

RECENT PROJECT DEVELOPMENTS

Greetings participating families and friends! We hope that our quarterly newsletter finds all of our contributors in the best of health! We would like to offer our deepest appreciation to those families who have participated in the study and welcomed us into their homes. Also, we would like to thank all of our Community Advisory Panel members who are helping us grow the project in many different ways. We are writing to share some new developments.

One important change is that we are now recruiting families with 8-14 year old children who have at least one Lebanese immigrant parent. It is important to note that we still rely on our participating families and friends to refer us to other families who may be eligible in the study. Even if you do not personally know any other families with children in the target age range, you may have friends or acquaintances who do know families with children of these ages. We would greatly appreciate any contacts or referrals you may have for us. Feel free to forward the project description on the back of this page to families who may want to participate.

In order to learn more about children and families in the Lebanese community, we are interested in talking to leaders of youth organizations, religious education programs, or after school programs that may involve Lebanese youth. If you know of any such individuals or programs, please let us know!

As we try to gain a better understanding of the Lebanese immigrant experience, we often have questions that we would like to pose to the community. For instance, we are very curious about books that you may be reading related to your cultural or religious background in addition to the kinds of materials you encourage your children to read. Feel free to call or e-mail and share with us the books your family has enjoyed. We would love to hear from you!



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COMMUNITY EVENTS

Our Associates Kathleen and Jeannette recently attended a very moving photographic exhibit by Rania Matar, The Veil: Modesty, Fashion, Religious Devotion, or Political Statement?, featuring images from Lebanon. See: http://www.raniamatar.com.

Other noteworthy events where you may see us:

Saturday, May 5th

Arab-American Anti-Discrimination Committee of Massachusetts
2nd Annual Community Banquet

See: www.adcma.org for further details.

Medical Missions for Children
The Inaugural Benefit Gala

See: www.mmfc.org for further details.

Tuesday, May 8th

The Sounds of Arab Classical Music

featuring The Bassam Saba Ensemble. Proceeds from the sale of tickets will support the "Boston to Lebanon" campaign. See: web.miy.edu/lebanon/www/events/upcoming/abaConcert0507/index.html for details.

Saturday, June 16th

American Lebanese Awareness Association
24th Annual Scholarship Banquet

Contact: amerleb@comcast.net for further details.

We are always looking for events in the Lebanese Community that we can attend in order to learn more about the culture and to support participating families and friends of our project. If you know of any events that you would like to see posted in our Connections Newsletter, or as a link on our webpage, please let us know!

Our Team:

Lawrence Gianinno, Ph.D, leads the project, and continues to look for ways to increase the understanding of the ways in which culture influences the development of children and young people, including how ethnicity, religion, and media affect what they learn about the economic world. Dr. Gianinno can be contacted by email at lawrence.gianinno@tufts.edu.

Kathleen Cobb Leonard, Ph.D, a cultural psychologist, is the project liaison for participating Lebanese Muslim families. Katie can be contacted by email at kathleen.leonard@tufts.edu.

Jeannette Belcher-Schepis, a graduate student in the Sociology Department at Boston College, is the project liaison for Lebanese Christian families. Jeannette can be contacted by email at jeannette.belcher\_schepis@tufts.edu.

Ana Maria Vidal, our Undergraduate Assistant, is a Senior at Tufts University, majoring in International Relations and Sociology.

Our Webmaster, Jon Gregorowitz, has been working hard to create our new website. Jon is a Civil Engineering major.

Happy Spring!



## An Invitation to Join a Research Study at Tufts University

### Greetings!

We are excited to tell you about a very important research study that is being conducted at Tufts University. As you may know, helping children develop the skills to function effectively in today's global economic world is an increasingly important challenge for parents and teachers. Global competition, ever-changing workplace technologies, and expectations that workers will assume more responsibility for their own financial welfare and future—these are conditions that require that children and young people begin to acquire an understanding of fundamental economic concepts and practices, and that they become self-reliant, able to make sound decisions in regard to spending, saving, and investing; credit and debt; career planning; entrepreneurial activities; property ownership; and other economic practices. Given the widespread absence of curricula in our schools to help children become economically and financially literate, this challenge may be particularly difficult for immigrant parents to address alone on behalf of their children. But there are some immigrant groups, including the Lebanese, which tend to respond quite effectively to this challenge. How do they do it?

### **How does culture— ethnic traditions and religion, in particular— influence the process of acquiring the values and skills that families use to adapt to the U.S. economic world?**

To answer these kinds of questions, social scientists at Tufts University are interviewing members of Lebanese Christian and Muslim communities in Eastern Massachusetts. According to the most recent U.S. Census, the Lebanese are among those immigrant groups that tend to adapt well to economic challenges. Our initial goal is to learn more about what accounts for their success, and examine the kinds of experience their children have that enable them to develop into healthy, productive, and successful adults.

### **What are the benefits of this research?**

In the second phase of the project, the Tufts Research Team plans to collaborate with school teachers, after-school teachers, curriculum specialists, and others, and apply our research findings to aid the development and/or improvement of middle-school curricula focused on economic and financial literacy, youth entrepreneurship, and career planning. In the final phase of the project, the Team will seek to talk with policy makers and others about the results of this collaboration--to obtain their support for legislation and funding for school and after-school programs fostering the development of a full range of economic skills that children of immigrants families need to succeed.

### **Participation**

The Research Team is currently interviewing families with at least one Lebanese immigrant parent and an 8-14 year old child. In later phases of the project, other ethnic groups will be included as well. The interviews are a positive experience, and provide the children with a unique opportunity to voice their thoughts and opinions.

### **How to Get Involved**

If you or anyone you know is eligible to participate in the study, please contact Dr. Lawrence Gianinno at Tufts University by phone at 617-627-4449 or by email at [Lawrence.Gianinno@Tufts.edu](mailto:Lawrence.Gianinno@Tufts.edu). This is the first step to help improve the economic curriculum for our children. We hope to hear from you soon. Thank you!