

David S. Traub has published a new book, *Discovering Philadelphia, Places Little Known*, a collection of black and white photographs of row houses, neighborhood parks and gardens, small streets, cemeteries, and some unusual buildings all over the city of Philadelphia, divided geographically into seven sections. Center City residents may recognize some places in the “Historic

Center” section which covers the Rittenhouse Square area and adjacent neighborhoods.

In the foreword, David B. Brownlee, Frances Shapiro-Weitzenhoffer Professor of the History of Art at the University of Pennsylvania, describes Traub’s pictures: “His photographs tenderly capture another Philadelphia, a wondrous city of intimate

places and intricately textured things.” Brownlee says, “...David Traub possesses not only a great eye for architecture but also an enormous talent for photography. His black and white images are almost literally colorful...” Traub studied architecture at the University of Pennsylvania in the Master Class of Louis I. Kahn and established his own architectural office in Center City.

Town Square

Local Non-Profit Helping Refugees and Asylum-Seekers, HIAS Pennsylvania Expands Its Mission According to the Need

By Bonnie Eisenfeld

Editor’s note: A few hours before killing 11 people at Pittsburgh’s Tree of Life Synagogue during Shabbat services on October 27, the gunman posted a hateful message about HIAS.

On June 11 an audience gathered at the Philadelphia City Institute of the Free Library on Rittenhouse Square to hear Cathryn Miller-Wilson, Executive Director of HIAS Pennsylvania, discuss the organization’s efforts.

HIAS PA was founded in 1882, originally to assist Jewish refugees. In the 1970s, the organization expanded its mission to help all refugees and asylum-seekers and now provides legal and social services to more than 3,000 people per year from all over the world. Last year they helped people from more than 110 countries.

As a refugee-resettlement agency, HIAS PA provides cultural orientation, English-language learning, housing assistance, employment assistance, financial literacy and health-care access assistance. One year after resettlement, they usually return to HIAS PA to receive legal assistance to become permanent residents, to petition for relatives, and to become citizens.

Miller-Wilson explained that refugees and asylum-seekers obtain the same legal status through different paths, and the criteria for both are the same. Both refugees and asylum-seekers flee their country of origin because of persecution based on race, ethnicity, religion, political belief or as a member of a persecuted group.

Refugees flee from their country to a second country where there is a United Nations-run refugee camp. At that camp, officials

determine whether a person meets the definition of refugee and whether they will be able to return home or will need resettlement in a third country. According to the United Nations Refugee Agency, 1.2 million refugees will need resettlement in 2018. National quotas are inadequate to deal with the numbers, so they may remain in refugee camps for years or even decades, an average of 20 years.

Asylum-seekers who flee from their country to the United States can claim asylum by filing a petition in immigration court. If they prove to the court that they meet the same criteria as refugees, then they are granted asylum and have the same legal rights and obligations as refugees. Crossing an international border in order to seek asylum is not illegal and an asylum-seeker’s case must be heard, according to U.S. and international law.

The U.S. Refugee Act of 1980 was created to provide a permanent and systematic procedure for the admission of refugees and asylum-seekers based on humanitarian concerns. Refugees and asylees are authorized to work and receive public benefits. Those who qualify after one year will receive their “green cards,” i.e., permanent-resident status, from the U.S. Citizen and Immigration Services (USCIS); this card legally allows them to live permanently in the U.S. After five years they may apply to take the naturalization test and become U.S. citizens.

Other ways of obtaining legal status include special visas for victims of human trafficking, winning the “diversity lottery,” or being sponsored by a person or a business.

Cathryn Miller-Wilson has been Executive Director of HIAS Pennsylvania since

November 2016, prior to which she had been Deputy Director. Before joining HIAS Pennsylvania, she was a Visiting Assistant Professor at Villanova University School of Law where she taught the Civil Justice Clinic – a course that permitted students to represent low-income persons in civil matters. Her experience also includes serving as Deputy Managing Attorney of the AIDS Law Project of Pennsylvania, Associate Professor at Drexel University Earle Mack School of Law, Custody and Support Master in Philadelphia’s Family Court, the public interest agency coordinator at the Philadelphia Bar Association, and a staff attorney at Community Legal Services. She co-founded, while in law school, the Custody and Support Assistance Clinic (CASAC) and today sits on that organization’s board. A 1989 graduate of Tufts University and the University of Pennsylvania Law School in 1993, she currently sits on the latter’s Alumni Board of Managers. In 2004 she was awarded the Penn Law Alumni Society’s Young Alumni Award for Professional Achievement.

In August 2018 HIAS, Inc., an international organization, sent a legal delegation of volunteers, staff, attorneys, and translators to the Port Isabel Detention Center in Texas. In partnership with the South Texas Pro Bono Asylum Representation Project (ProBAR), HIAS worked with adult asylum applicants, many of whom have been separated from their children after crossing the U.S. border. (HIAS PA is an affiliate for purposes of refugee resettlement.) Read the stories of some asylum-seekers separated from their children and how HIAS attorneys have helped them. <https://www.hias.org/blog/little-help-lawyer-can-mean-lot-reflections-border> HIAS and HIAS PA are separate organizations. For more information go to www.hiaspa.org