

# INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF BUFFALO

Now incorporating the programs of Buffalo/Niagara WorldConnect

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## **International Institute of Buffalo and Buffalo/Niagara WorldConnect Merger Finalized** ***Merger Creates Dynamic Center for International Programs and Services in Buffalo***

On Friday, July 7, 2006, the New York State Secretary of State gave final approval to the merger of the International Institute of Buffalo and Buffalo/Niagara WorldConnect. By merging, the two organizations have created a more efficient, dynamic institution that provides exemplary services to Buffalo's refugee and immigrant populations and builds the capacity of our community to understand and communicate successfully with people from around the world.

During the past year—with funding and guidance from the United Way of Buffalo and Erie County—the boards and staffs of both organizations have worked diligently and tirelessly to create favorable conditions for a merger. They have examined missions and visions, combined programs and physical assets, and identified exciting possibilities for positive growth. With the merger finalized, all of WorldConnect's programs are officially part of the International Institute.

Since 1918, the International Institute has been a nonprofit, non-sectarian agency helping refugees and immigrants overcome cultural and linguistic barriers and become self-sufficient members of our community. With the addition of WorldConnect—itsself the result of a merger in 2000 of the Buffalo Council on World Affairs and the Buffalo Niagara Council for International Visitors—the Institute adds valuable capacity in international visitor hosting and global affairs education. Following the merger, the expanded International Institute now includes a broad constellation of programs and services that:

- Welcomes refugees and helps them transition to a new life in America
- Assists immigrant victims of domestic violence, human trafficking, and other crimes
- Prepares students for the opportunities and challenges of a global world
- Provides interpretation and translation services in over 60 languages
- Hosts international delegations in Buffalo Niagara

**\*\*\* MORE \*\*\***

- Engages in citizen diplomacy with community leaders worldwide
- Fosters international understanding and economic cooperation
- Assists all in our community to communicate effectively across cultural, ethnic, and linguistic barriers
- Serves as a hub for international activity in our region
- Preserves a historic Buffalo mansion

The new organization will uphold the fine traditions of its national associations: the U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants, the National Council for International Visitors, the World Affairs Councils of America, the American Translators Association, and the American Immigration Lawyers Association. An annual meeting and fundraiser in Fall 2006 will bring together members and supporters of the International Institute and the former WorldConnect to celebrate the merger.

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