



Abdoulaye immigrated to the U.S. from Senegal in 1999. In 2003, he decided to return to his home country where he was married and had two children (pictured above). He returned to the U.S. with the aim of petitioning to have his family join him, so they could all start a new life here, but the paperwork was too complex for him to successfully complete. Determined to help his family come to the U.S., Abdoulaye turned to the CMC immigration legal services program. Thanks to the CMC's representation, after more than a decade of separation, Abdoulaye and his family were reunited here in Madison this March!

IMMIGRATION LEGAL SERVICES: DOING MORE TO WELCOME THE STRANGER

The CMC immigration legal services program is now able to help more people like Abdoulaye (see his full story to the left). This time last year, the program had only one staff member. Since then, the staff has grown to four:

- Attorney, Saba Baig
- Department of Justice Accredited Representative, Janice Beers
- Part-time associate attorney, Talita Bornholdt
- Program assistant, Alan Canacasco

Together, they are serving more people who need help navigating various immigration processes. Without being able to turn to the CMC, individuals might try to file their applications on their own. Associate attorney, Talita, explained that this is an issue because the system is very difficult to navigate without proper legal guidance, and if something goes wrong in the application process, their whole life as they know it is on the line.

“Being an immigrant myself, I know how important it is to have someone you can rely on,” said Talita. “Our program is doing a great job of being a place our clients can rely on.”

The program has diversified greatly, serving more clients from a larger variety of countries. In just a few short months, active cases jumped from 20 to 71 a month thanks to the expanded staff. The program has served individuals from 39 different countries over the past year and is serving refugees for the first time, with 25 cases currently pending. The CMC looks forward to continuing to offer the best immigration legal services possible to those who need it most.

For more information on this program, visit cmcmadison.org.

JOB TRAINING PROGRAM EXPANDS

The CMC's job training program, Culinary Creations Catering is continuously growing, serving funerals, local businesses and schools.

This past year, Culinary Creations successfully took on the lunch services at Our Lady Queen of Peace (for the second year) and Blessed Sacrament schools. Next year, lunch services will be added at Edgewood Campus and St. Francis Xavier schools. To accommodate deliveries for all four schools, a second van has just been generously donated by an anonymous donor!

The increasing customer base will also allow Culinary Creations to train and employ more people. New trainees will come on board in Mid-July, giving them the chance to learn employment skills and build their resume.

"It's an exciting opportunity to be able to offer employment, training, and career support to even more people," says Lynn Heiman, Catering Manager.



WEEKLY FOOD PANTRY VISITS INCREASE

The CMC Food Pantry has become a weekly stop to put food on the table for many individuals and families, now averaging 60 visits a week. That's around 6,000 pounds of food a month! This is partially due to the pantry being available once a week to people versus twice a month. "It's not just about eliminating hunger though," says Antonio Quintanilla, services coordinator. "We want to help lift the burden of expensive everyday living costs for those who visit. It can be difficult to find money for things like rent, but it's easy to find food. People can save a lot of money by using the products that the food pantry offers, preventing homelessness for some."

Interested in creating a food drive to help with the increase of users? The CMC can help by sending helpful tools to support a collection, including guidelines and promotional templates to make it easier to get started! Contact Laura Green, volunteer coordinator, at 608-441-1180 or email laura@cmcmadison.org.

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