



Assisting recent immigrants through loans,
savings and financial education

Our Community Partners

Community Law Program, Inc.
Florida Center for Survivors of
Torture
Gulfcoast Legal Services, Inc.
Lealman & Asian
Neighborhood Center
Lutheran Services of Florida
Tomlinson Adult Learning
Center, ESOL Program
Pinellas Technical Education
Center (pTEC)

Message from the President

It's been just one year since we officially launched Project Pro\$per. It's astonishing how far we've come in a very short time. We have borrowers who've used Project Pro\$per's loans to launch a business, to get training to qualify for a professional certificate, to purchase basic home appliances and furnishings, and to achieve the dream of citizenship.

Now, in addition to making loans, we are offering financial education classes for immigrants. Recent immigrants are often overwhelmed by the dizzying array of financial services available here. Our volunteer Money Smart instructors and

mentors help immigrants make informed choices and avoid high cost services offered by those who prey on the uninformed.

Our dream is to equip each of the approximately 10,000 documented immigrants arriving in the Tampa Bay area annually with basic financial skills that will enable them to succeed in their new home.

Our list of Community Partner organizations continues to grow. The mutual benefits of our relationships with other organizations that provide services to immigrants and refugees have exceeded our

expectations.

I look forward to the day when we'll see our Project Pro\$per borrowers and students running successful businesses, sending their children off to college, taking an active role in civic activities, supporting our public schools and becoming engaged in all aspects of this community.

As an all-volunteer organization, we are totally dependent on volunteers who believe in our mission and are willing to roll up their sleeves. To all of our volunteers and donors, thank you for sharing our vision and helping to make it a reality.

Robin Warren, President

Did you know?

The Department of Homeland Security reports:

- From 2001-2007, over 64,000 immigrants were granted Permanent Residence status in the Tampa Bay
- 60% of all persons granted Permanent Residence status are between the ages of 25 and 64, prime working years.

An Immigrant's Perspective *by Paul Chuk*

A recent *St. Petersburg Times* article about a new organization called Project Prosper caught my attention. I am a Cambodian refugee who came to the U.S. and live in Pinellas Park, Florida since 1979.

I remember how vulnerable my wife and I were when we first came. We were fortunate to have great support from Seminole First Baptist Church. But many immigrants who do not have anyone to depend on, face great challenge not only to learn new culture but also struggle to survive financially. For that reason, I immediately contacted Project Prosper and

offered to help volunteer.

A small loan modeled by Project Prosper is considered not sufficient enough for many, but for the new immigrant, it is a big deal. Such small loans will enable them to get on their feet and to move beyond their current hardship. I remember when I first came, my wife and I had only \$5 each, a gift from Sister Ruth, who was at the time working for Church World Services. Could you imagine a small loan of a few hundred to more than a thousand dollars meant to me and my family at the time?

I was once an immigrant and know first hand how desperate life *is* for the first few years here in the U.S. Also I plan to go back to Cambodia to help the poor Cambodians. Hopefully by working with Project Prosper, I could gain some knowledge of how the program works and possibly use a similar model to provide small loans to many Cambodian families there.

Mr. Chuk is a member of Project Pro\$per's Loan Committee

Money Smart – An Instructor’s Perspective

By Joann Townsend



At one of my first Project Prosper meetings someone asked, “Would anyone like to teach the ‘Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) Money Smart- An Adult Financial Education Program’. It’s at the Tomlinson Center taught to adults who are studying English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL).” The goal of this course is to help adults outside the financial mainstream enhance their money skills and banking relationships.

From the minute my hand went up, I began to worry: “What did I get myself into?” “How will I be able to handle the teaching

material?” “How will I teach ESL students?” “How can I do a good job?”

I already was committed to financial education. Also, helping new immigrants with financial literacy is one of Project Prosper’s goals. “OK”, I said, “Don’t worry, forge ahead.”

I was presented with a Money Smart package *containing* all the material needed to make a professional presentation. All I had to do was follow their instructions on how-to teach my selected module.

My last hurdle was the fear of teaching ESOL. How well would I be able to handle this? I

arrived in class and found a lively group of people so full of interest in learning about finances. My fears were quickly forgotten. The time passed so fast. With all the questions and interest, the class could have gone on much longer.

In the end, I had such a great time. I hope that the people I came in contact with learned as much from me as I did from them. I am so happy that I volunteered.

Ms. Townsend is a member of Project Prosper’s Board of Trustees and Loan Committee. A CPA, Ms Townsend also serves as Project Prosper’s Treasurer.

“In the end, I had such a good time...I am so happy that I volunteered.”

Money Smart – A Student’s Perspective *by Trang Doan*

Twelve students enrolled in Project Pro\$per’s first series of Money Smart classes offered to ESOL students at Tomlinson Adult Learning Center. One of them, a young Vietnamese woman, wrote to us after completing the course. Here’s what she told us:

“The Money Smart class is worth to me. It has a lot of knowledge that I never heard about it when I opened an account in the bank.

...

“And I am appreciate because there is an non-profit organization like project prosper help immigrant to understand about banking. I think this is a good idea. That is what I thought. Despite I can’t be approved the loan, I do not feel sad because I know and understand the way I apply for a loan. Once thank you for your class is very useful.”

Using the knowledge she’d gained in the Money Smart classes, this student applied for and received a loan from Project Pro\$per to help pay her tuition to become certified as a dental assistant.

You can help

Click here to make your tax-deductible contribution to [Project Pro\\$per](http://ProjectPro$per) at www.projectprosper.org

[DONATE NOW](#)

Or mail your contribution to Project Pro\$per, PO Box 8411, Madeira Beach, FL 33738

Project Pro\$per is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization. Contributions to Project Pro\$per are tax-deductible.

A COPY OF THE OFFICIAL REGISTRATION AND FINANCIAL INFORMATION MAY BE OBTAINED FROM THE DIVISION OF CONSUMER SERVICES BY CALLING 1-800-435-7352, TOLL-FREE WITHIN THE STATE. REGISTRATION DOES NOT IMPLY ENDORSEMENT, APPROVAL OR RECOMMENDATION BY THE STATE. REGISTRATION #: CH23333