

EIIC NEWS

February 2009



"Meeting the Needs of Immigrants"

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EIIC Presents 16th Annual Robert Briscoe Awards

New York City Council Member Oliver Koppell and Neal S. Schelberg Esq, partner in the law firm Proskauer Rose LLP, were honored on Monday, January 26th at the Emerald Isle Immigration Center's (EIIC) sixteenth annual Robert Briscoe Awards at the 21 club in Manhattan.

The awards, named for the first Jewish Lord Mayor of Dublin, pay tribute to Jewish leaders in the New York area whose work betters the lives of Irish immigrants. Past recipients have included Mayor Michael Bloomberg, Senator Charles Schumer, Congressman Anthony Weiner and former Governor Eliot Spitzer.

Council Member Koppell was recognized for his dedication to fighting crime and discrimination, as well as his work for the Bronx School Board and his commitment to the EIIC through the annual City Council Immigrant Opportunities Initiative; while Mr. Schelberg was honored for bringing a passionate dedication to counseling and education in the area of employee benefits.

The ceremony was attended by Irish Consul General Niall Burgess and Vice-consul Alan Farrelly, and the awards were presented by Mayor Briscoe's son, former Irish Parliament member Ben Briscoe.



Ben Briscoe (center) with Neil S. Schelberg Esq (l), and Hon. Oliver Koppell

The Catholic and Jewish faiths were represented by the Rt. Reverend Monsignor James Kelly of St. Brigid's, Brooklyn, and Rabbi Joseph Potasnik of Congregation Mount Sinai, Brooklyn, who both spoke of the ongoing history of cooperation between the Irish and Jewish communities, and the need for this tradition to continue in our difficult times.

"Both our honorees stand out for their approach in helping marginalized members of society overcome some of their day to day challenges by their readiness to help, their steadfast dedication and unique approach; but above all for their giving of their time above and beyond the call of duty," said EIIC Executive Director Siobhan Dennehy, who co-hosted the event with Brian O'Dwyer, chairman of the Executive Board of the EIIC.

More from the Briscoes, see P.5

News

'Phishing' Scam Targets Immigrants

The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) in New York City have issued a warning about a recent identity theft scam that uses a fraudulent 'Tax Recertification' form to illegally acquire sensitive biographical and financial details from non-resident aliens.

Potential victims of this scam receive a letter which requests that they fill out a fraudulent form – "IRS Request for Recertification of Foreign Status" (W-4100B2) – which requests biographical information, as well as asking for photocopies of passports, bank account numbers and other bank details.

If you have received such a form **Do not fill it out!** It will be used to steal valuable information from you.

If you are unsure about this or any other form, or have any questions about government documentation, please feel free to get in touch with the Emerald Isle Immigration Center at: **(718) 478-5502**

The IRS addresses this topic on their website <<http://www.irs.gov/>> Click on "Phishing and e-mail Scams" and a link to the EIIC press release regarding this scam is available at www.eiic.org. An announcement on Radio Irish regarding same is also available at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eY8tQ8H4gM4>

New ESTA Requirements

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) remind travelers from all Visa Waiver Program (VWP) countries that they are now required to obtain approval through the Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA) prior to traveling to the United States. This requirement applies to all eligible citizens or nationals traveling under the VWP.

ESTA is a web-based system, initially launched in August 2008, that determines the preliminary eligibility of visitors to travel under the VWP prior to boarding a carrier to the United States. To date, more than 1.2 million ESTA applications have been received, and more than 99.6 percent of applicants have been approved, most within seconds. For additional information on ESTA, visit www.cbp.gov/esta, and for more information on the VWP, please visit http://www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/travel/id visa/business_pleasure/vwp/

EIIC Reminder: All Taxes Must Be Filed By April 15, 2009

All workers, including undocumented workers, are required to report their income to the federal Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and to the state. Even if you are paid in cash, you are required to report your income. Also, if you fail to pay your income taxes, you may be turned down for certain benefits that are paid for by your tax dollars (e.g., State Disability Insurance, Social Security Disability Insurance).

If you do not have a Social Security Number to report your taxes, and if you cannot get one because you are undocumented, you can use an Individual Tax Identification Number (ITIN) to properly report your income. The IRS can issue an ITIN to any non-resident who earns income in the United States but is not eligible to receive a Social Security Number. As a side benefit, an ITIN usually can be used to open a bank account.

Applying for an ITIN: If you want to apply for an ITIN, contact the IRS and request Form W-7. You can also ask for information about "Acceptance Agents," who are authorized by IRS to help people apply for an ITIN. The IRS can normally process your application in a few weeks, but it may take as long as six or eight weeks to receive your ITIN. The IRS should not contact the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) if you request an ITIN.

For **more information**, including a downloadable list of places where you can receive tax preparation information in NYC, visit the tax help section of our website at: <http://www.eiic.org/taxhelp.htm>

*In addition, the EIIC will run **tax seminars** on March 18 & 19*

News

New York's Immigration Coalition Advocacy Day in Albany



Far right: EIIC staff Karla Rosero & John Stahl Esq. were among the protesters in Albany.



FEB 10, ALBANY, N.Y. -- A group of immigrants a thousand people strong stood in front of the state Capitol, asking to help rebuild the economy with the rest of the nation.

New York's Immigration Coalition members say the state is cutting the only two immigrant aid programs in its budget. While they say they understand Governor Paterson's fiscal challenge, there still needs to be adequate funding for healthcare and education.

"We should look at how to effectively use federal stimulus money to help workers get back on their feet, prevent workers from being laid off, giving them the English language lessons that they need to stay in their job, move up the ladder, so we can all become a part of the economic recovery plan." said Chung-Wha Hong, New York Immigration Coalition Executive Director.

The coalition says the state's four million immigrants are eager to work as they have the past year, accounting for \$229 billion of economic growth.

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EIIC Executive Board Member Honored

EIIC Executive Board member Noreen Lydon O'Donoghue has been chosen as an Aide to Grand Marshall Janine Rose, News12 anchor of the Westchester evening news, for the 13th annual Sleepy Hollow – Tarrytown St. Patrick's Day Parade.

Noreen, a native of Tournakeady Co. Mayo, has had a long career of community service since arriving in New York in 1963, which has combined hands-on services with leadership and lobbying to the benefit of thousands of needy Americans.

For journal advertising the deadline is February 22, 2009, and for tickets call the center and speak to Siobhan/Lisa.

News

Ecuadorian Consulate open at Roosevelt Ave., Queens

Representatives from the Emerald Isle Immigration Center visited the new Ecuadorian Consular office in Woodside last week in order to offer information about our services and to extend to consular staff a warm welcome to the neighborhood.

With Queens being the borough in which most of the 162,900 New York-based Ecuadorian nationals are resident, the Woodside office of EIIC has a long history of providing counseling and referral services on a range of immigration and social issues to Ecuadorian immigrants, which both organizations agree will now become the basis for a co-operative future.

The consular office is located at the corner of Roosevelt Avenue and 67th street in Woodside, and offers services like issuing passports and Ecuador's official identity cards, registering births and weddings, and providing authorizations for children traveling on their own. It is open Saturday through Wednesday.

Telephone: 718 6518797

Website: www.consulecuadornewyork.com

Upcoming Events

March 18, 19 EIIC Tax Seminar

This March the EIIC will run a **Tax Seminar** at both of our offices (in Queens at 7pm on Wednesday the 18th; in The Bronx at 7pm on Thursday the 19th) in order to offer help to immigrants who want to ensure that they abide by all IRS requirements before the tax return filing deadline of April 15.

Call us for information at our

Bronx Office: 718.324-3039

Queens Office: 718.478-5502

March 17 St. Patrick's Day!

Please note both our offices will be closed on March 17, 2009.

The Emerald Isle would like to wish you a very
Happy
St. Patrick's Day

~~La Fhéile Padraig Shona Daoibh Go Léir~~

Ongoing Civics & ESL Classes With NY Cares

Civic Classes / ESL with our partner NY Cares Started January in Queens

Adult Civic / English as a Second Language (ESL) classes with NY Cares are ongoing as of January 2009. The classes take place from 6:30 – 8:00 at our Woodside office (59-26 Woodside Ave. 2nd Fl. Woodside, NY 11377) and are open to the public. Reservation is necessary. The dates for these classes are:

Monday Evenings

January: 12, 26 6,

February: 2, 9, 23

March: 2, 9, 16, 23, 30

April: 6, 13, 20, 27

Tuesday Evenings

13, 20, 27

3, 10, 17, 24

3, 10, 24, 31

7, 14, 21, 28

Call **Karla Rosero** for information on (718) 478-5502 x202

Senior Scene

The Bronx EIIC Knitting Group donated fifty blankets to residents of the Frances Schervier Nursing Home in the Bronx on Tuesday, January 13, 2009. The residents each picked out their own blanket, and were delighted with them. The staff of Frances Schervier were also extremely grateful.



Emerald Isle hosted a **Christmas Luncheon** for our senior citizens on December 17th at the Cuckoos Nest in Woodside. The mood was wonderfully festive and a great time was had by all. It was a lovely gathering where our guests got to mingle with old friends and catch up on the news. All of our guests looked beautiful dressed in their holiday outfits. Approximately 30 people attended the event along with members of the Emerald Isle Staff.



Senior Helpline: Call For Volunteers

The Senior Help Line is a dedicated phone line service which is in the process of being set up (start date April, 2009). The phone lines will be operated on a voluntary basis by Seniors.

We are looking for people age 55+ who are interested in volunteering a couple of hours each month to answer phone calls from people who are lonely, isolated or just want to chat.

If you are interested, please call for more information

Bronx office: 718-324-3039 x 101
Woodside office: 718-478-5502 Ext 208.

More from the Briscoe Awards



EIIC Board Staff & Briscoe Honorees



Pat O'Dwyer & Ben Briscoe



Honoree Hon Oliver Kopell



Honoree Neal S. Schelberg Esq.



Msgr. James Kelly



Rabbi Joseph Potasnik



EIIC Executive Board Director
Brian O'Dwyer