

The MBF is Broadening its Outreach

by Tyler Volm, Chair

MBF Public Outreach Committee

Last month, representatives from the Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization (IRCO) met with representatives from the Multnomah Bar Foundation's Public Outreach Committee (Judge Chanpone Sinlapasai and me) for a tour of the new Multnomah County Central Courthouse. We joined Mr. Lee Po Cha who is the Executive Director of IRCO, Djimet Dogo, the Director of Africa House, and Sokho Eath, the Director of Pacific Islander and Asian Family Center. We were led on a guided tour by Barbara B. Marcille, Trial Court Administrator for Multnomah Circuit Court, whose wealth of knowledge tracked down to the finest detail.

The Public Outreach Committee is partnering with IRCO to bring its CourtConnect program to IRCO's umbrella of organizations. In addition, the committee is exploring other opportunities to be a bridge between IRCO and the legal community.

IRCO serves the holistic needs of Oregon's immigrants, refugees and mainstream community members by empowering children, youth, families and elders from around the world to build new lives and become self-sufficient by providing more than 200 culturally and linguistically specific social services. IRCO's mission is to be a leader of community-driven innovative programs delivered by compassionate staff who create equitable services that empower immigrants, refugees and underserved communities.

Photo: Lee Po Cha, Djimet Dogo, Tyler Volm, Sokho Eath and Judge Chanpone Sinlapasai tour the Central Courthouse



Judge Sinlapasai, prior to joining the bench, worked with many members of the OSB to bring free and low-cost legal services to the community while she served as a board member and board president for IRCO. As a member of the Public Outreach Committee and a presenter with the MBF CourtConnect program, she works with the MBF and the court to make sure that organizations serving diverse communities have access to resources available at the new courthouse.

During the guided tour, IRCO representatives noted the courthouse's bright and welcoming entrance, the easy-to-use kiosks, and, of course, the views. They were also impressed with the CourtCare facility where the first photograph was taken. The second photograph is from IRCO's open house for their new Africa House facility on NE 102nd Avenue. The representatives would not let us leave the courthouse tour without making sure that the judge and I were not only invited, but that we would be sure to attend. I attended on the front end, and Judge Sinlapasai, in her infinite energy and overwhelming commitment to our community, was on clean-up crew after attending another event that evening.



Africa House's Open House celebrates the new one-stop center for the diverse, rapidly growing African immigrant and refugee community

More information on IRCO, and how you can get involved, can be found on their website: www.irco.org.

For more information about the work of the MBF, visit us at www.mbabar.org/mbf or contact Pamela Hubbs (pamela@mbabar.org, 503.854.5237).