



# **FORGOTTEN GATEWAY**

## **COMING TO AMERICA THROUGH GALVESTON ISLAND**

### **Explore Your Community's Immigrant History**

#### **How to Engage Your Community:**

- 1. An Immigrant's Story Box**
- 2. Talking to our Neighbors**
- 3. Immigrant's Guide to the Neighborhood**
- 4. Faces of Our Community**
- 5. It's My Story**

## **Section Introduction**

The following workshop activities are meant for school groups, civic institutions, and community centers that would like to a) foster engagement with recent immigrants and longstanding residents; b) initiate a meaningful dialogue on the topic of immigration among community members; and c) develop public exhibits and family activities that explore the immigrant influence of a neighborhood's religious, cultural, and civic life.

These activities have been piloted in schools, clinics, libraries, community centers, and museums. They are meant to be adapted for a variety of settings and the issues particular to each community. Most of these projects were developed in collaboration with community-based institutions that were already set up to serve immigrant, migrant, or longstanding descendent communities.

## EXPLORE YOUR COMMUNITY'S IMMIGRANT HISTORY

### Activity #1 An Immigrant's Story Box: Community Craft Activity

**Suggested Audience** School groups, families

#### Objectives

- Understand and promote the richness and diversity of a community's immigrant population
- Create Story Boxes highlighting a local immigrant's story to display in the community

**Time** Four one-hour sessions or more

#### Preparation

- Look over *Conducting an Oral History* in the Appendix, section D
- Review, adapt and conduct the lesson *What's in Your Suitcase* prior to beginning this activity (optional)
- Make a copy for each student of *Handout #1: Interview for Story Box Activity*
- Gather materials: shadow boxes (wooden craft boxes, cigar boxes, or covered shoe boxes that can be covered in cloth make good alternatives), glue, scissors, colored cloth, construction paper, watercolors, copier, optional scanner, printer and digital camera
- Check out one or both of the following books from your local library: *Miss Bridie Chose a Shovel* by Leslie Connor and / or *Small Beauties: The Journey of Darcy Heart O'Hara* by Elvira Woodruff and Adam Rex. Descriptions of these books can be found in the Resources section

#### Introduction

1. Explain that objects have always been important to immigrants coming to a new country. Explain to the group that they will be making a Story Box of objects and photos highlighting a local immigrant community member.
2. Invite an immigrant community member to share their story of immigrating to the United States. Encourage participants to ask questions and your guest to bring special objects that remind them of home and to tell stories about:
  - Why they decided to immigrate
  - What objects, photos, and documents they brought with them, and what they left behind
  - What the journey was like
  - The hardest things about immigrating
  - The special objects that remind them of home



# EXPLORE YOUR COMMUNITY'S IMMIGRANT HISTORY

## Activity #1 An Immigrant's Story Box: Community Craft Activity

**FORGOTTEN GATEWAY**

COMING TO AMERICA THROUGH  
GALVESTON ISLAND

### Procedures

1. Read the book *Small Beauties* and de-brief about what special things immigrants keep to remind them of home or read *Miss Bridie Chose a Shovel* to talk about what objects are useful to bring to a new country.
2. Explain that participants will conduct an interview with an immigrant community member.
  - Give participants ten minutes to write down questions about what special things are important to newcomers
  - Have participants (or families) pair up and practice asking questions
  - Review *Handout #1: Interview for Story Box Activity* and have participants add more questions
  - After the workshop, participants will interview an immigrant community or family member about their immigration experiences using this handout and they will copy, scan, or collect special objects, letters, photos, or documents
  - Encourage the person that is interviewed to fill out their immigration story in the handout to describe the objects and documents included in the Story Box
3. Explain that there are other ways of telling stories—people write books, make movies, and also create artworks about real-life experiences.
  - Show *Handout #2 Sample Shadow Boxes*
  - Participants will begin to create a Story Box based on the interview they conducted with a community member and the materials they collected
4. Ask participants to share their interview stories. Encourage other participants to ask questions and to compare the diversity of experiences.

### Extensions

- These Story Boxes look great in a display format. Contact a local library, school, or community center to inquire about exhibiting the collection of Story Boxes to share with the broader community.



**Handout #1 Interview for Story Box Activity**

Participant Name \_\_\_\_\_

I interviewed \_\_\_\_\_

**Make sure to get permission from the person you interview to create a Story Box about their immigration experiences. Remind them that you would like to collect copies of photos, letters, documents, and photos of special objects to include in the Story Box. Show them the photos of the sample Story Boxes.**

Where is your family from? What does your home country look like?  
Do you have photos from your home country that I can copy?

What was the journey like? What transportation did you take?  
Do you have bus tickets, a passport, or any other important documents that I can copy?

Do you keep in touch with family back home? How often?  
Do you have letters from home or family photographs that I could copy?

What other objects are special to you that remind you of home? Can I take a picture of these special objects to include in this box?

What foods do you continue to eat that remind you of home?  
Do you have food containers or wrappers that I can include in the box?

Add your own questions on the back of this page.





**Handout #2 Sample Story Boxes**



*The Hoang Immigration Family Story*

My family is from Vietnam. I was born in a huge family with many traditional celebrations. Its fun to celebrate these traditions with my family because the people who made this family is from different places in Vietnam they don't come from the same place, they come from different places and that's why it makes my family so "special" to me. I just didn't live in America all my life I immigrated here from Vietnam to here. I immigrated here because years ago my grandpa "Vyhn Dong" work for the United states so one day they said he needs to come over here to do some work to help the U.S with something he did a get job to get to move over here or that's what I think. It was very hard for my family it was a big change.



Courtesy Walnut Creek Elementary School, Vietnamese Program, Austin, Texas

# EXPLORE YOUR COMMUNITY'S IMMIGRANT HISTORY

## Activity #2 Talking to Our Neighbors: Dialogue Workshop

**FORGOTTEN GATEWAY**

COMING TO AMERICA THROUGH  
GALVESTON ISLAND

**Suggested Audience** Groups with shared interests: parent groups, neighborhood associations, religious/cultural/civic groups, library staff and patrons, etc.

### Objectives

- Foster engagement with recent immigrants and longstanding residents
- Initiate a meaningful dialogue on the topic of immigration

**Time** Three one-hour sessions or more

### Preparation

- State your own goals for initiating these dialogue workshops and be prepared to share them with participants
- Review *How to Talk about Sensitive Topics* and *Facilitating Students Dialogues*
- Gather materials: laminated maps of the world and of the United States and whiteboard marker, sticky notepad, paper
- Print out *Timeline* in Appendix, Section B

### Introduction

1. List and explain your goals on a piece of large paper or on the board and encourage participants to share their own goals for these dialogue workshops.
2. Conduct an ice-breaker. Participants will state their name and finish the sentence *"I am (describe something positive about themselves)"* along with a gesture. Every person after that will be required to introduce the previous persons (along with gestures).
3. Write the question, *"Why do you think we need these dialogue workshops about immigration in our community?"* Encourage participants to write their answers and discuss as a group.

### Procedures

1. Explain that whether you move from country to country, state to state, or across the city, there are some similarities to the experience of leaving home and moving to a new place.
  - Each participant will trace the route of how they arrived to the United States, the state, or the city and share why they decided to leave, difficulties along the journey, and the experience of coming to a new community
  - List the similarities and differences between the two experiences of migrating to a different place within the US, and immigrating from a different country (why people move, difficulties of moving, etc.): *What are the causes of these differences?*
  - Gather together in a circle; 4-5 participants will sit in a smaller circle in the center and discuss: *When do you feel like you do belong; what impact does that have on your behavior? When you feel like you don't belong; what impact does that have on your behavior?*
  - After a few minutes, switch out with other participants to continue the conversation; debrief with the question: *Does our sense of belonging rely upon the actions and perceptions of others or actions and perceptions of our own?*





## EXPLORE YOUR COMMUNITY'S IMMIGRANT HISTORY

### Activity #2 Talking to Our Neighbors: Dialogue Workshop

2. Encourage participants to read and place a sticky note on the Timeline with the year that they immigrated (or their immigrant ancestors immigrated), and country or region of origin.
  - List the groups that have immigrated to Texas throughout history
  - List the major historical events affecting immigration
  - Discuss how historical events influence immigration at different times
3. Write the following questions on the board or on two large pieces of butcher paper: *What typically shapes public opinion about immigration in this country?* and *Why is immigration such a difficult issue for this country to address in a contemporary context?*
  - Participants will illustrate or write their opinions about these two questions
  - As a group, discuss the answers and encourage respectful, productive responses—remember the goal is sharing not necessarily agreeing!
4. Encourage participants to share something that made them think twice during the workshops.

### Extensions

If you would like to add more time for personal reflection, use this activity to discuss how immigration affects our daily lives.

1. On a sheet of paper, participants create a mind-map (self-directed illustration, list, graph etc.) answering the question: *Where in my life do I do business with people I know to be recent immigrants?*
2. Participants share their answers in pairs or small groups of three and discuss: how important are these individuals and the services they provide in my daily life?
3. As a group, debrief with the following questions:
  - *Did you find any commonalities in your experiences? What were they?*
  - *Is there anyone who does not, in any context, do business with people who are recent immigrants to this country?*
  - *What do our experiences say about the relationship of our economic life to people who are recent immigrants to this country?*

# EXPLORE YOUR COMMUNITY'S IMMIGRANT HISTORY

## Activity #3 Immigrant's Guide to the Neighborhood: Community Booklet

**FORGOTTEN GATEWAY**  
COMING TO AMERICA THROUGH  
GALVESTON ISLAND

**Suggested Audience** Groups in a shared community: parent groups, neighborhood associations, religious / cultural / civic groups, library staff and patrons, etc.

### Objectives

- Foster engagement with recent immigrants
- Initiate a meaningful dialogue on the topic of immigration among community members
- Develop a neighborhood guide for incoming residents to the community

**Time** Six one-hour sessions or more

### Preparation

- Review and /or conduct *Activity #2 Talking to Our Neighbors: Dialogue Workshop* (optional)
- Gather materials: unlined paper, butcher paper, markers and colored pencils, folders (to keep materials), disposable cameras (4-6), printer and scanner
- Make enough copies for your group of *Handout #1 Food and Community*
- Review *Handout #2 Sample Community Booklet Page*
- For a complete sample of a Community Booklet, visit our website at [www.ForgottenGateway.com](http://www.ForgottenGateway.com)

### Introduction

1. Explain that local individuals have always played an important part in welcoming or orienting newcomers to a neighborhood or community. Explain to the group that they will be creating a guide of their neighborhood to welcome newcomers to the community.
2. Invite an immigrant community member to share their story of immigrating to the United States. Encourage participants to ask questions and your guest to tell stories about:
  - Why they decided to immigrate
  - Where they first arrived and who helped them get settled
  - Who assisted in finding a home, health care, and a job
  - How they felt as a newcomer to a new community



## Procedures

1. Participants will reflect their vision of their community.
  - On a large piece of paper, participants will draw a visual mural and/or map of their neighborhood, illustrating places they work, worship, go to school, landmarks, places to shop or eat, etc.
  - Participants will also illustrate people doing daily activities, community events, etc.
  - Discuss who may not be depicted in the illustrations and whether and how they should add them
2. Invite participants to talk about the individuals, organizations, and institutions that helped them find their way in a new place (school, city, job, etc.)
  - *What specifically did they need help with?*
  - *How did the individuals affect the experience of coming to a new place?*
  - Write the following question on the board or butcher paper: *How would you make (or have you made) a newcomer feel welcome?* Discuss the answers
3. Pass out paper and pens/pencils. Ask participants to write a letter to a newcomer in the neighborhood. *What would they say to welcome them or to orient them to the neighborhood? What pieces of advice do they have?* Read the letters out loud and discuss them as a group.
4. Explain that it is sometimes difficult for people from other places to come to a new environment and get used to new food and food preparation, new markets, and new products.
  - Participants will state their name and a dish that reminds them of home
  - Participants will write down a favorite family recipe on index cards to share with the rest of the group
  - In pairs, they will share and write down favorite, memorable, or funny stories about cooking food in a new place or a family cooking tradition
  - As a group, list the local markets, ethnic restaurants, and chain grocery stores that could orient a newcomer to the neighborhood
  - For next time, encourage participants to share a favorite dish
5. Ask participants to bring pre-made food that reminds them of home. In groups of 3-4, continue to discuss food and cooking in a new place using *Handout #1 Food and Community*.
6. Take a walking tour of the area and document the neighborhood, including important people and places.
  - Take photos with the disposable cameras and record a description of each place
  - Participants will also share and write down any stories they have to tell about particular places
  - Debrief about their experience: *How did you decide as a group what was important? Did you notice the ways in which people told stories at particular places? Which stories did you record?*
7. Compile the series of photographs, stories, notes, letters, and recipes that the participants have written over the course of the workshops. As a group, create a table of contents and decide what to include in the guide. The facilitator or a willing participant can scan/copy and produce the booklet for distribution.
8. Discuss as a group: How do you think this guide will help a newcomer to this community? How can we continue to update this and distribute it to newcomers?



# EXPLORE YOUR COMMUNITY'S IMMIGRANT HISTORY

## Activity #3 Immigrant's Guide to the Neighborhood: Community Booklet

### **FORGOTTEN GATEWAY**

COMING TO AMERICA THROUGH  
GALVESTON ISLAND

#### **Extensions**

- List contacts for local stores, health clinics, schools, citizenship, and English-as-a-second-language courses. Conduct workshops with an immigrant group and add materials to the guide (see in this section the next activity, *Faces of Our Community: Immigrant Workshop and Exhibit*)







**Handout #2 Sample Community Booklet Page**

## Pensamientos: Mejorando a St. John

### *Thoughts: Making St. John a Better Place*

En las siguientes páginas queremos compartir los pensamientos de nosotros de las barreras que nos detienen en comunicarnos con culturas diferentes, y también ideas de soluciones para hacer St. John una comunidad sana y vibrante.

*In the following pages, we want to share the thoughts of the barriers we face in communicating across cultures, and also ideas of solutions to make St. John a healthy and vibrant community.*

"Primeramente, es importante conocer a nuestros vecinos, y de esta manera conocer a nuestra comunidad y conocer nuestras necesidades y de que manera podemos apoyarnos."  
--Martha Tamez



*"First of all, it is important to know our neighbors, and in this way to know our community and to know our necessities and so that way we can support each other." – Martha Tamez*

*"On my block, I make everybody associate, blacks, Spanish; we've got a lot of elderly people on my block too. You just have to get to know your neighbor, sometimes just say hi, how you doing?"*



*Our children need to get along. If we remember that, and teach our children to communicate better, then we'll have a neighborhood."  
--Wilma E. Thomas*

"En mi barrio, hago que todos se comuniquen, negros, los hispanos, también gente mayor. Tiene que familiarizarse con su vecino, a veces nomas un ¿hola, cómo esta usted?"

Nuestros niños necesitan tener buenas relaciones. Si nos acordamos de eso, y enseñamos a nuestros niños a comunicar mejor, es cuando tendremos una comunidad."  
-- Wilma E. Thomas

# EXPLORE YOUR COMMUNITY'S IMMIGRANT HISTORY

## Activity #4 Faces of Our Community: Immigrant Workshop and Exhibit

**Suggested Audience** Local immigrant groups: English-as-a-Second-Language classes, religious/cultural/civic immigrant groups, references from immigrant services centers, etc.

### Objectives

- Foster engagement with recent immigrants
- Develop a public exhibit that explores the immigrant influence of a neighborhood's religious, cultural, and civic life

**Time** Five one-hour sessions or more

### Preparation

- Read *Conducting an Oral History* and review *You Are the Oral Historian!*, *Questions*, and *Oral History Release Form* in the Appendix section D
- Invite local immigrant community members that agree to participate in all workshops
- Gather materials: Laminated world map, whiteboard marker, small sticker dots, audio recorder (digital is best—many ipods and computers come with this capability; recording in .wav format is the highest quality), computer or word processor, digital camera, scrapbook materials

### Introduction

1. Explain that their personal experiences of immigrating into the community are important stories that contribute to the life of the community. These workshops will be created into a community exhibit and possibly an immigrant's guide to the neighborhood.
2. Invite participants to share their story of immigrating to the United States. Audio record all workshops. Encourage the participants to ask questions about:
  - *Reasons why they decided to immigrate*
  - *Difficulties of the journey*
  - *Who helped them settle in a new place*
  - *How they felt as a newcomer to this community*

### Procedures

The facilitator will audio record each workshop and write down memorable quotes and stories from the participants. These excerpted quotes will become the basis for the exhibit and guide. The facilitator will also take a frontal portrait photograph of each participant.

1. On a world map, participants will trace where they are from, what route and transportation they took to the United States, the difficulties of living in a new country, and moving into the neighborhood. Scan or copy the map. Display map in a public place to encourage visitors to place their own stickers on the countries where they are from.



2. Participants will bring a special object or photographs that remind them of home. The facilitator will photograph each object. They will share stories about:
  - What objects or photos they brought with them, and what they left behind
  - The special objects and photographs that remind them of home and why
3. Participants will bring any letters that remind them of home. Explain that it is common for immigrants to communicate with family and friends in their home countries. Ask participants:
  - Who they still keep in touch with from home
  - Describe the letters that they have collected and why they are important
  - Write a letter during the workshop to someone from their home country about their new life in the United States
  - If participants are comfortable, copy or scan their letters to include in a guide
4. The facilitator will compile scans, copies, photographs and type up excerpts from the participants for the next workshop. For maximum accuracy, go to audio recordings for exact quotes and stories.

#### **Debrief**

Explain to the participants that their stories, photographs, and letters will be compiled to create an exhibit and guide.

- Each participant will select stories they would prefer to be included (portraits, quotes, photographs, letters, etc.)
- Using scrapbook materials each participant will compile their own page with the materials gathered

Each of the scrapbook pages can be laminated and displayed with a portrait of each participant.

# EXPLORE YOUR COMMUNITY'S IMMIGRANT HISTORY

## Activity #5 It's My Story: Family Storytelling Program

**FORGOTTEN GATEWAY**

COMING TO AMERICA THROUGH  
GALVESTON ISLAND

**Suggested Audience** Immigrant and longstanding resident families

### Objectives

- Foster engagement with recent immigrants and longstanding residents
- Develop a public exhibit that explores a neighborhood's religious, cultural, and civic life by displaying stories and family photographs

**Time** One hour preparation and two hour program or more

### Preparation

- Copy and laminate 5-10 copies of *Handout #1 Tell Us Your Story* and copy one per participating family, *The Family Immigration Story Worksheet*
- Advertise this program in conjunction with another event, such as the opening of a community exhibit (see Activity #4 *Faces of Our Community: Immigrant Workshop and Exhibit*) or the publication of a community project (see Activity #3 *Immigrant's Guide to the Neighborhood: Community Booklet*)
- Gather materials: digital camera, stand, laptop, scanner and printer, butcher paper
- Prepare signage that invites youth, families, and individuals to contribute their own stories about how their family came to the country, the state, or the neighborhood

### Procedures

1. During the program, the participants will take a family portrait and record their immigrant stories to be displayed.
  - Set up digital camera on stand and connect to a laptop computer in a well-lit area
  - Set up tables with laminated copies of *Handout #1 Tell Us Your Story*
  - Invite families and individuals to write the story of how they came to the United States, the state, or the neighborhood
  - Facilitators will take a portrait of the family and save it on the laptop computer
  - Scan any family portraits that participants brought with them
  - If you have the capability and staff, print images, attach to *The Family Immigration Story Worksheet* and display during the course of the event
2. On a whiteboard or a large piece of butcher paper, invite participants to answer the question: *What are the similarities and differences between the two experiences of migrating to a different place within the US, and immigrating from a different country (why people move, difficulties of moving, etc.); What are the causes of these differences?*

### Extensions

Exhibit panels can be created digitally by reformatting in a word document. See *Handout #1 Sample Exhibit*. Go to File, then Page Setup and change the orientation to landscape. Under Page, change the size to Legal or customize your own size. Change the margins to the lowest number allowed. Go to Format, then Background to change the background color. Go to Insert, then Text Box to create a text box and add excerpted quotes in 20 point font or larger. Insert the digital photo. Print on a color printer that can manage this size.



### Handout #1 Tell Us Your Story

Here are some ideas of what you can write:

Describe your experience coming to the country / the state / the neighborhood.

- When did you first arrive? (year and month)
- How old were you?
- Why did you decide to move?
- What community did you leave?
- Who came with you? Who stayed behind?

Tell about the journey itself.

- What kind of transportation did you use to journey here?
- Did your family come here all together? Did you come here directly or was your journey done in stages?
- What were your feelings on the day(s) of the journey?
- Do you have any photographs or documents of the journey, or objects that you brought that were special? Can you describe them?

Describe your first few days of coming to the city.

- Did you know anyone at all when you came here? When you arrived here, did anyone help you settle into a new home or community? Was someone from your hometown already here when you arrived?
- How did you find your first home? Who helped you find it?
- What were some of the challenges you faced in your new community?
- Did you ever feel like you were treated unfairly because you were new or different because of the way you looked, spoke, or dressed?

Tell about your expectations of the neighborhood.

- What did you expect the country to be like? What had you heard about the city? What made you pick this neighborhood as a place to live? Is it what you expected?
- Did anything happen to your family that was funny or special because of what you expected?
- What were some similarities and differences between your old community and your new one?
- Do you feel like life is better for your family in this place than in your old?

**THE \_\_\_\_\_ FAMILY IMMIGRATION STORY**

Insert family photo here



**Handout #1 Sample Exhibit**

# It's My Story

Austin, Texas is home to over 600,000 people, nearly half of whom were born outside of the state. To paraphrase a popular bumper sticker, "They might not have been born in Texas, but they got here as fast as they could." Of these relative newcomers, about a third have immigrated from outside the United States—including Europe, Asia, Africa, Latin America, Oceania, and North America.

Whether they arrived in the past days or the past decades, they all have stories to tell about their migrant experience, and their earliest impressions of their adopted home in Texas.

As part of a long-range exhibit project on immigration to Texas, the Bob Bullock Texas State History Museum staff has begun gathering the migrant stories of some of Austin's first generation residents, as well as some of their more established neighbors.

Meet a few of your neighbors from Austin and learn their stories—and maybe take a moment to contribute your own story of how you came to live in Texas' capital city.



Photographs taken by Chris Caselli, John Lucas and/or Bette Reichman