees. **We thank all of our volunteers, of all ages!** Without them we would not be able to provide essential language services to students from all over the world.

### Global Tastes - Save the Date!

On **November 10th**, NSC will celebrate Philadelphia's diverse communities and its 90th Anniversary through good food and good company at the Penn Museum of Archeology and Anthropology. We are excited to bring **Global Tastes** to you again! Please save the date and spread the word about our event! Contact Leyla Dursunova or check our website for more information.



90<sup>th</sup>

## Nationalities Service Center

*Serving immigrants and refugees since 1921*

1216 Arch Street, 4th Floor  
Philadelphia, PA 19107  
(215) 893-8400  
[www.nscphila.org](http://www.nscphila.org)

Check out our 90th anniversary page  
to learn more about NSC's history and  
upcoming special events!  
[www.nscphila.org/90](http://www.nscphila.org/90)



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### LEGAL SERVICES

## The U-Visa – Help for Immigrant Victims of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault

When Maria came to the U.S. from the Dominican Republic in 2001 after losing her husband in a tragic accident, she left behind her 3-year old daughter, hoping to reunite when she had the means to take care of her. One night in 2009, Maria was raped at gunpoint after two men stormed into her apartment in one of Philadelphia's surrounding counties. Maria was hospitalized, but she was nonetheless able to help the police find and prosecute one of the attackers, leading to his conviction and seven-year imprisonment.

Under the "U-visa" provision in the Violence Against Women Act, added by the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Prevention Act of 2000, Maria, as a rape victim, was able to file a U-Visa petition with the help of NSC.

Congress created the U-Visa classification in order to strengthen the ability of law enforcement agencies to detect, investigate, and prosecute cases of domestic violence, sexual assault, trafficking, and other types of criminal activity in which immigrants are victimized.

One of the requirements of the U-visa is a Certification signed by a law enforcement official confirming that an immigrant has been helpful or is expected to help the investigation of a criminal act. In Maria's case, however, the crime happened in a county where law enforcement officials were reluctant to certify, presuming that they were automatically granting Maria US citizenship. NSC, as Maria's advocate, explained to the county's law enforcement officials

that the certification is just one step in a long process that concludes when the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) decides whether or not to issue a U-visa. We were thus able to procure the officer's certification, which we submitted along with evidence of the severe physical and emotional harm Maria suffered. Maria's U-visa petition was approved in September of 2010.

Soon afterward, NSC helped Maria's daughter surmount the Dominican Republic's bureaucratic obstacles so that **she can finally reunite with her mother after 10 long years of separation.** This case represents one of the many occasions in which NSC helps people to overcome hardships in order to reestablish their lives in the United States.