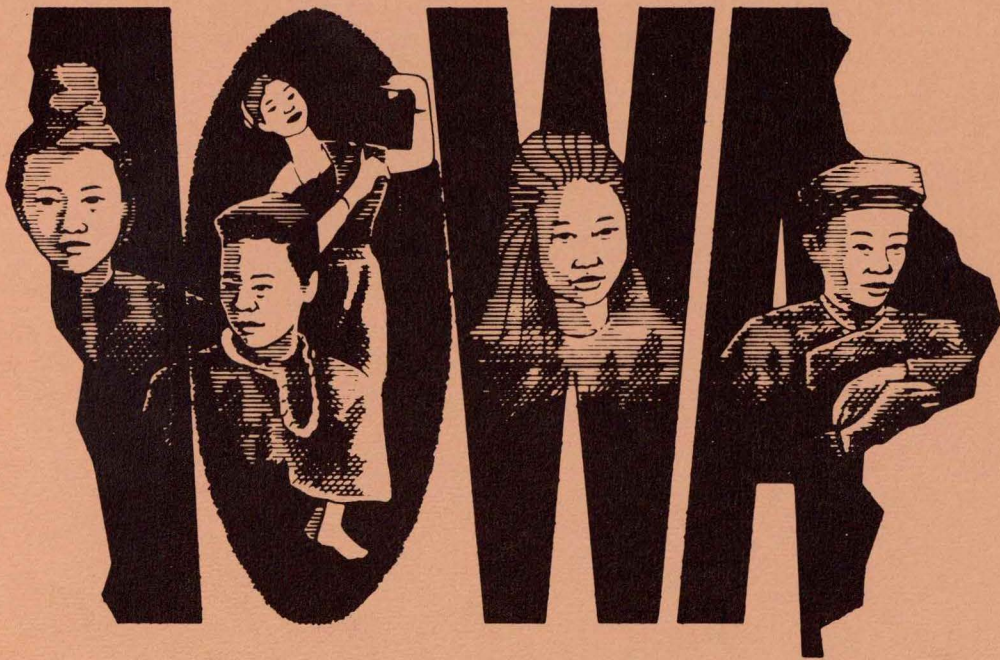


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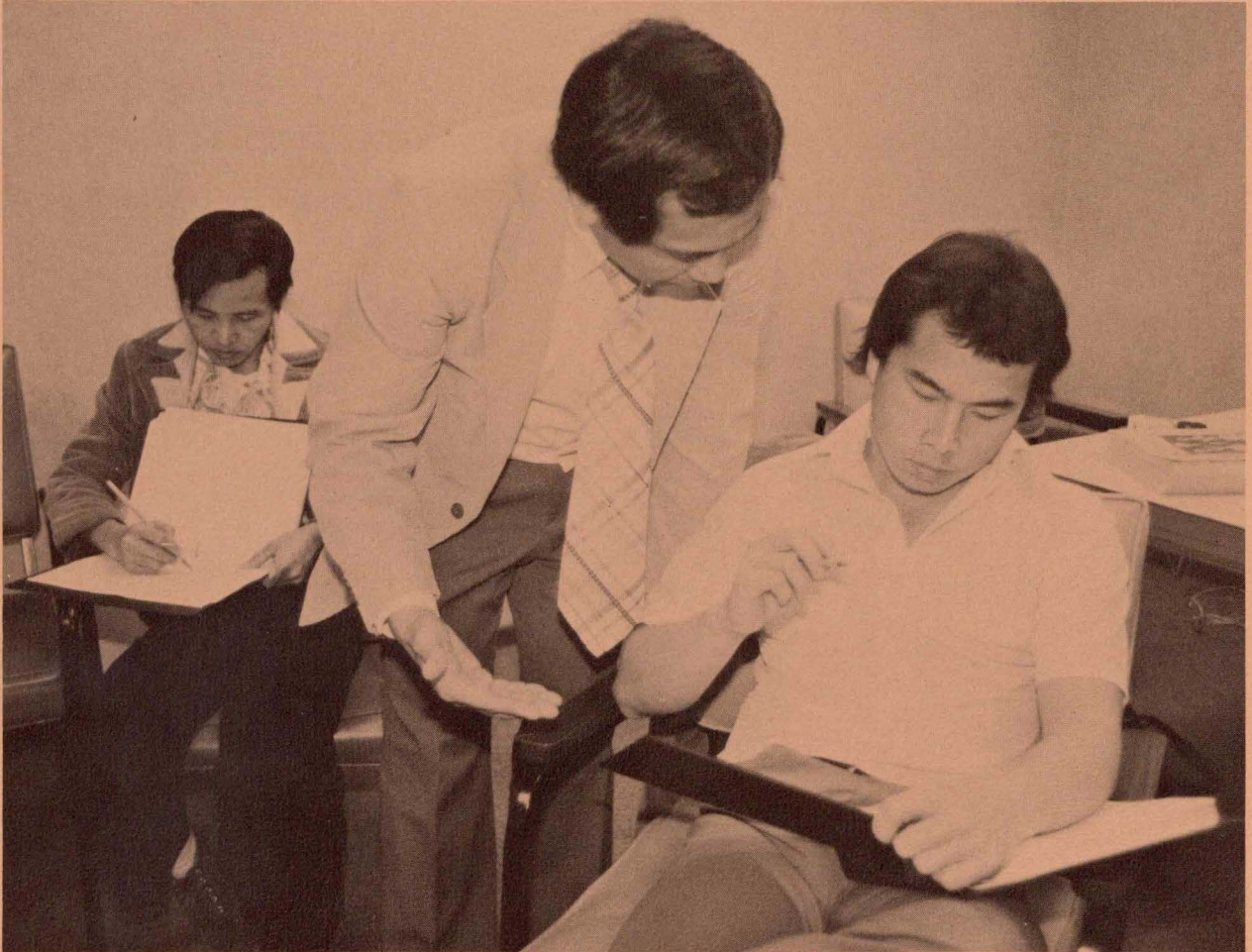


Iowa Refugee Service Center

4626 SW 9th Street, Des Moines, Iowa 50315

Iowa toll-free: 800-362-2780
General number: 515/281-4334

STATE LIBRARY OF IOWA
Historical Building
DES MOINES, IOWA 50319



IRSC staff member Houng Baccam (standing) assisting Tong Vang during a session of the two-week training course "Iowa Refugee Job-Seeking Program." (The course provides Southeast Asians with a full array of employment information and practical application in trying to secure a job.)

Copies of *Introduction to Iowa* are available free of charge by writing to the following address:

**Information Services
Iowa Refugee Service Center
4626 SW 9th Street
Des Moines, Iowa 50315**

IRSC

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December 1984

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Iowa's resettlement of Southeast Asians

In 1975, various Communist powers gained control of Indochina — the countries of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia (now called Kampuchea). As a result, hundreds of thousands of people, most of them fleeing to safety because of their past associations with U.S.-backed, anti-Communist efforts, fled to nearby countries. The United States of America responded by admitting Southeast Asians under a special refugee program. (A "refugee" — as designated by the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) — is a person who cannot return to his or her country because of a well-founded fear of persecution.)

Iowa's participation in the program began in September 1975 as a result of a request by President Gerald Ford. Former Iowa Governor Robert D. Ray created the Governor's Task Force for Indochinese Resettlement, which was later renamed the Iowa Refugee Service Center, and put the effort under the administration of the director of the Iowa Department of Job Service. In 1984, Iowa Governor Terry E. Branstad appointed an executive director for the Iowa Refugee Service Center.

Under the leadership of Iowa Governor Branstad, IRSC has continued to strengthen its employment oriented refugee program. The goal of IRSC is to maximize self-sufficiency among refugees and to hold to an absolute minimum those who must temporarily rely upon government assistance.

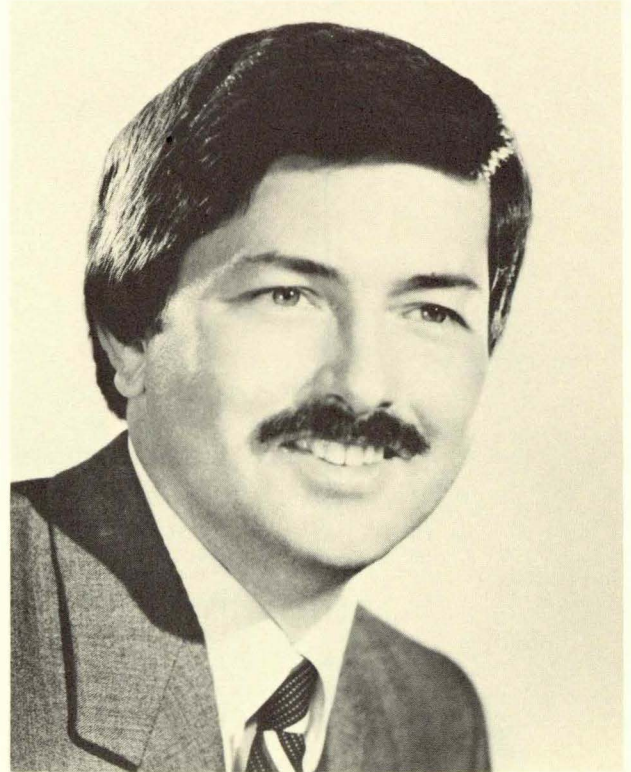
Tai Dam resettlement

The State of Iowa's resettlement program began with the relocation of a group of refugees from Laos called Tai Dam. The Tai Dam, a small ethnic group with close inter-family ties, had originally lived in the area called Tonkin, which was later declared North Vietnam. The Tai Dam fought with the French against the Communists and fled into Laos in the 1950s after their defeat.

Iowa's resettlement of the Tai Dam could be considered a "cluster resettlement." With minor exception, all of the Tai Dam in the free world have been resettled in the State of Iowa and the country of France. As of October 1984, 2,400 Tai Dam lived in Iowa.

IRSC funding

IRSC operates under two federal contracts with two sources of funds. One contract is with the U.S. Department of State. This contract allows IRSC to serve as a resettlement agency, or a voluntary agency (volag) as it is sometimes called.



Iowa Governor Terry E. Branstad

As a resettlement agency, IRSC works with the various U.S. overseas programs in Southeast Asia, coordinating the arrangements for the resettlement of refugees in Iowa.

The second funding source is from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). This contract could be described as a "service contract" which allows IRSC to maintain a staff of workers to assist refugees and sponsors, an Iowa toll-free telephone line, health coordination services, immigration status adjustment services, volunteer tutor projects, multilingual publications and extensive employment projects. (A list of IRSC services can be found beginning on page 9.)

IRSC resettlement philosophy

The philosophy of IRSC can be simply stated in this way: IRSC believes that refugees need to develop and maintain self-sufficient positions in our society as quickly as possible. IRSC focuses its efforts on placing refugees in jobs — jobs that generate federal, state and local taxes and add additional consumer dollars in local communities.

IRSC does not approve of the use of welfare-type funds by refugee families, except when circumstances require such use.

Worldwide resettlement

More than 1.5 million people have fled Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia (now called Kampuchea) since 1975. By September 1984, over 1.2 million refugees had been resettled in various countries of the world. Over 30 countries have participated in the resettlement of Southeast Asians.

Leading resettlement countries	Resettled by August 1984
United States	710,318
China	265,775
France	106,044
Canada	105,494
Australia	93,694
West Germany	27,782

Securing sponsors

Securing sponsors for Southeast Asian refugees is an ongoing process. IRSC stresses strong sponsorships and believes that refugees who enter the U.S. under strong sponsorships are more apt to find success and thus are less likely to become dependent upon public welfare. IRSC studies have supported this belief.

Sponsors are counseled and trained before the refugee family arrives. Items such as job search techniques, housing, financial aid and medical programs are covered. By the time the refugee family arrives, specifics of the sponsorship have been covered in detail. Such preparation allows the sponsorship to get off to a good start with success much more likely.

The help and assistance sponsors provide the refugees are invaluable. The hours spent helping the refugees understand heating bills, checking accounts, insurance policies and so on give the "new Iowans" many good lessons on their new life.

IRSC provides ongoing assistance to sponsors and refugees. Although contacts from IRSC workers to sponsors and refugees after the initial resettlement process are not as frequent, contacts are still routine and problems and assistance are handled on an "as needed" basis.

State Refugee Coordinator

Under the leadership of Iowa Governor Terry E. Branstad, the Iowa Refugee Service Center (IRSC) serves as the government agency charged with administering refugee services in Iowa. In addition, as appointed by Governor Branstad, the executive director of IRSC serves as the State Refugee Coordinator for Iowa.

As the primary agency for refugee activity, IRSC receives all U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) funds for Iowa refugee-related services. IRSC's major contracts are with the Iowa Department of Human Services for the refugee cash and medical assistance programs and the Unaccompanied Refugee Minors Program.



Natasin Dance Troupe members performing during the Lao New Year celebration in Des Moines, Ia., in April 1981.

Refugees in Iowa

As of October 1984, approximately 8,700 Southeast Asians lived in Iowa. IRSC has resettled about half of the 8,700. The remaining half has been resettled by a combination of other resettlement agencies active in Iowa. (A complete list of all resettlement agencies active in Iowa can be found on page 7.)

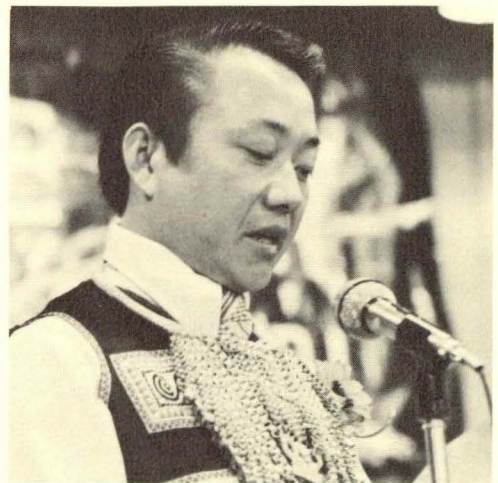
Southeast Asians live in 85 of Iowa's 99 counties. The total refugee population figure of 8,700 represents less than one-third of one percent when compared with the Iowa population of 2.9 million.

In ranking with other states, Iowa ranks 20th in the largest number of Southeast Asians.

State	Number of Southeast Asians resettled by July 1984
California	257,400
Texas	57,200
Washington	32,400
Illinois	25,000
New York	24,400
Pennsylvania	24,300
Minnesota	22,200
Virginia	21,500
Massachusetts	17,200
Oregon	16,900
Louisiana	14,000
Florida	12,300
Colorado	10,500
Ohio	10,400
Michigan	10,300
Wisconsin	9,900
Kansas	9,200
Oklahoma	9,000
Georgia	8,800
IOWA	8,700

Iowa Refugee Groups

Country of Cambodia (Kampuchea)	
Cambodian	800
Country of Laos	
Hmong	600
Lowland Lao	1,900
Tai Dam	2,400
Country of Vietnam	
Vietnamese	3,000
Iowa Refugee Total by October 1984	8,700



IRSC staff member Su Thao reading a speech at the November 1980 Hmong New Year celebration in Des Moines, Ia.

Iowa Joint Voluntary Agencies

Iowa Joint Voluntary Agencies (IJVA) is a working group formed by IRSC, made up of managers and directors of the resettlement agencies in Iowa, to better coordinate refugee activities in the state. IJVA members share information about upcoming projects, changes in social services programs, employment activities and future resettlement plans. (A list of the resettlement agencies active in Iowa can be found on page 7.)



Vietnamese refugees stepping off the plane on April 29, 1979, to begin their new lives in Iowa.

Iowa resettlement agencies

Iowa Refugee Service Center (IRSC)

Marvin Weidner, Executive Director
4626 SW 9th Street
Des Moines, Iowa 50315
Iowa toll-free: 800-362-2780
Local Des Moines: 281-4334

United States Catholic Conference (USCC)

Catholic Council for Social Concern
Larry Breheny
818 Fifth Avenue
Box 723
Des Moines, Iowa 50303
515/244-3761

St. Vincent Center
Betty Anderson
2706 Gaines Street
Davenport, Iowa 52804
319/324-1911

Catholic Charities
Joe Featherston
P.O. Box 1309
1229 Mt. Loretta
Dubuque, Iowa 52001
319/556-2580

Catholic Charities

Jim Taylor
1822 Jackson Street
P.O. Box 2025
Sioux City, Iowa 51104
712/252-4545

Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS)

Lutheran Social Service of Iowa
3116 University Ave.
Des Moines, Iowa 50311
515/277-4476

Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS)

Jewish Family Services
Kathy Harpster
910 Polk Blvd.
Des Moines, Iowa 50312
515/277-6321

Iowa Refugee Service Center

Iowa toll-free number: 800-362-2780

General number: 515/281-4334

Marvin Weidner, Executive Director 515/281-3119
Lupe Harris, Secretary 515/281-6880

Wayne Johnson, Assistant Director 515/281-4337

Employment and Social Services

Cary Shearer, Coordinator 515/281-8920
Su Thao, Lead Job Developer 515/281-6847
Steve Bose, File Clerk 515/281-3768
Ly Chao, Case Worker/Job Developer 515/281-6882
Phouvaly Chounlamounry, Case
Worker/Job Developer 515/281-3472
Oudone Kouangvongthien, Case
Worker/Job Developer 515/281-6286
Le Nguyen, Case Worker/
Job Developer 515/281-6846
Try Tuon, Case Worker/Job Developer 515/281-7099
Kao Xiong, Case Worker/Job
Developer 515/281-4336
Arthur Ferguson, Administrative Asst. 515/281-6014
Don Phommachakr, Case
Worker/Job Developer 515/281-6883

Project Appointees

Mary Ames, Mason City 515/423-1133
Merrill Buckley, Sioux City 712/277-8540
Tammy Dierks, Davenport 319/386-4770
Bob Handley, Ottumwa 515/684-5401
Frank Tribble, Marshalltown 515/752-3607
Laura Yager, Sioux City 712/277-8540

VISTA Volunteers

Phetdavone Dethphommathet,
Sioux City 712/277-8540
Setha Hy, Des Moines 515/281-8225
Linda Kienast, Waterloo 319/235-1471
Ven Mom, Des Moines 515/281-5131
Scott Schamberger, Cedar Rapids 319/365-9474
Samral Um, Des Moines 515/281-8225

Health Coordination/MAA Liaison

Charlene Heggen, Coordinator 515/281-4332
Van Tran, Health Programs
Field Specialist 515/281-3116
Phranom Philavanh 515/281-8150

Resettlement Services

Houng Baccam, Coordinator 515/281-4338
Faluang Baccam, Immigration
& Translation 515/281-3109
Tam Nguyen, URM & Sponsor
Recruitment 515/281-6881

Information Services

Richard Whitaker, Coordinator 515/281-3117

Volunteer Services

Bette Crumrine, Coordinator 515/281-6398

Financial Management

Joelle Bose, Accounting Technician 515/281-6628

Receptionist

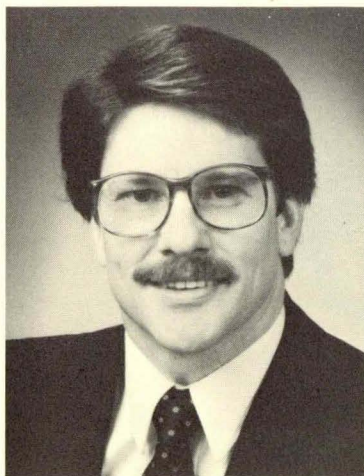
Rebecca Crabtree 515/281-6843

Computer Programming & Research

Tom Thorup, Coordinator 515/281-4333

Clerk/Typist

Jo Campney 515/281-5625



IRSC Executive Director Marvin Weidner

IRSC services

Employment services

IRSC operates an extensive job development program for refugees. IRSC maintains a staff of job developers who are stationed in the Des Moines IRSC office and assigned to various areas of Iowa. In addition, IRSC maintains staff in various areas of Iowa who work out of local Job Service of Iowa offices.

The job developers contact employers in an effort to secure employment opportunities for refugees. In the development and retention of employment positions, IRSC workers assist refugees on their first day of work, arrange for IRSC to translate the work rules and provide continuing assistance to employers on all aspects of the employment.

Also, a training program that teaches refugees how to find jobs on their own called the Iowa Refugee Job-Seeking Program is offered by IRSC. The training deals with how to follow up on job leads, resumes, successful interviews, what employers look for in workers and how to successfully retain a job.

Sponsor services

IRSC provides a wide variety of assistance and counseling to sponsors. Sponsorship is, of course, a moral commitment and not a legal commitment. With this in mind, IRSC requires the sponsoring group to fill out a sponsor application as the first step.

After extensive counseling, IRSC matches the sponsorship group with a refugee family. By the time the refugee

family arrives, the sponsoring group is well informed on what the sponsorship will entail. Items such as housing, possible employment opportunities, school enrollment for the children, and food and clothing are just a few of the items that are discussed and finalized with IRSC well in advance of the refugee family's arrival.

Follow-up services to sponsors and refugees are available at IRSC. A specific IRSC worker is assigned to every refugee family and sponsoring group to provide assistance on almost every detail. Regular contact between the IRSC worker and the sponsor and refugee family is maintained during the first few critical resettlement months. After that, contacts are made and problems are handled more on an "as needed" basis.

Sponsors are fully briefed on IRSC's resettlement philosophy of placing refugees into jobs as soon as possible after they arrive. Other avenues of resettlement, such as vocational or English language training, are considered to be adjuncts to jobs and not usually replacements for jobs.

IRSC serves all refugees

IRSC serves all refugees — no matter which agency originally performed the resettlement. Services to refugees not resettled by IRSC greatly vary. The assistance may be extensive or be a simple referral to the appropriate agency — depending on individual situations or the extent of that resettlement agency's operations in Iowa — but IRSC will serve any refugee who requests assistance.

Health services

Networking with various health providers in Iowa, IRSC coordinates health treatment programs for refugees, advises health providers of cultural differences and secures information on developing refugee health treatments and programs.

Health publications in the various Southeast Asian languages are made available to refugees from IRSC. *(To receive a complete bibliography of the health publications available, contact IRSC.)*

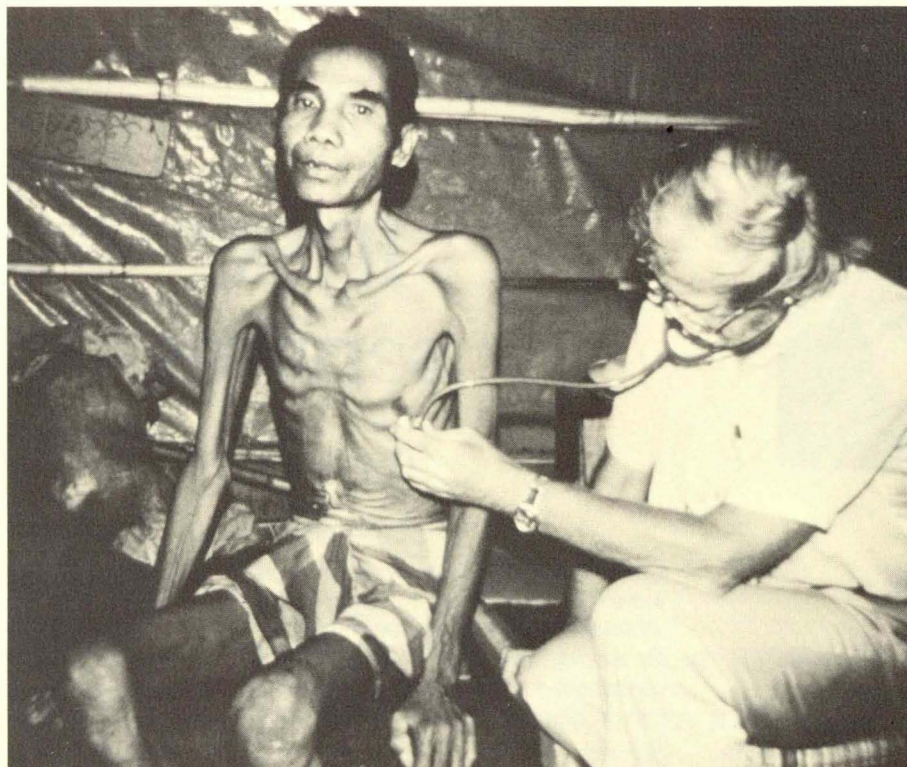
Refugee services

IRSC provides a wide variety of direct services to Southeast Asians, in addition to employment services. Assisting with the purchase of an automobile or house, enrollment of children in schools, problems with heating or water bills and legal actions are just some of the services.

Whatever the human problem met by the refugees, IRSC stands ready to assist and advise in making the necessary adjustments to the new life ahead of them.

Speakers' bureau

IRSC maintains a speakers' bureau to present information on any aspect of refugee resettlement. In addition, videotape and slide presentations are available to be shown with the speakers' presentations or by themselves. *(If you would like to schedule a speaker, contact IRSC.)*



Dr. Robert Dalager examining a Cambodian patient in Khao I Dang refugee camp in Thailand. Dalager served as a volunteer under Iowa SHARES (Sends Help to Aid Refugees and End Starvation). Iowa SHARES raised more than \$545,000 in volunteer contributions, sending Iowa doctors and nurses to Thailand and providing food and medicine. (Picture was taken May 1980.)

Planning and statistical services

IRSC maintains data on Southeast Asians in Iowa to better develop and maintain services and to provide beneficial information to related service providers. Information such as Southeast Asians participating in refugee assistance programs, geographical dispersion of Southeast Asians in Iowa and overall resettlement trends are regularly examined.

Immigration status services

IRSC assists refugees in the adjustment of their legal status. Week-long immigration sessions are held at the IRSC office to enable refugees to adjust their status from refugee to permanent resident alien. Such sessions allow large numbers of refugees to be processed and eliminates the need for Iowa's refugees to travel to the immigration office in Omaha, Nebraska.

Education services

IRSC networks with the various educational services and assists and counsels Southeast Asians in enrollment. In addition, educators are advised on cultural differences and assisted in occasional difficulties.

Denison Job Corps Center

The Denison, Iowa, Job Corps Center admits Southeast Asians age 16 to 21 from Iowa. The refugees live at the Job Corps Center during the duration of their training which can last from nine months to two years. Training is available in such fields as clerical and general office work, welding, carpentry, small engine repair and nurses' aides.

Media library

IRSC maintains videotape, film and slide presentations for use by various groups in Iowa. The presentations cover such topics as: services of IRSC, a summary of the refugee situation in Indochina, the Iowa SHARES (Sends Help to Aid Refugees and End Starvation) program, the Natsin Dance Troupe from Laos, the reasons why employers hire Southeast Asians, IRSC's Volunteer Tutor Program, the "boat people" from Vietnam, the resettlement of the Tai Dam refugees in Iowa and the Hmong refugees from Laos. (A complete list of the media library items may be obtained from IRSC.)

Radio show

IRSC produces a refugee news and music radio program called The Asia-Iowa News broadcast on KDPS FM 88.1 every Monday evening from 6 to 7 p.m. The broadcast can be heard in central Iowa.

Volunteer Tutor Program

IRSC's Volunteer Tutor Program began in June 1979 to help refugees learn English. The program utilizes Iowa volunteers who meet with the refugees — often in the refugee family's home — to aid in the learning of English. IRSC gives the volunteers a quick training course on how to teach the refugees.



Tai Dam woman singing into a tape recorder for broadcast on the Tai Dam radio program in Iowa. (Picture was taken in the Nongkhai refugee camp in northern Thailand in May 1980.)

Iowa Literacy Program

In September 1984, Iowa Governor Terry E. Branstad announced the formation of the Iowa Literacy Program, a program aimed at reducing functional illiteracy among adult Iowans. The program is a combined effort of the Iowa Governor's Office for Volunteers, Iowa Department of Public Instruction and Iowa Refugee Service Center.

The Iowa Literacy Program links with IRSC's Volunteer Tutor Program in providing valuable services to refugees, such as efforts for refugees to obtain high school equivalency diplomas.

Publications

IRSC develops and maintains printed items for use by refugees, sponsors and service providers. Some of the topics covered include: services of IRSC, the refugee groups and their cultures, employment information, health treatments and various informational items on the refugees and the refugee program.

Resettlement services

IRSC, under contract with the U.S. Department of State, serves as a resettlement agency for refugees. IRSC works with the various U.S. overseas programs in Southeast Asia, the Intergovernmental Committee for Migration (ICM) which is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland, and the American Council for Voluntary Agencies (ACVA) in New York, coordinating the resettlement of families in Iowa.

IRSC assists sponsors and refugee families already resettled in Iowa in the resettlement of additional family members who are in refugee camps in Southeast Asia.

