

News Release

For Immediate Release: Saturday, April 4, 2009, 12 noon

BACKGROUND ON THE AMERICAN CIVIC ASSOCIATION

- Founded by 11 immigrants in 1939 on Pine Street. Now located at 131 Front St., a 16,000-square-foot, mortgage-free facility in the heart of Binghamton. Mission is to help immigrants and refugees who come to the United States.
- ACA encourages spirit of brotherhood among nations and peoples; sponsors citizenship education; promotes racial, religious and political understanding; cultivates fellowship between native and naturalized citizens; safeguards and defend the Constitution of the United States.
- Provides new arrivals from dozens of countries with assimilation services; counseling; citizenship and family reunification; obtain green cards and visas; promotes racial, community and religious harmony.
- Introduces Americans to cultures from around the world. Known for cultural programs, meals and holiday celebrations.
- ACA serves 60-100 people every day. Constituents range from teenagers to men and women in their 60s; many from Vietnam and Laos. More than 7,100 immigrants have settled in Binghamton since 2005 – more than 70 percent of which are from Asia, according to city statistics.
- Executive director is Andrew J. Baranoski, board of directors president is Angela Leach; endowment provides funding for services to people who frequently cannot afford them. A United Way agency, ACA offers translators and interpreters and English as a Second Language classes.
- ACA one of the 40 partner immigration agencies affiliated with the United States Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI). ACA funding, besides the United Way, comes from various grants, fundraising events and service fees.
- Core services include assisting with the search for clean, affordable and safe housing; helping with availability of adequate food for nourishment; availability of sufficient clothing and toiletries; facilitating medical care and treatment; assisting with search for gainful employment; legal & technical assistance on immigration and naturalization issues; assistance with foreign passports and pensions; employment and personal counseling; renewal of or problems with green cards; translation and interpreter services; English as a Second Language Classes;
- ACA staff consisted of a part-time caseworker, administrative assistant, and a custodian, plus a full-time executive director. ACA paid staff is supported by extensive cadre of volunteers who help in such areas as: language interpreting and translations, fundraising activities, mentoring refugees and immigrants in language development and preparation for naturalization process.

Media Contacts:

From Eric Mower and Associates: John Lacey, 315-413-4294, jlacey@mower.com;

Bob Bellafiore, 518-928-8471, rjb@mower.com;

From Burke, Scolamiero, Mortati & Hurd, LLP: Peter Scolamiero and Kevin Burke, 518-862-1386