

R E P O R T

Your United Way of Broome County investment at work

June 2002

American Civic Association: Helping new neighbors to build a better community

Each year, many people travel to the United States with the hopes of building a better life for themselves and their families. The move is a major change in life, and such a transition can be very difficult. Often, immigrants do not have family in the U.S., and they cannot simply return home if the transition is rough. The American Civic Association (ACA) provides the support necessary for the transition, so that immigrating families can more easily adapt to, and be adopted by, American society.

Reaching out when and where assistance is needed most

The Merkulov family has benefited from the hand of the ACA. They arrived from Russia in May 2001 and settled in the Binghamton area to be near relatives. After one year in the U.S., the Merkulov's needed to apply for their "green cards". The family sought assistance with the paperwork that they had to fill out in order to obtain permanent residency. For the adjustment of status of non-refugee clients, there is usually a fee of \$250 per person. In this case, however, the fee was waived. ACA caseworker Karen Monaghan was happy to help the Merkulov's obtain permanent residency in the U.S., and ACA was very pleased to help the family that have chosen to make their home in our community. The Merkulov family was grateful for the support and assistance they have received.

ACA serves our local community in many ways

The American Civic Association is a not-for-profit member agency of the Broome and Tioga Counties United Way. The organization receives its funding from the United Way, a variety of grants,

fundraising, as well as ACA service fees. It is also supported by many volunteers from the community.

ACA strives to embrace immigrating families and help create a smooth, mutually beneficial integration into our community.

Be it searching for adequate housing, employment, schooling, translation services, visa information, passports, political asylum, or other forms of assistance, ACA helps immigrants, and refugees, as they need it.

ACA, Broome County United Way, and You

With the support of the United Way, the American Civic Association is helping many individuals and families lead better lives by becoming productive members of our community. By helping them adapt and providing support, you are also giving to yourselves. As immigrants become Americans, they often give back to the country, to the community, which helped them get there. This is another way that the funds and services of the United Way benefit our community. For information on how you can help, visit United Way of Broome County's web site at www.unitedwaybroome.org.

Getting in touch with your local ACA

It is your contributions that allow the United Way of Broome County to support

the American Civic Association. Its Binghamton office is located at 131 Front Street. To find out more about what the American Civic Association does for our community, call the Binghamton office at 723-9419 or e-mail to americancivic@stny.rr.com.



Recent arrivals from Russia (left to right, top row): Yelena Merkulov, Viktor Merkulov, and Karen Monaghan; (middle row): children: Dimitriy, Viktoriya, Vitaliy, (bottom row): Olesya, Aleksey, Igor, and Marina Merkulov