



PIRC

Pennsylvania Immigration
Resource Center

2013 ANNUAL
REPORT
TRANSFORMING LIVES



"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has." – Margaret Mead

PIRC... Then

On June 6, 1993, the *Golden Venture* ship ran aground with approximately 286 Chinese nationals aboard. These refugees, seeking asylum from political persecution and coercive population control policies, were subject to prolonged detention in the York County Prison. The York community responded with impassioned advocacy, sharing a fueled commitment to the words inscribed on the Supreme Court entrance: *Equal Justice Under Law*. In June 1996, the Pennsylvania Immigration Resource Center was formed with the mission of providing equal access to justice for vulnerable immigrants.

1993 ...
Arrival of the
Golden Venture



1996 ...
Founding
of PIRC



2006 ...
Legal Orientation
Program Begins



Message from Executive Director

The year 2013 was marked with tremendous impact in the lives of the people PIRC serves. PIRC's programs and services create impact by transforming lives...changing futures without hope to ones of safety and opportunity.

PIRC creates this transformation through *education, advocacy, and access to justice*. In 2013, PIRC provided legal orientation and education to over 3,100 vulnerable immigrants in detention, empowering them to have a voice in their own representation. PIRC advocates for family members at the Berks County Residential Center, responding to the unique needs and vulnerabilities of parents and their children. And, PIRC provides access to justice for victims of violence and persecution, helping asylum-seekers in detention gain freedom, and victims of domestic violence obtain work authorization and status.

The impact of our services in 2013 would not have been possible without help. Throughout the year, we benefited from the generosity of our donors, funders, law school and university partners, pro bono attorneys, and professional volunteers who multiplied all of PIRC's efforts, serving many more people in need. On behalf of all of the individuals and families we serve, we are grateful for your past support. We hope that you will continue to partner with us in transforming the lives of the most vulnerable immigrants in our community.

Warm regards,
Mary Weaver



Golden Venture Ship
Created by Golden Venture Refugee
All of the *Golden Venture* art was created while
the refugees were in detention, 1993-1997
Photo: Joel Springer

PIRC... Today

Today PIRC continues to serve as a light in the darkness, a voice for the most vulnerable among us, and an advocate for those least able to access justice. PIRC provides legal advocacy to immigrants fleeing persecution, to those challenged by mental health diagnoses, and to victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking.

2010 ...

Central Pennsylvania
Immigration Project
becomes PIRC program



2012 ...

Protection
Advocate Initiative
begins at Berks County
Residential Center



2013 ...

PIRC serves over
3,200 vulnerable immigrants
in detention and in
the community

2013 Board of Directors

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Pennsylvania Institutional Law Project

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York County Bar Association

Clasina Houtman, Esq.
York County Public Defender's Office

PIRC Staff

Mary Weaver, Executive Director

Detained Programs

Amara Riley, Managing Attorney

Abigail Moyer, Staff Attorney

Daniel Conklin, Staff Attorney

Joseph Cackley, Protection Advocate Coordinator

Community Programs

Diana Locke, Managing Attorney

Sarah Martin-Torres, CPIP Coordinator

Marissa Mowery, Legal Advocate

Development/Administration

Elizabeth Miller, Development Manager/Office Manager

Angelica Ramos, Office Assistant



Green Dragon

*Created by Golden Venture Refugee
All of the Golden Venture art was
created while the refugees were
in detention, 1993-1997*

Photo: Joel Springer



You May Have Noticed Our New Look




In June 2013, PIRC launched a new logo and website (www.pirclaw.org) that we think better reflects our mission, program services and spirit.

For our new logo, we kept the Chinese folding art bird, an important reminder of the amazing art created by the *Golden Venture* refugees in their almost four years of detention, and the helping hand that sets the bird free, symbolizing the transformative work we do each day.

For our website, we added more information that we hope proves valuable to the immigrants, families, attorneys, students and supporters who visit www.pirclaw.org every day. Please take time to visit our website.

We hope you enjoy the images of *Golden Venture* art that we are so pleased to share with you throughout this annual report.



What We Do... Alex's Story

Alex* was born in Central America in a country where criminal gang activity is present in every part of society. When he was just a toddler, Alex came to the United States with his family in search of a better life. He became a legal permanent resident (green card holder) and the United States became his home. As a teenager, he ran into trouble with the police and was deported to the country where he was born. What Alex found in his country of birth was a government that persecuted gang members and gangs who persecuted anyone perceived to be in a rival gang. Alex, who had tattoos as a teenager, was incorrectly thought to be a gang member. As a result, he was targeted by government officials and gangs who subjected him to: a mock execution, death threats; beatings; intimidation; and unlawful arrests and detentions based on false charges. Fearing for his life, Alex fled to the United States, but was again deported. Suffering horrible persecution and torture, he fled a second time to the United States where he was arrested for unlawful reentry and served nearly 5 years in federal prison. Once transferred to immigration detention, Alex met with a PIRC attorney who listened to his experiences of torture and persecution. Represented now for the first time, PIRC argued his case before the Immigration Court. Alex was granted relief under the Convention Against Torture which does not grant him asylum but allows him to stay in the U.S. and work lawfully. He was released from immigration detention in 2014, more than 2 years after his immigration case began and after 7 years in detention. Alex is now reunited with his family, and he is grateful to be able to work and become a part of his community in the country he calls home.

*Name has been changed to protect identity.

Transforming Lives...

providing a beacon of hope for immigrants in detention

Programs for Detained Immigrants

PIRC is the *only service provider* in Pennsylvania, and one of only 17 providers in the United States, offering the **Legal Orientation Program (LOP)** to immigrants in civil detention. The LOP educates immigrants on immigration law, immigration court procedure, and the potential for legal remedies. PIRC provides LOP services to the 800 immigrants in detention at the York County Prison and the 86 family members detained at the Berks County Residential Center, on average each day.

An LOP orientation or workshop may be the only information detained immigrants receive about their rights or potential legal options. PIRC seeks to equip detained immigrants with the essential information they need to represent themselves in immigration court. In 2013, PIRC helped over 3,100 individuals at the York County Prison and the Berks County Residential Center to understand their rights and prepare for their hearing before an immigration judge. The LOP helps detained immigrants move through the Immigration Court on average 11 days faster¹ than defendants who do not receive this pro se education. And, detained immigrants who participate in the LOP are in detention on average of six fewer days.

PIRC, and the private attorneys who work pro bono with PIRC, represent **Vulnerable Persons in Detention**, many of whom have fled persecution and torture and are seeking refuge in the United States. Legal representation is critical to a successful defense against removal. This legal advocacy navigates the nuance and limitations of existing immigration law and leverages the protections within law forming a critical advantage in an individual's defense. The impact of this direct representation and advocacy is measured in lives changed. In 2013, 44 detained immigrants were provided with direct representation either through a PIRC staff attorney or a pro bono private attorney.

See [Improving Efficiency and Promoting Justice in the Immigration System: Lessons Learned from the Legal Orientation Program](#), The Vera Institute of Justice, Report Summary May 2008.



Bowls with Lids

*Created by Golden Venture Refugee
All of the Golden Venture art was created while
the refugees were in detention, 1993-1997
Photo: Joel Springer*



What We Do... Mayra's Story

For 22 years I was living in the shadows. I was embarrassed and ashamed of myself, because I was an undocumented, illegal immigrant. No one knew about my "secret life" other than a few close people. I was in an abusive marriage – mentally, physically, and emotionally. One night I gathered my courage and left because I knew I could no longer live that way, I knew that I couldn't expose my children to that kind of life. I knew that by leaving that life behind, I would become a single, undocumented mother of three, homeless, and afraid. But I knew I had to do better for my children and for myself. I had made call after call, telling anyone who would listen about my lifelong "secret" in the hopes that something good would come from it. Miraculously something did. I was finally able to speak to a PIRC attorney and I told her about my situation. She reassured me that I could get help through PIRC, that this organization would help me! Not only did I qualify, but they would be doing my case pro-bono. I remember going home and crying, joyful tears, tears I had forgotten that I still had. I hugged my children that day, looked them in their eyes and said to them, "Things are going to get better for us." Today, I can have a job and even apply to colleges – something I thought would never happen to me. I owe everything that I have now to PIRC. Not only did PIRC help me but they inspired me. They gave me hope, they gave me a belief in myself to not be ashamed of who I am. Most importantly, they gave me a start to MY American Dream.

Transforming Lives...

protecting immigrant victims and their children in the community

Programs for Immigrants in Our Community

PIRC's **Central Pennsylvania Immigration Project (CPIP)** program advocates for immigrant victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, and other crimes in nine counties in south central Pennsylvania. PIRC partners with county and state agencies to ensure the safety of victims and removes the fear of detention and deportation by providing them with work authorization and lawful status. Lawful status transforms an undocumented victim to a lawful resident, creating newly available educational and employment opportunities that positively impact the victim, their children, and the community.

In 2013, CPIP provided services to 159 immigrant victims and family members and to date has helped 292 immigrant victims and families with obtaining immigration status and work authorization. In the households of these immigrant victims, there were an additional 105 minor children sharing these homes who benefited from the increased safety and financial stability created by lawful status.

CPIP Partners

YWCA of York/York County

YWCA of Hanover, Safe
Home/York County

SURVIVORS, Inc./Adams County

Women in Need (WIN)/Franklin
and Fulton Counties

Domestic Violence Services/
Lancaster County

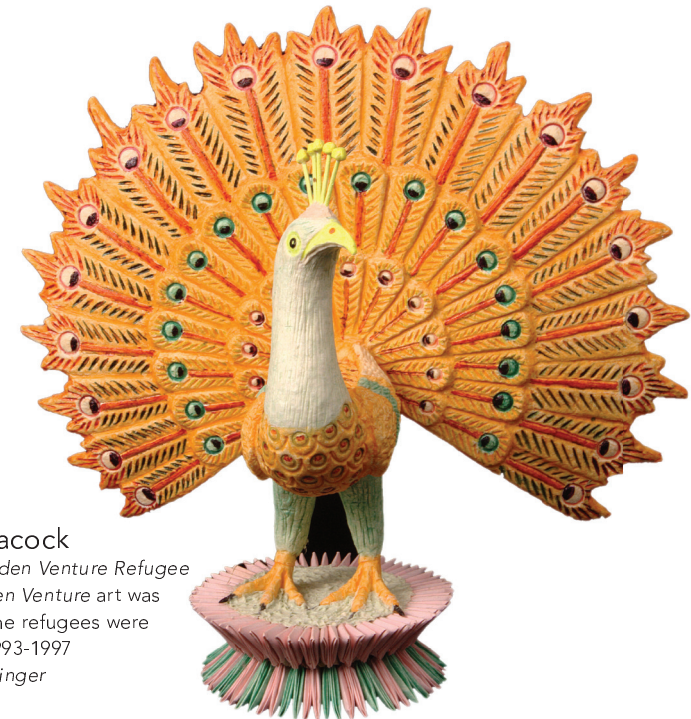
Lancaster YWCA/Lancaster
County

Harrisburg YWCA/Dauphin County

Pennsylvania Coalition Against
Domestic Violence

Pennsylvania Coalition Against
Rape

York County Bar Association



Golden Peacock

Created by Golden Venture Refugee
All of the *Golden Venture* art was
created while the refugees were
in detention, 1993-1997
Photo: Joel Springer



Who Do We Help? Profiles of the Families in Detention:

- Ages of children detained with mothers and fathers: Infant to age 17
- Percent expressing fear of returning to their native country: 100%
- Percent with criminal history: 0%
- Percent traveling hundreds of miles to reach U.S. border: 100%
- Families flee countries from around the world, including: Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Somalia, Iraq, China

Transforming Lives...

helping families who are seeking asylum and a safe life for their children

When we speak to families who have fled their native countries, they all express the same desire: *we want to raise our children in safety*. Many families fleeing Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador, and Iraq or Somalia, speak about the violence of gangs or clans in power and the corruption and ineffectualness of the government and law enforcement to protect them from this violence. They measure the great risk of traveling with small children to the U.S. border to ask for asylum against the violence they have experienced in their homes and communities – and ***they choose the risk of coming over the certainty of the violence they are fleeing.***

PIRC's **Protection Advocate Initiative** provides advocacy for the family members in detention at the Berks County Residential Center, located outside Reading, PA, through education, identification of legal and non-legal needs, and coordination of community resources. PIRC also provides Legal Orientation Program workshops each month and works to match families with pro bono representation when possible. Between March 2012 and December 2013, PIRC has provided services to more than 265 families at the shelter.

Transforming Lives...

through education and “hands on” learning

Partnering with Law Schools and Universities

PIRC has established teaching relationships with law schools and universities in the region, including the Widener University School of Law, University of Pennsylvania Law School, Penn State Dickinson School of Law, and Franklin and Marshall College, offering a unique, on-site learning experience for students. PIRC matches students with detained immigrants who have a meritorious claim of relief, allowing students a direct experience with the challenges and the rewards of working with detained immigrants. Law students also help with case development, research on country conditions, and the identification of country conditions experts.

Providing education, outreach, and services in the community

PIRC offers a wide range of educational and outreach activities in the community. In 2013, PIRC provided, in partnership with county bar associations, seven Continuing Legal Education (CLE) classes training 199 attorneys. PIRC also offered three legal clinics helping 32 applicants apply for Naturalization and Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals. Additionally, PIRC staff conducted outreach with 22 organizations and agencies reaching 413 individuals.



Leaping Cheetah

Created by Golden Venture Refugee
All of the Golden Venture art was created while
the refugees were in detention, 1993-1997

Photo: Joel Springer



Language Access

Language is consistently identified as a barrier for vulnerable immigrants in accessing legal and social services. PIRC directly advocates for language access for detained immigrants and for immigrant victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, and other crimes. PIRC works for systems change within the community through training and education for community service providers. Language access advocacy recognizes that to access justice a **victim must not only be understood but equally understand the legal process impacting them.** In 2013, PIRC offered a three-part workshop series on language access focusing on: federal mandates, designing language access plans, and best practices in working with interpreters.

Transforming Lives...

working with volunteers to advocate for the most vulnerable

PIRC identifies many vulnerable immigrants who are eligible to request relief or status under existing law, but unfortunately, cannot help everyone who needs legal representation. To fill this need, private attorneys from across the region, including York, Berks, Lancaster, Dauphin, and Cumberland counties and Philadelphia, in addition to law students from the Villanova Law School, Widener School of Law, and Penn State Dickinson School of Law, have stepped in to ensure that vulnerable immigrants are not alone in navigating the complex immigration system of federal agencies and courts. In 2013, these generous attorneys and law students donated hundreds of hours totaling more than \$229,550 of in-kind professional services.

To support the pro bono efforts of these attorneys and law students, PIRC provides unique training and resources, matching pro bono attorneys with a mentoring attorney and volunteer interpreters. We hear from pro bono attorneys that representation of a vulnerable immigrant is both rewarding and a learning experience. If you have an interest in helping in this way, please go to our website at www.pirlaw.org and *volunteer today*.

PIRC also benefits from the incredible generosity of members from the community who donate their experience in medical and psychological care and evaluation, interpretation and translation, and marketing and administration. We honor these volunteers and PIRC's pro bono attorneys each year at our *Light of Liberty* award reception.

Light of Liberty Award Recipients

Community Programs Attorney - Leanne Miller, CGA Law

Detained Programs Attorney - Valerie Burch, The Shagin Law Group
Law Firm - Barley Snyder

Volunteer Interpreter - Vanessa Diaz

Professional Volunteer - Dr. Arno Vosk

2013 Pro Bono Attorneys & Volunteers

Dominic Akena
Farrin Anello, Esq.
Tebby Aweke, Esq.
Paula Baginski
Dr. Amanda Bowman
Megan Bremer, Esq.
Valerie Burch, Esq.
Marisa Button, Esq.
Joseph Catuzzi
Wendy Chan, Esq.
Arielle Chapnick
Angela Cohen, Esq.
Jennifer Creel
Vanessa Diaz
Susan Dicklitch
Carol Anne Donohoe, Esq.
Chris Egleson, Esq.
Margo Einsig
Dianne Elderkin, Esq.
Codelia Elias, Esq.
John Elliot, Esq.
Jamilah Espinosa
Rosanna Felix
Keith Flanagan
Lisa Flanagan
Dave Freedman, Esq.
Demeke Getahun
Ana Paulina Gomez
Patricia Gonzalez
Amy Good, Esq.

Rebecca Green
Deep Gupta
Karrie Gurbacki
Dr. Alisa Gutman
Nadja Helm, Esq.
Karen Herrling, Esq.
Brett Hertel
Joe Hohenstein, Esq.
Stacie Hunhoff, Esq.
Fatoumata Keita
Wegayhu Mekonnen-Ketema
Rachel Keung
Kathleen Klein
Steve Koehler, Esq.
Jessica Kurtz, Esq.
Matthew Lamberti, Esq.
Nyasha Largen
Cindy Lobach
Jeff Lobach, Esq.
Benjamin Lombard
Andy Mahon, Esq.
Michelle Majkut
James Maroulis, Esq.
Rev. Joan Maruskin
Tejal Mehta, Esq.
Leanne Miller, Esq.
John Mokry, Esq.
Fouzia Mousse
Marissa Mowery

Rebecca Munscher
Robert Neiberding
Timothy Norton, Esq.
Joshua Ortiz
Tatiana Pakula
Michelle Pistone, Esq.
Michelle Pokrifka, Esq.
Elizabeth Pomada
Gabriela Raful, Esq.
Alison Razet, Esq.
Wayne Sachs, Esq.
Michelle Santos
Steve Schulman, Esq.
Craig Shagin, Esq.
Laura Smith, Esq.
Suzanne Smith, Esq.
Joel Springer
Matthew Tamul
Bobby Tavenner
Justin Tomevi, Esq.
Rekhee Vemulapali, Esq.
Dr. Homer Venters
Subha Viswanathan, Esq.
Dr. Arno Vosk
Shoba Wadhia, Esq.
Ellen Weaver
Judy Woods
Elizabeth Yaeger, Esq.
Rebecca Zhou
Zehao Zhou



Green Dragon

Created by Golden Venture Refugee

All of the Golden Venture art was created while the refugees were in detention, 1993-1997

Photo: Joel Springer

Financial Highlights

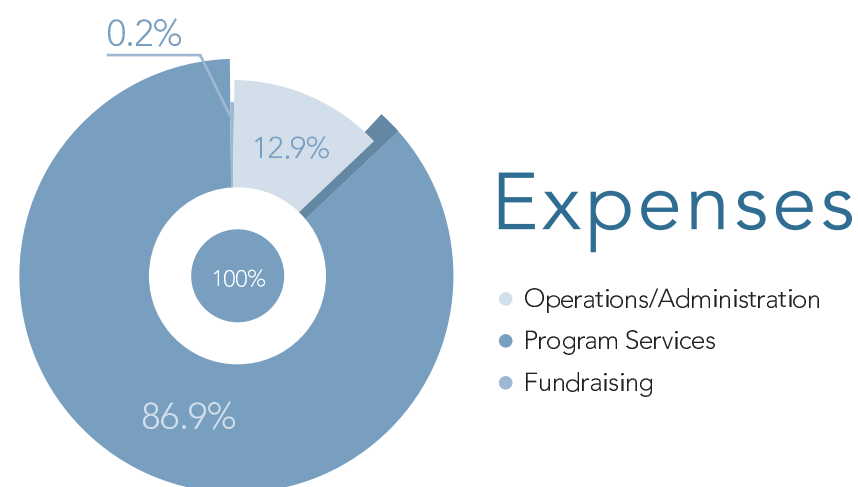
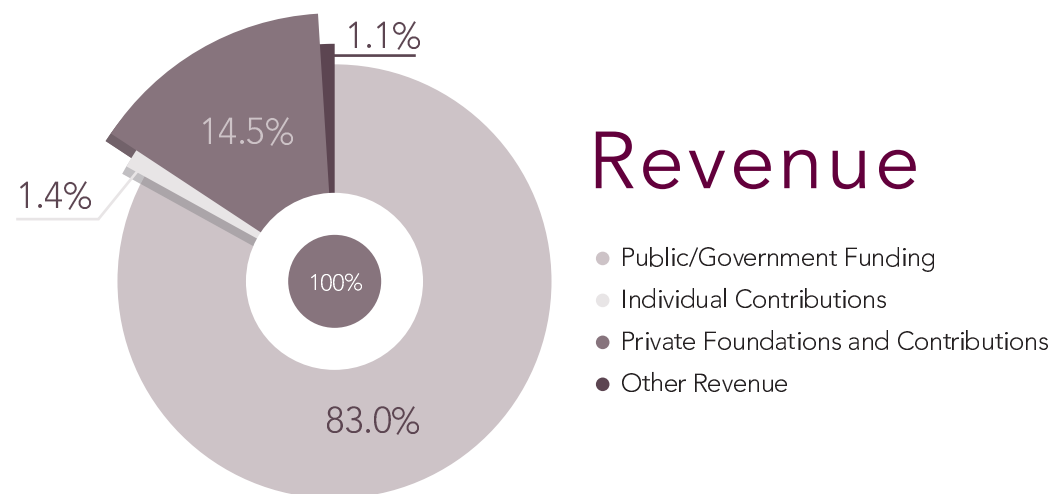
The Pennsylvania Immigration Resource Center devotes 86.9% of funding to program services. PIRC's funding is additionally "put to work" by leveraging in-kind donations that represent 31% of total PIRC revenue.

2013 Revenue:

Public/Government Funding	\$461,859	83.0%
Individual Contributions	\$ 7,538	1.4%
Private Foundations and Contributions	\$ 80,500	14.5%
Other Revenue	\$ 6,327	1.1%
Subtotal	\$556,223	100%
In-Kind	\$245,345	
Total	\$801,568	

2013 Expenditures:

Support Services/Management/Ops	\$ 94,861	12.9%
Fundraising	\$ 13,221	0.5%
Program Services	\$394,388	86.9%
Subtotal	\$502,470	100%
In-Kind	\$245,345	
Total	\$747,815	



Donors

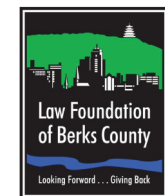
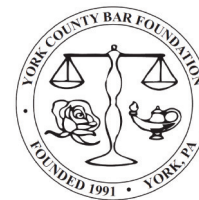
Thank you to the individuals, organizations, corporations, and foundations who have generously donated to the Pennsylvania Immigration Resource Center (PIRC). Your financial giving allows PIRC to provide legal services and related support to indigent immigrants who are fleeing persecution and violence. Together we create real impact in the lives of vulnerable immigrants, transforming stories of fear to ones of safety and hope. *Thank you for your generosity in 2013!*

Individuals

Elodia Barajas	PSU Latino Studies Program
Hester M. Blum	Jayesh Rathod
James and Suzanne Bruzga	Charles and Toni Rausch
Marissa Button	Tricia L. Richardson
Stephen Converse	Douglas Schaufler
Amelia Dietrich	Craig and Rachel Sharneztka
Angela Eveler	Laura Smith
Rosanna Felix	Linda Theophilus
William Gierasch	Justin Tomevi
Joseph Gothie	Hon. Craig Trebilcock and Family
Clasina Houtman	Maria Truglio
Julia Kasdorf	James Wade
Angus Love	Hermal and Shoba Wadhia
Andrew Mahon	Francis Weaver
Joseph McDevitt	Robert and Judy Woods
Hon. Todd and Leslie Platts	Zehao Zhou

Private Foundations, Corporations, and Other Organizations:

- AILA Philadelphia Chapter
- CGA Law Firm
- Gladfelter Insurance
- Iron Hill Brewery
- William and Mildred Kaplan Foundation
- Law Foundation of Berks County
- M&T Bank
- Moxie Design and Marketing
- The Patton Group
- Philadelphia Bar Foundation
- Rehmeyer Trust Foundation
- Saint Andrew's Episcopal Church, State College
- Saint Joseph Church, York
- York County Bar Foundation/ Association



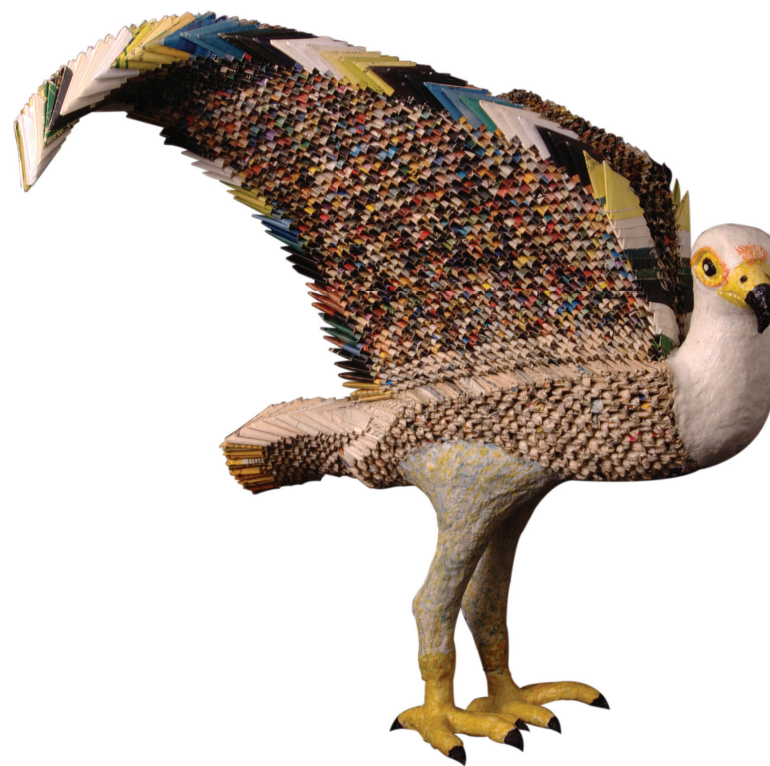
The Story of the *Golden Venture* Artwork

When the *Golden Venture* finally set sail off the coast of Kenya for the final leg of its journey to the United States, some of the passengers had already been traveling for many months. They were young – some just teenagers – and others were in their 30s or older; they were mostly men and almost all from the Fujian Province of China. They were not a group of artists escaping state censorship of their work – they were fleeing political persecution and state persecution under China's one child policy. Yet during the 44 months of their immigration detention, this group of "non-artist" refugees would individually and collaboratively create 10,000 pieces of art that captured the attention of the world.

After the refugees' arrival at the York County Prison in June 1993, members of the York community began to visit the passengers of the *Golden Venture* and discovered that the men were creating art from pieces of paper they had access to in the prison. In time, members of the community began bringing simple supplies to the prison – toilet paper, magazines, Elmer's glue, and markers to support this creative outlet.

The art being created by the *Golden Venture* refugees was not the simple, single-sheet Japanese origami. Rather, they were creating "three dimensional" pieces utilizing a Chinese folding art, known as Zhe Zhi in China. This art form, possibly created as far back as the Han Dynasty (3rd century AD), utilizes a folded triangular unit of paper as the building block to construct the three-dimensional works of art. This "building block" is a triangular piece of paper with two tabs and two pockets, used for interconnecting the units. What these *Golden Venture* refugees created by interconnecting these small triangular pieces of folded paper is nothing short of spectacular.

The art created during their long detention reflected an artistic and human spirit that was expressed in the creation of numerous "freedom birds," such as the bird shown here, vases, urns, elephants, dragons, pagodas, bowls, and teapots. The art of the *Golden Venture* sparked a renewed interest in this ancient Chinese art and drew worldwide attention to the plight of the *Golden Venture* refugees. Their art has been shown in exhibits in New York, New Jersey, Washington, D.C., and at York College of Pennsylvania.



Freedom Bird

Created by Golden Venture Refugee

All of the *Golden Venture* art was created while the refugees were in detention, 1993-1997

Photo: Joel Springer



Educating, advocating, ensuring access to justice.

www.pirclaw.org