



**BOSTON CENTER FOR REFUGEE HEALTH & HUMAN
RIGHTS
SUMMER 2018 NEWSLETTER**

*Pictured above: Dr. Lin addressing the room at BCRHHR's
Annual Client Gala.*



Hiebert Lounge full of BCRHHR's clients & friends.

ANNUAL CLIENT GALA, 2018

Boston Center for Refugee Health & Human Rights (BCRHHR) held its Annual Client Gala on July 11, 2018 in Boston University's Hiebert Lounge. The event celebrates the strength, resilience and courage of BCRHHR's clients, while also

commemorating World Refugee Day & the United Nations Day in Support of Torture Survivors.

This year's Gala was particularly special as it marked the twenty year anniversary of the Center's founding. In 1998, Dr. Lin Piwowarczyk co-founded BCRHHR with a client-centered, multidisciplinary approach. Since that time, the Center has served nearly three thousand clients from eighty-eight countries. They or their families have all experienced refugee trauma or torture.

The Gala was emceed by Jen Martin, a Clinical Social Worker in Child and Adolescent Psychiatry. Sean Mullan was the DJ, playing both traditional music from around the world as well as some current hits. Client Speaker Michael Ssebugwawo shared his story about coming to the United States and the struggles he overcame in creating a life for himself here. Michael's path has not been easy, but his inner strength and hope for the future resonated with many in the room. His powerful words also served as an important reminder that recovery and healing are possible even in the wake of such hardship.

This year's Ubuntu award was presented to Health Law Advocates (HLA) for their excellent work promoting health care equality for all. The Ubuntu Award, given each year to an organization that represents the "spirit of Ubuntu" or "the essence of being human," as Archbishop Desmond Tutu once explained it, was accepted by Andrew Cohen, a supervising attorney at HLA.



Mr. Cohen's impassioned speech.

Mr. Cohen thanked Dr. Lin and spoke to the fact that BCRHHR has been a "critical partner" of HLA, as both organizations fight for health care coverage for our clients. Mr. Cohen stated that health care is a "human right" and "that by coming together, we can create a movement for change to recognize it as such". His organization is working diligently to create this sea-change in attitude towards the type of care that clients receive. HLA changes minds through advocacy, legal wins for clients' rights to health care, and by bringing organizations together in a working group called the "Immigrant Health Care Access Coalition". The coalition works together to share information about their organizations, educate one another and empower all to, "fight for what is right... and what is right is to make sure that everyone in the United States can get access to affordable and excellent quality health care services," as Mr. Cohen put it. There could be no better recipient of the Ubuntu award than HLA, and the partnership between the two organizations echoed the theme of the Gala: "Celebrating Unity".

Also present to accept a certificate of appreciation for his selfless dedication to BCRHHR's clients was Avik Sarkar. Avik is a young pianist who first approached the Center last year with a proposal to raise funds through a benefit concert. He did just that, raising nearly \$5,000 while playing pieces inspired by stories of immigrants from around the

world. Avik shared his talents again at the 2018 Client Gala as he played two beautiful classical pieces, causing the audience to listen in silent contemplation.



Avik Sarkar on piano.



A favorite of the Gala is always the fashion show. This year hailed one of the most well-participated in fashion shows in the history of BCRHHR's Galas. Clients glided, strutted and even danced down the hallway in clothing from their home towns. The room exploded with clapping and cheers with each fashion show participant. They all thanked Dr. Lin and staff for helping them to heal and to find hope in the Center she founded.

CAREER CORNER: BY LINDA ZIMMERMAN



Jobs:

Kudos to six clients who have gained new employment during the last 30 days. Their new jobs are: Bicycle Mechanic, Information Technology Technician, Data Analyst, Customer Service Representative, Nursing Assistant, Home Health Aide.

Following completion of a series of job readiness workshops (US work culture, skill identification, resume development, mock interviews and job search strategy), clients continue the career development process with a job search. The roller coaster ride of acculturation to the US and integration into the workforce can take as long as one year; therefore, receiving a first paycheck is an incredible boost to a client's morale.

Technology:

We are implementing a new web-based job readiness program to improve client access to learning if they are unable to attend on-site training. Upwardly Global will provide technical assistance for this effort which is expected to launch in October 2018.



AmeriCorps Host Site:

BCRHHR has become a host site for AmeriCorps' New American Integration Program (NAIP). NAIP serves Immigrants and Refugees throughout Massachusetts. Madeleine Jackman will join our team in September 2018 assisting with a variety of projects that support our mission. (AmeriCorps members commit to a full time service position while receiving a modest living allowance, health benefits, training and an education award.)

REFUGEE PATIENT NAVIGATOR (RPN) IN THE SPOTLIGHT

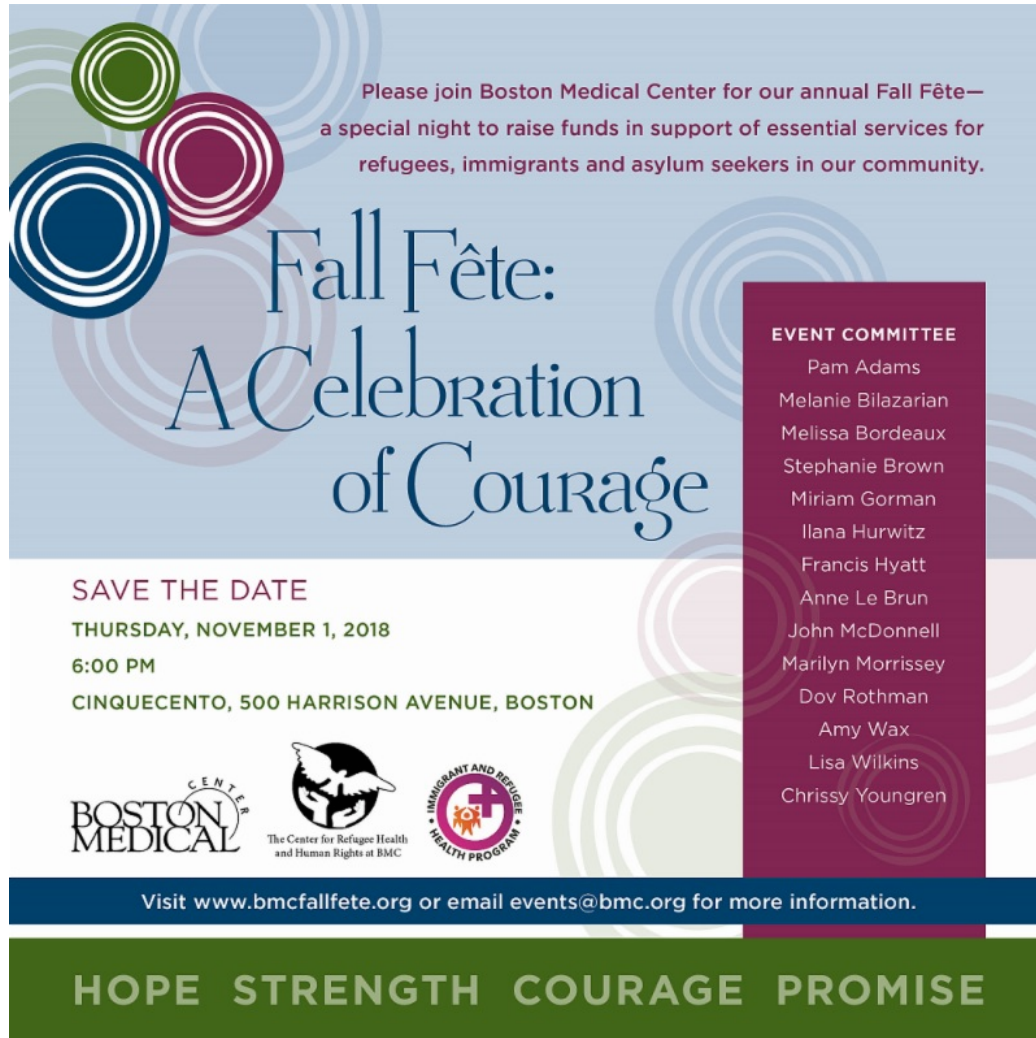
Ellie Warner-Rousseau joined Boston Center for Refugee Health & Human Rights as a full-time Refugee Patient Navigator (RPN) for the summer of 2018 and she has made a lasting impression on all of the staff, clients and other volunteers during her short time here. Ellie will be entering her senior year at Boston College this fall, where she is completing a B.A. in International Studies with a concentration in Global Health and Ethics and a minor in Spanish. Many of us at the Center find it hard to believe that she is still an undergraduate due to her level of maturity and commitment to the work. Patient, kind, humble, flexible and hardworking, Ellie is an exemplar of an RPN.



Ms. Warner-Rousseau's interest in refugees and asylum seekers grew out of a need to understand why the health disparities in the U.S. are so severe, stating that many people "are unable to access high quality health care, including mental health services that are culturally and linguistically appropriate". The desire to examine these issues in "a hands-on environment" led her to the BCRHHR. She stated that the one-on-one interactions she has had with clients have been "both challenging and rewarding", causing her to consider a career in social work after she completes her B.A.

Ellie has learned about the numerous responsibilities that social workers carry while working with survivors of torture and other trauma. Being an RPN has opened her eyes "to the importance of trauma-informed care and practicing 'radical hospitality' at every step of the health care process", two lessons that she says will influence her future career path. Whatever that path may be, all of us at BCRHHR know Ellie will be successful at it. She will be greatly missed but we look forward to hearing all of the wonderful ways that Ellie helps the world in her




Save the date for this year's Fall Fête fundraiser!



Please join Boston Medical Center for our annual Fall Fête—
a special night to raise funds in support of essential services for
refugees, immigrants and asylum seekers in our community.

Fall Fête: A Celebration of Courage

SAVE THE DATE
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 2018
6:00 PM
CINQUECENTO, 500 HARRISON AVENUE, BOSTON

Visit www.bmcfallfete.org or email events@bmc.org for more information.

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