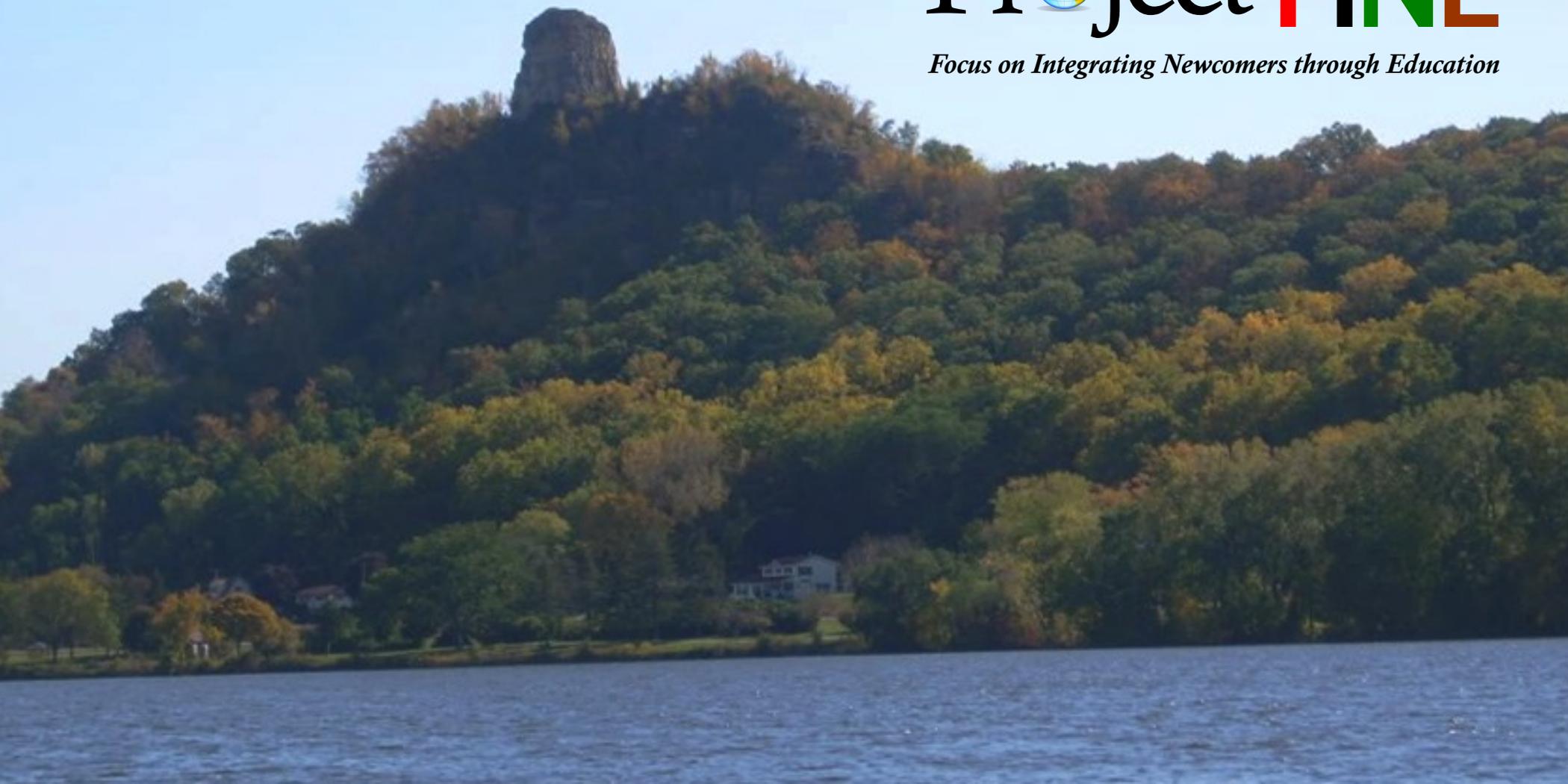


# 2011 Annual Report

Project  FINE

*Focus on Integrating Newcomers through Education*



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## Geographic Area Served:

We are proud to be able to serve Winona County and the surrounding region.



## About Project FINE (Focus on Integrating Newcomers through Education):

Project FINE is a private, non-profit organization based in Winona, MN, dedicated to easing the integration of ethnically diverse people into the local community. To achieve our mission, we provide culturally and linguistically appropriate services and education. We also connect newcomers with existing services in our community. Our work is accomplished by a small staff, committed volunteers, a dedicated Board of Directors and extraordinary partners.

**Our Mission:** To strengthen and enrich our community by facilitating the integration of people who are ethnically diverse.

**Our Vision:** To create a respectful and sensitive community.

**Our Guiding Values:** Diversity, Respect, Culture, Family, Partnership

# Welcome

It has truly been an honor to serve as the Board President of one of Winona County's finest nonprofit organizations. After serving on the Board of Directors for nearly 6 years and seeing all the great things that Project FINE is doing for newcomers, I am honored to take a more active role in the organization. I'm proud to report that we have continued to respond to the many needs of our ever-changing population.



As you may know, the 2010 Census indicates that diverse individuals now make up over 8% of the population in Winona County, a significant increase over the last ten years. In response to this growth, Project FINE has strengthened existing programs and developed new initiatives to meet the needs of our growing refugee and immigrant population. It is clear that, with the help of our partners and the community, Project FINE is moving full steam ahead into our 22<sup>nd</sup> year of operation!

I must also share one of our secrets to success. The achievements of our organization are a direct result of our dedicated and determined leader, Fatima Said. Fatima continues to lead our truly talented staff by setting high goals that hold true to the mission of Project FINE. As the Board President, I am so proud that we have a strong leader and a very capable staff. This year, Project FINE was one of the first nonprofits in our community to earn the "Meets Standards" seal from the Charities Review Council. This recognition testifies to the quality of our organizational structure and reflects our commitment not only to mission, but also to transparency and responsibility. As we look forward to 2012 and beyond, be assured that we will continue to provide core services and support to newcomers and established residents throughout our region.

*Bill Spitzer*

Bill Spitzer, Board President 2011



Dear Friends,

As we reflect on another year, we think of the good times and the bad, the highlights and hardships. In 2011, Project FINE continued to serve our community by providing essential services and education to newcomers and service providers throughout our region. It was another successful year for us, and I continue to be amazed at the difference Project FINE has made in the lives of so many. Our work meets a wide variety of needs and I am pleased to report that during the last year we served over 2,500 newcomers.



The best way to understand our work is to put yourself in the shoes of a newcomer and imagine what you would do if you were a student falling behind in class, a single mother struggling to put food on the table, a young man in need of emergency medical attention, a local farmer looking to grow the business, a family building a new life in our community. These situations represent some of the challenges that Project FINE is able to address on a day-to-day basis. Whether our work is accomplished by providing an interpreter, sharing information, connecting students with tutors, promoting small business development or seeing the eyes of our participants light up when they use a computer for the first time; we are truly proud to be able to assist newcomers on their road to self-sufficiency.

I am honored to serve our community and so very thankful to the many partners and individuals whose collaboration is essential to our work. As you read this report, you will see many stories about the tremendous impact that your commitment and support to Project FINE has had in the lives of people all over our region.

Thank you for another wonderful year, we look forward to serving our community for many years to come.

*Fatima Said*

Fatima Said, Executive Director

# Language Services

## *Giving a Voice*

Through Project FINE's Language Services program, service providers throughout Winona County and the surrounding area are able to communicate more effectively with their non-English-speaking clients and customers. Project FINE provides interpreters for face-to-face appointments or conference calls and provides translation for written documents. Our interpreter roster consists of over 60 interpreters proficient in 24 languages. All interpreters receive training in interpreting ethics and ongoing education.

During 2011, Project FINE provided over 2,275 hours of interpretation and translation services to 50 service providers. Nine Project FINE interpreters are currently registered with the Minnesota Department of Health's Spoken Language Healthcare Interpreter Roster. In 2011 the Board and staff revised and compiled the Project FINE Language Services policies into one comprehensive document, reflecting the most recent changes and requirements for interpreters. These policies are submitted to contracted insurance agencies and are used as a tool during interpreter orientation.



### ***Back on Her Feet - Maria's Story***

*Maria knew that something wasn't right. She had just been laid off from her job of five years and was overwhelmed. In addition to the stress of searching for a new job, she had been experiencing tingling in her feet and had been feeling ill for several months. In the past, she had had health insurance from her employer and had received regular medical care and examinations. Now uninsured and needing medical care, Maria was afraid that she had a serious medical condition.*

*When a Project FINE staff member called Maria to tell her about a free health care clinic, she was relieved. The Winona Community Health Clinic began in November of 2010 as a collaboration between Winona Health, Winona County Public Health and Winona State University. Project FINE has been involved with the Winona Community Health Clinic since its inception, providing translated promotional materials, informing newcomer families of the clinic, and providing interpreters for clinic sessions and follow-up appointments. Maria marked the clinic date on her calendar and asked for an interpreter to meet her at the clinic. The provider ordered lab work and diagnosed Maria with Type 2 diabetes. The clinic provided her with three months of medication and scheduled follow-up care with a physician and dietician.*

*Today, Maria is living healthier and is grateful that Project FINE shared information about the clinic with her. Shortly after her clinic visit, Maria got a new job and is fortunate to have health insurance again. She is very thankful for Project FINE and says, "the information and interpreter provided by Project FINE allowed me to see a doctor and get back on track with my health. Thank you for helping me get back on my feet!"*

# Advocacy & Information Referrals

## Making Connections

Through Advocacy and Information Referral Services, Project FINE provides assistance to newcomer families who are building a new life in our community. We connect individuals with existing services and provide linguistically appropriate information and referrals to meet the needs of newcomer families.

In 2011, Project FINE provided over 7,129 hours of service to more than 1,675 newcomers in Winona County. Over 2,730 of these hours were provided in-kind. During the last year, Project FINE also developed a new client database designed to meet the specific needs of our organization and help us to better serve newcomers and service providers.



*I have nothing but positive things to say about Project FINE. I was able to get my Drivers License and employment through them. I'm not sure where to get the services if there is no Project FINE. I am so thankful to them."*

*Cha Lee, Project FINE Client*



### Food Distribution

*For many newcomer families, securing healthy, nutritious food is a challenge. Large family size, limited income and unfamiliarity with American cooking ingredients make preparing healthy, balanced meals a challenge. Throughout 2011, Project FINE worked with several organizations to provide newcomer families access to healthy food.*

*In January, Project FINE facilitated focus groups on local foods for both Hmong and Somali women. These groups were organized by the University of MN Regional Sustainable Development Partnership and were intended to discover the types of produce used by specific immigrant and refugee groups, as well as the demand for and local availability of such produce.*

*Over the past two years, Project FINE has provided assistance to Hmong gardeners by connecting them with local land owners and agricultural experts. Through the Voices in Harmony program, these gardeners have gained access to additional land and are happy to express their gratitude by sharing their bountiful harvest with others. This summer, several Hmong gardeners continued their commitment to giving back to the community by donating over 500 pounds of fresh produce to local food shelves and families in need.*

*In the Fall of 2011, Project FINE became involved in monthly food distributions through the Agape Hispanic Ministry at the Winona Church of the Nazarene. A large trailer of food is delivered from Minneapolis and is made available to all members of the community. Project FINE staff assist with the monthly distributions by unloading, arranging and distributing food. An average of 35 families receive food each month, including fresh produce, dry goods and meat. Through this partnership, Project FINE also provided food for distribution in St Charles, and plans to continue and expand this collaboration in 2012.*

# Diversity Training

In partnership with local businesses, organizations, service providers and educational institutions, Project FINE provides educational workshops on diversity and cultural sensitivity.

Training sessions are designed to meet the needs of each client, and cover topics such as cultural information, the definition of culture and diversity, common barriers to service, and strategies for organizations working with diverse populations. Project FINE also conducts needs assessments for businesses and organizations upon request. Assessments are intended to help organizations and service providers identify unmet needs or gaps in services. They can also help businesses learn more about a potential market for products and services.

*Increasing Understanding*

# Navigating Community Systems

For many newcomers, arriving in the United States is a time of excitement, as they welcome the opportunity to build a new and better life for themselves and their family. It can also be very overwhelming, as they adjust to life in a new country and a society that is often vastly different from their own. While newcomers are ready to build a new life, they need additional support to overcome language and cultural barriers and pursue the American dream.

Through grant support from the United Way of Greater Winona and other partners, Project FINE is able to provide newcomers with education about distinctly American social and structural systems such as government, housing, banking, health care and employment. We serve newcomers in a variety of ways, including one-on-one and large-group educational sessions on childbirth, United States citizenship, the criminal justice system and employment.

In 2011, Project FINE offered a series of Disaster Preparedness sessions in St Charles. The sessions were very well received, with over 50 adults in attendance. Presentations were held in partnership with the City of St Charles—Mayor Bill Spitzer spoke about how to remain safe during natural disasters such as flood or tornado. Fire Chief Lyle Peterson talked about fire safety and provided training on how to use a fire extinguisher, and City administrator Nick Koverman spoke to the people about city ordinances and regulations.

*Empowering Individuals*



# Technology Education

In 2011, Project FINE launched the Technology Education for Immigrants and Refugees project, designed to provide computer training and increased access to technology for newcomer families. This project was developed as part of the Minnesota Intelligent Rural Communities Coalition and is funded by the Blandin Foundation of Grand Rapids, MN. Project FINE receives Foundation funds through a grant from the City of Winona.

The program began with Hands-On Training Sessions, which provided participants with instruction in fundamental skills such as how to operate a computer and create documents using Microsoft Office. These sessions were a great success, with 67 individuals participating. The next phase of the program focused on internet skills and safety, with visits to local free internet 'hotspots'.

Following the educational sessions, participants were eligible to receive a home computer through a partnership with PCs for People. Project FINE sought donated computers from the community, which were then refurbished and distributed to participants. During the summer, computers were installed in the homes of 48 participants, the majority of whom did not previously own a computer. To help participants improve their skills, the Technology Education program also organized a corps of technology tutors consisting of computer science students from Winona State University.

## Technology Tutors

*Juan started attending Project FINE's Technology Education sessions because he wanted to understand how to use a computer to connect with friends, family and the community. He is one of the most enthusiastic participants and is constantly wanting to learn more. Through the hands-on training sessions, Juan received instruction in programs such as Microsoft Word and Excel, created his own email account, and learned about internet safety. Juan's only complaint about the sessions was that they only met weekly.*

*"The classes are so good, but I forget some of the things because of the time between," he said. Juan also received a home computer through the Technology Education program and PCs for People. He was excited that he would be able to practice his newfound skills at home and even happier when he learned that tutors were available to help him.*

*"This program has been such a help to me," said Juan, "little by little I am advancing my knowledge of computers and my tutor has been great. Without the help of my tutor and the interpreter, I wouldn't be able to do anything on the computer. Now I know how to send email messages and pictures and use Skype to talk with my family. I also use my computer for online banking and to read the news. This program has helped me so much and I am so thankful."*

## Closing the Digital Divide



*"Project FINE has done a magnificent job in improving the ability of new Americans to access and use the Internet. Their ability to bring digital inclusion into the center of their work with immigrants and refugees will have lasting positive impacts on these families."*

*Bernadine Joselyn, Director of Public Policy and Engagement,  
Blandin Foundation*



# College Education Connection

The College Education Connection program provides academic support, motivation and access to resources for immigrant youth as they pursue post-secondary education. The program serves students from the Winona, St. Charles and Lewiston-Altura school districts, and provides information for the parents of high schoolers as well.

College Education Connection consists of monthly large-group sessions, which provide in-depth information about various topics related to higher education, such as college entrance requirements, college preparation and financial aid. Program participants have the opportunity to tour the three post-secondary institutions located in Winona and learn about schooling options in their own backyard.

To supplement the large-group sessions, the program coordinator spends time each week visiting the three high schools to provide one-on-one support to students. This allows the coordinator to get to know the students and provide additional assistance to meet their academic needs. During 2011, the program had 83 participants and 20 of the 22 senior participants completed their high school education. Sixteen of these graduates are currently attending a post-secondary institution, and are well on their way to a successful higher education career.

*Preparing for the Future*



Xou Vang, 2011 College Education Connection Scholarship Recipient,  
Fatima Said, Executive Director, Project FINE,  
Michell Rosas, 2011 College Education Connection Scholarship Recipient

## *Supporting our Future*

*Through the support of the Great Lakes Higher Education Guaranty Corporation, Project FINE has been able to provide scholarships to seven of our College Education Connection participants during the last two years. These scholarships are awarded on a competitive basis, with students completing an application and essay about their educational goals. During 2011, two scholarships were awarded and plans have been developed to continue the scholarship program for years to come.*

*In the Fall of 2011, the Project FINE Board of Directors reinforced their commitment to the scholarship program by establishing the Project FINE College Education Connection Scholarship Fund. Organizations and community members can make designated donations to support immigrant and refugee youth who are pursuing post-secondary education. Through the creation of this fund, Project FINE will be able to continue supporting the educational goals of newcomer youth for many years to come.*

# Diversity Youth Quest

## *Promoting a Healthy Tomorrow*

Being an adolescent can be very difficult and often poses challenges for the entire family. These years can be especially hard for immigrant and refugee families, as youth and families are often unfamiliar with the educational system and culture in the United States. For some youth, growing up and finding an identity in two cultures can be confusing and may lead to mental health or social adjustment issues.

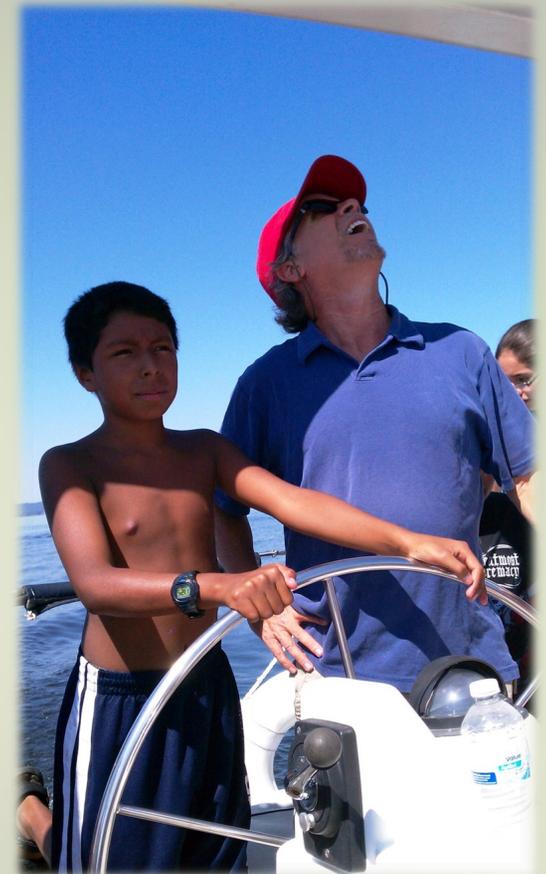
To help overcome these challenges, Project FINE developed the Diversity Youth Quest program to improve the mental health and ease the social adjustment of newcomer youth and their families. Monthly program sessions are held in Winona and St Charles, and supporting activities are held during the summer months. The Diversity Youth Quest program is in its fifth year of operation and was funded in 2011 by the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of MN Foundation, the Mardag Foundation, and the Winona Community Foundation.

During 2011, Diversity Youth Quest had 276 participants, 116 middle and high school students, 100 parents and 60 younger children. Several sessions were offered for parents and young children, including presentations on Stress and Anger Management, Parenting and Healthy Habits.

### *Life Lessons on the Big Lake*

*"I can't believe we did it," exclaimed Miguel, "I really drove that!" He had reason to be excited. Miguel and his friends had just maneuvered a 20 foot sailboat around Lake Pepin, learning about the various parts of the boat and taking turns controlling the vessel. Along the way, they learned about teamwork and the power of following a dream. Sailing the beautiful lake is something that Miguel had dreamed about but had never experienced before participating in the Diversity Youth Quest program. This is just one of the unique supporting activities offered for program participants during the summer.*

*The captain for Miguel's trip was David Sheridan, owner of On-Deck Seminars and Charters, who not only guided the youth through the educational sailing session, but also dared them to set high goals and work hard to achieve them. These lessons were learned on the lake and on a sunny August morning, Miguel was definitely living the lesson. A diverse group of youth participated in the sailing experience: middle and high school students from Hmong and Mexican backgrounds. While on the lake, the youth had the chance to learn more about each other and work together. Through this fun and powerful experience, students learned how to join forces to reach a common goal, a lesson that will stay with them long after their day at the lake.*



# Voices in Harmony

The Voices in Harmony program fosters social and cultural interaction among newcomers and provides them with the tools needed to become true participants in the community. In 2011, Voices in Harmony program activities focused on providing resources and small business education for local food growers.

Project FINE continued to partner with Winona County at the community garden site on a reclaimed landfill near Highway 43. This summer, the area was officially named Stone Point Park and throughout the summer several improvements were made to the site. The construction of a well and pump house for irrigation, a washing area for vegetables and a high tunnel hoop house made the site more useful for gardeners. In 2011, 10 of the 14 plots at Stone Point Park were leased to Hmong families. Many of these families are highly committed to gardening and want to supply the entire region with nutritious food.

In the Fall, Project FINE began a series of Entrepreneurship Training sessions supported by the Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation. These sessions provide an overview of small business for newcomers, including how to develop a business plan, financial information and marketing. The Small Business Development Center provides presentations and individual counseling sessions for participants so they can explore the possibility of small business ownership. Over 40 individuals attended the sessions and have begun to create plans for a variety of businesses, including restaurants, hotels, cleaning services and Farmer's Market stands.

## Building Bridges



### *Fallow Ground to Growing Strong*

*Just three years ago, the newly named Stone Point Park was quiet. Located on the bluff top southwest of Winona, the park has scenic views of the surrounding valley and even offers a glimpse of Winona's beloved Sugar Loaf. Today, visits to the site are still peaceful, however the scenery has changed. What used to be fallow ground is now home to 10 acres of community garden sites. This summer the park's first season-extending hoop house that rises against the surrounding scenery. The hoop house is a testament to how far the site has come and how committed the community is to supporting local growers. The hoop house is owned by three Hmong families, who also lease community garden plots and sell their produce at the Farmer's Market. The hoop house was built in 2011 with grant funds from the USDA and Project FINE played a critical role in the construction process.*

*Paperwork for the hoop house began in 2010, with meetings almost every month and weekly contact with the grant applicants. Project FINE provided interpreters and assisted the families as they navigated the paperwork and grant process. Winona County Environmental Services provided technical knowledge for the project, and Sentence-to-Service laborers facilitated the construction process. "We are so happy to have this opportunity," said Sai Her, an owner of the hoop house, "we can now begin growing much earlier and have a jump start on our peppers and tomatoes. This will be a great help to us, as we will be able to offer these items at Farmer's Market sooner." Through the hard work of so many, Stone Point Park and the gardeners are definitely 'growing strong'.*

# Community Involvement & Events

## Local Foods Focus Groups

In January, Project FINE interpreters served as cultural guides for focus groups that were part of the Southeast Minnesota Foodshed Planning Initiative organized by the University of Minnesota and the Sustainable Development Partnership. Project FINE recruited Hmong and Somali women as participants and provided interpreting and translating for the focus groups and additional surveys. The goal of the focus groups was to discover the current use of and interest in local foods within the Hmong and Somali community. The results are being compiled by the University of Minnesota and will be published in 2012.

## Annual Report to the Community

On February 1, Project FINE hosted its Fifth Annual Report to the Community event at Saint Mary's University. On this occasion, Project FINE celebrates and recognizes its partners, stakeholders, staff and volunteers and shares the previous year's activities and accomplishments. At this event, Project FINE recognized Saint Mary's University and Dr Chris Carroll, Pediatric Dental Care as the Partners of the Year for 2010.

## Immigrant and Minority Farmer's Conference

In partnership with the Land Stewardship Project, several Hmong growers attended the Immigrant and Minority Farmer's Conference on February 4-5 in St Paul. Project FINE identified participants and provided a Hmong interpreter for the event. This was the first time any of the growers had attended a conference, and they had the opportunity to participate in sessions on growing techniques and gardening trends.



## General Vang Pao Memorial Service

Project FINE staff participated in a memorial service for General Vang Pao on February 17. General Vang Pao was a leader of Hmong both in Laos and the United States and a father figure to Hmong worldwide. The service was hosted by the Winona State University Hmong Student Association. Project FINE staff members and clients spoke at the event, sharing their experiences and respect for General Vang Pao.

## Bundles of Love

On February 19, Project FINE was invited to speak at an appreciation luncheon for Bundles of Love volunteers in Chatfield. Bundles of Love provides donations of clothing, blankets and baby items to newborns and their parents. For several years, Project FINE has partnered with them to distribute bundles to newcomer families throughout the county.

## United Way Annual Meeting

On March 1, Project FINE staff attended the United Way Annual Meeting and was recognized as having 100% employee participation in the 2010 United Way campaign.

## Winona State University Scrubs Camp

In June, Project FINE staff spoke about the "Role of the Interpreter" at the WSU Scrubs Camp. This camp is for high school students interested in pursuing medical careers. The presentation covered the basics of interpreting, including when and how to utilize an interpreter, cultural considerations and helpful tips.

# Community Involvement & Events



## Charities Review Council

In 2011, Project FINE received the “Meets Standards” seal from the Charities Review Council. The Charities Review Council is an independent resource for people who support charities and non-profit organizations. Organizations voluntarily participate in an Accountability Wizard review of their policies and operations. Those who demonstrate a commitment to accountability and openness and that meet all Accountability Standards earn the “Meets Standards” seal. This seal signifies that these organizations are among the most trustworthy charities. In April, representatives from the Charities Review Council visited the Project FINE office to describe their non-profit standards and learn more about Project FINE’s policies and procedures. In May, Project FINE completed the review process and was awarded the “Meets Standards” seal on June 1.

## Sixth Annual Taste of International Cuisine

Project FINE hosted its’ annual fundraiser, *A Taste of International Cuisine*, on June 12. The event featured a three course meal including dishes from around the world. Entertainment included a performance by Heartstrings, a group of local harpists, the Nutty Winona Professor, Bruno Borsari and a preview of the Dancing With the Winona Stars routine by Dr Connie Gores and Paul Ebner. As part of the evening’s festivities, scholarships were awarded to two College Education Connection program participants.

## Land Stewardship Project Hog Roast

On July 10, Project FINE participated in the Land Stewardship Project’s Annual Hog Roast held near St Charles. Project FINE partnered with the Land Stewardship Project to promote the event and provided interpretation and translation.



## Minnesota State Shutdown

During the month of July, Project FINE staff participated in meetings organized by Winona County to discuss the state shutdown. These meetings informed service providers in the community about the effects of the shutdown on those served by state and local government. While many clients experienced a delay in state benefits or services because of the shutdown, Project FINE did not experience any significant delays and was able to continue providing services during this time.

## Dancing With the Winona Stars

On August 13, Dr. Connie Gores, Vice President for Student Life and Development at Winona State University, danced for Project FINE in the 2011 Dancing With the Winona Stars fundraising event. It was a wonderful evening, with many Project FINE supporters in attendance to cheer for Dr. Gores and her dancing partner Paul Ebner. She did an amazing job, and won third place in the individual competition. Through the generous support of the community, Dr. Gores and Project FINE raised \$1,200 in support of the College Education Connection Scholarship Fund.

# Community Involvement & Events

## National Night Out

Project FINE participated in National Night Out events throughout the City of Winona on August 25. Project FINE staff and board members attended block parties held in several neighborhoods.

## Project FINE Open House

In August, Project FINE hosted an Open House for Winona County employees. More than 50 people stopped by to visit Project FINE's new office space and enjoy a wide selection of hors d'oeuvres from around the world. Project FINE is settled in their new location in the lower level of the County Office Building and will participate in a public Open House with the county in early 2012.

## Gladiolus Days Parade

On August 28, Project FINE participated in the St Charles Gladiolus Days parade. Diversity Youth Quest and College Education Connection participants from Winona and St Charles walked in the parade, throwing candy and fortune cookies and raising awareness of Project FINE.



## Interpreter Potluck

Project FINE's Tenth Annual Interpreter Potluck was held on August 18 at Valley Oaks Lodge. Interpreters, board members and staff shared a wonderful night of international food, games and friendship.



## Service Learning Fair

On September 6, Project FINE attended the Service Learning Fair at Saint Mary's University. The fair is designed to familiarize university honors students with local organizations and volunteer opportunities. At the fair, Project FINE shared the goals of the College Education Connection program and requirements for volunteer tutor positions.

## I AM College Bound

In the Fall of 2011, Project FINE served as a partner in the I AM College Bound tutoring program, organized by the Inclusion and Diversity Office at Winona State University. The program provides tutors for students at Winona Senior High School before and after school three days each week. Project FINE assists with recruitment and provides one of the coordinators for the program, which will continue through the end of 2013.

## Tuesday Topics

On September 27, Project FINE staff described our mission and programs to Winona County Community Services staff at a "Tuesday Topics" session. These sessions, held in the Winona County Office Building, are designed to help staff learn more about how the various offices and departments located in the building serve the community.

## St Charles Press

In September, the St Charles Press published the first in a series of bi-monthly articles provided by Project FINE in Spanish and English. Articles focus on a variety of topics, including information about programs and services, resources from educational sessions and upcoming Project FINE events.

# Community Involvement & Events

## Great Expectations

On October 6-7, Project FINE staff attended the Minnesota Council of Nonprofits Annual Conference, titled “Great Expectations.” Held in St Paul, the conference provided many educational sessions and workshops for nonprofits, as well as opportunities to network with other organizations and talk about Project FINE’s work with immigrants and refugees in Southeastern Minnesota.

## Food Distribution

In October, Project FINE participated in a food distribution event organized by the Agape Hispanic ministry at the Winona Church of the Nazarene. For this distribution, a pastor from the Twin Cities area travels to Winona each month to distribute food to local families. Project FINE staff helped unload and sort the food, assist recipients with their selections and clean-up following the distribution. More than 35 families received food in October, and Project FINE continued this partnership by volunteering at the November and December distributions. Project FINE also hosted a food distribution event for newcomers in St Charles in November.

## Blandin on Broadband

On November 16-17, Project FINE staff attended the Blandin Foundation’s “Policy and Progress - Border to Border Broadband” Conference in Duluth, MN. As part of the conference, Project FINE was invited to serve as an exhibitor and share the success of the Technology Education for Immigrants and Refugees program. The event was a wonderful time of connection, with over 150 individuals from across the state in attendance.

## Gifts for Winona

During November, Project FINE participated in the Gifts for Winona program organized by Saint Mary’s University. This program provides Christmas gifts for Winona County residents in need. Project FINE helped many non-English-speaking families complete the program application.

## Toys for Tots

On December 17, Project FINE attended the Annual Toys for Tots event at the Tandeski Center on the Minnesota State College-Southeast Technical campus. Project FINE staff provided interpreting services and helped distribute toys.

## Project FINE serves on several local Boards and Committees, including:

- Minnesota State Colleges and Universities Community Action Diversity Council
- Whitewater Country Coalition
- Winona Human Rights Commission
- Winona County Criminal Justice Coordinating Council
- Winona Area Public Schools Diversity Advisory Committee
- Winona Area Public Schools Staff Development Committee



*Project FINE and its Diversity Youth Quest (DYQ) serve as important examples of how bringing together immigrants and longer-term receiving communities members can transform lives and create more welcoming communities. After speaking to experts around the country in the development of the Receiving Communities Toolkit, it became increasingly clear that DYQ can inform other growing efforts to reach out and engage mainstream Americans in immigrant integration work.*

*Susan Downs-Karkos, Director, Integration Strategies,  
Spring Institute for Intercultural Learning*

# 2011 Financial Summary

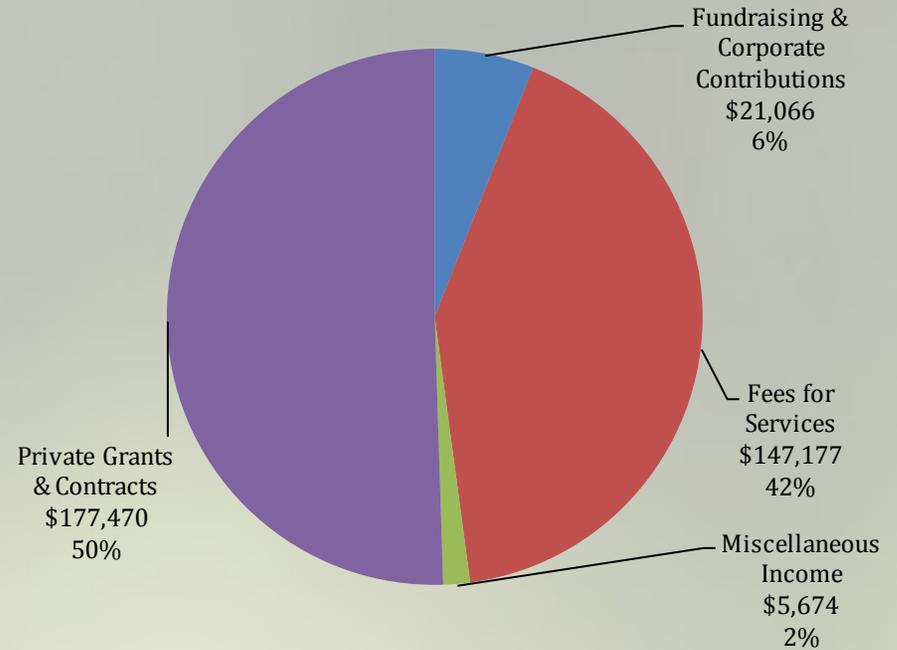
Total Revenues 2011	\$351,387
Total Expenses 2011	\$280,754
Board Designated Cash Match for Digital Inclusion for Immigrants and Refugees Program	\$ 16,700
Board Designated Funds for Continuation of Diversity Youth Quest Program	\$ 25,000
Board Designated Funds for Continuation of College Education Connection Program	\$ 25,000
Board Designated Funds for Future Operating Expenses	\$ 3,933



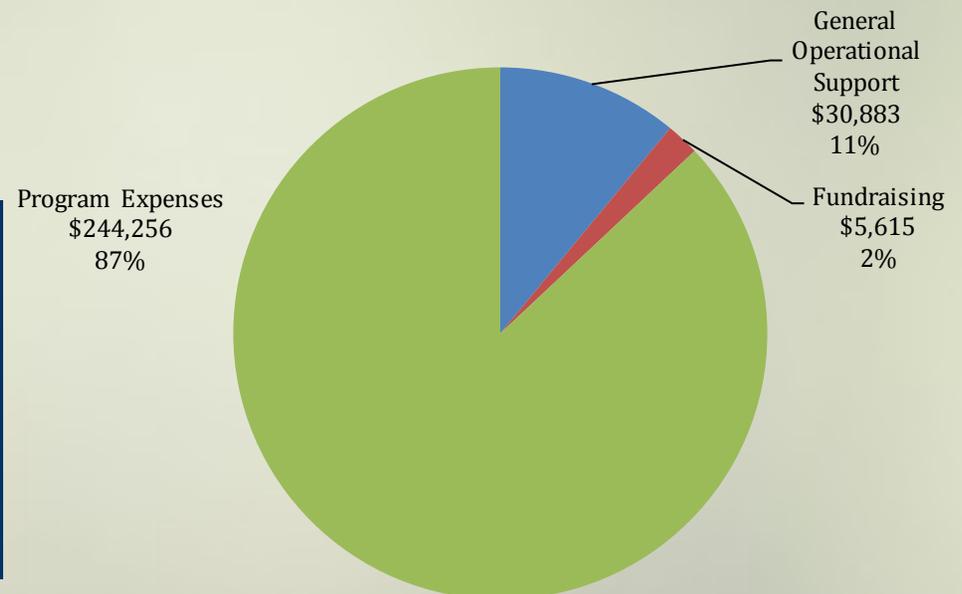
*It was a pleasure working with Project FINE and learning more about the great work of your organization. Project FINE completed the Accountability Wizard at record speed with almost all standards met from the time of the initial review - you should be proud of the work you've done to get your organization where it is!*

*Jenna Forner, Nonprofit Services Coordinator,  
Charities Review Council*

## Revenues 2011



## Expenses 2011



# 2011 Partnerships

At Project FINE, we truly believe that “Together Everyone Achieves More,” as this highlights the importance and role of partnership for our organization. Strong, lasting and effective partnerships are crucial for Project FINE, and we are thankful to the many businesses, government agencies, organizations and individuals who work to help build a respectful and sensitive community.

Blandin Foundation  
Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota  
Charities Review Council  
City of Saint Charles  
City of Winona  
Corporation for National & Community Service  
Diocese of Winona  
Dr. Chris Carroll - Pediatric Dental Care  
Family and Children’s Center  
Family-Based Services of Winona  
Gold ‘n’ Plump of Arcadia  
Gotta Dance  
Great Lakes Higher Education Guaranty Corp.  
Gundersen Lutheran Medical Center  
Hiawatha Broadband Communications  
Hiawatha Valley Education District  
Home and Community Options  
Immigrant Law Center of Minnesota  
International Quality Home Care  
Knitcraft - St. Croix Foundation  
Land Stewardship Project  
Lewiston Clinic  
Lewiston School District # 857  
Mardag Foundation  
Mayo Clinic  
Merchants Bank of Winona  
Midwest Dental Clinic  
MN Department of Corrections

MN State Bar Foundation  
MN State College—Southeast Technical  
MN State Colleges and Universities  
MN Third Judicial District  
Olmsted Medical Center  
On-Deck Seminars and Charters  
Options Plus Home Care  
Peerless Chain  
Ridgeway Community School  
Riverway Learning Community  
Rollingstone Cenex  
RTP Inc., Winona, MN  
Saint Charles School District # 858  
Saint Mary’s University of Minnesota  
Sauer Memorial Home  
Southeast MN Rural Education & Resource  
Center  
SEMCA  
Severson Oil Company  
SBA Small Business Development Center  
Southern MN Initiative Foundation  
Southern MN Regional Legal Services  
Spring Institute for Intercultural Learning  
Three Rivers Community Action  
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service  
UCare of Minnesota  
United Way of the Greater Winona Area  
University of Minnesota Extension

U of M Regional Sustainable Development  
Wabasha County  
Winona Chamber of Commerce  
Winona Church of the Nazarene  
Winona Community Foundation  
Winona Cotter High School  
Winona County  
Winona County Historical Society  
Winona County Criminal Justice  
Coordinating Council  
Winona Health  
Winona Housing & Redevelopment Authority  
Winona Human Rights Commission  
Winona National Bank  
Winona School District # 861  
Winona State University  
Winona Volunteer Services  
Winona Workforce Center  
Women’s Resource Center

*We are proud of our partnership with Project FINE. By working together, we can learn more about our community and use that deeper understanding to make a difference in the lives of our friends and neighbors who have enriched our world and brought fresh perspectives to all of us from around the world.*

*Dr. Judith Ramaley, President,  
Winona State University*

# Recognition of Special Partners

Each year, Project FINE designates a small number of its partners for special recognition through the Partners Award. In 2011, Project FINE is proud to recognize these exceptional partners:



## Minnesota State College –Southeast Technical

Minnesota State College –Southeast Technical has been an exceptional partner to Project FINE, and has gone above and beyond to meet the needs of non-English speaking students and create a welcoming community. Faculty, staff and students have been involved in many aspects of Project FINE, including serving on the Board of Directors and Education Committee, partnering on various educational programs and completing a campus-wide diversity assessment. In 2011, Minnesota State College - Southeast Technical was an essential partner in Entrepreneurship Training sessions, and provided presentations and college tours for the College Education Connection and Diversity Youth Quest programs. Project FINE thanks the alumni, faculty and students of Minnesota State College - Southeast Technical for their continued commitment to serving diverse students and families in our community.



## Winona County

Winona County has been an wonderful partner to Project FINE for many years, as we work together to meet the needs of diverse residents throughout the county. They are a collaborator on virtually all of Project FINE's programs and services, including a partnership for Advocacy and Information Referrals and Language Services for non-English-speaking county residents. Over the last two years, this partnership has taken on a new dimension through the development of the Stone Point Park Gardens, which increased access to farmland for Hmong gardeners. 2011 was another successful year at the garden site, as we saw the construction of a high tunnel hoop house and a well at the garden site, which will be great tools to increase production. Project FINE thanks Winona County for its commitment to creating and maintaining a welcoming and sensitive atmosphere for all residents.

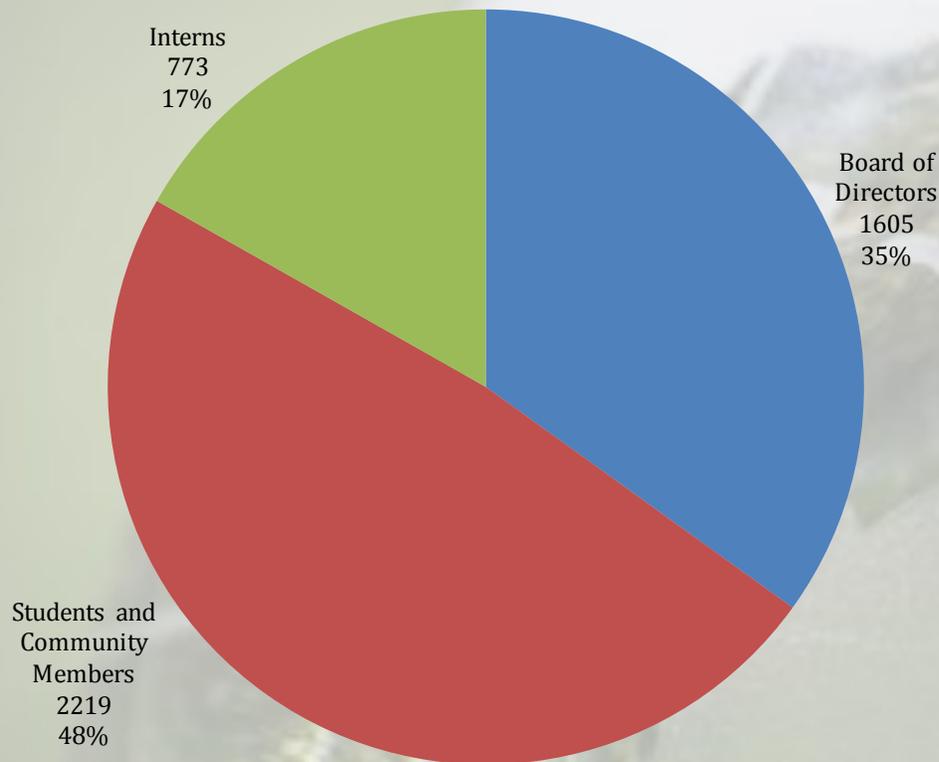
*Your organization is critical in helping integrate newcomers into our community, thank you for all you do.*

*Pat Mutter, Director, Visit Winona*

# Volunteer Information

*Thank You*

## Project FINE Volunteer Hours 2011 (4,597 Total Hours)



- Board of Directors
- Students and Community Members
- Interns

Volunteers play a vital role at Project FINE. Their support and dedication helps ensure that educational programs and services run smoothly and allows Project FINE to have an even greater impact in the community. During 2011, volunteers provided thousands of hours of service, assisting with projects such as database creation, marketing materials, program videos, technology tutoring, and program support.

We would like to thank the hundreds of gifted individuals who helped us fulfill our mission during 2011. Your support is essential to our success and has a tremendous positive impact in the lives of newcomer families throughout our community.



*"My experience at Project FINE has truly been transformative. I have learned so much from my co-workers and from our clients. Project FINE is doing important things for our community, and it has been my pleasure to be a small part of it."*

*Jason Ziebell, Intern, Winona State University*

# Board Members & Staff

The Board of Directors at Project FINE have gone above and beyond to share their time and talents with the organization and advance the organization's mission and vision. Their hard work and dedication is appreciated by the Project FINE staff and the entire community.



## 2011 Project FINE Board of Directors

William Spitzer, President  
City of St Charles

Paul Mundt, Vice President  
Southern MN Regional Legal Services

Robin Hoeg, Secretary  
Winona Health

Heather Bach, Treasurer  
Community Member

Bernhard Brenner  
Knitcraft Corporation

Paula Brown  
Hal Leonard Corporation

Julie Chiasson  
Community Member

Vicki English  
Winona State University

Dr. Justin Green  
Community Member

Alexander Hines  
Winona State University

Kevin Kearney  
Winona Police Department

William Moua  
Rollingstone Cenex

Tom Severson  
Severson Oil



## Project FINE Staff

(Left to Right)

Katie van Eijl, Program Manager

German Victoria, Program Coordinator

Maria Rodriguez-Ramirez, Hispanic/Latino Community Liaison

Fatima Said, Executive Director

Mai See Thao, Hmong Community Liaison

Jason Ziebell, Program Intern

Project FINE would like to recognize the contributions of the following individuals, who completed their service in 2011:

Chong Sher Vang, Goal Chia Her, Sue Yang and Tou Yah.

We would also like to thank the interns who shared their time and talents with Project FINE during 2011:

Emily Case, Raghavi Kharel and Jason Ziebell

# Project FINE



*Focus on Integrating Newcomers through Education*

[www.projectfine.org](http://www.projectfine.org)

[info@projectfine.org](mailto:info@projectfine.org)

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## **St Charles Office**

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