

## *Immigration lottery winners getting good news*

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### **Body**

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Immigration lawyer Bernie Wolfsdorf says he'd like to credit his legal skills with turning his clients into immigration lottery winners, but admits "there's a luck factor at work here, too."

A pretty sizable luck factor, from the look of things.

As results begin trickling in this week from the USA's largest ever immigration lottery, 23 of Wolfsdorf's 153 clients have won permanent U.S. resident status.

"When I go to the casino, I never win," says Mathias Pellam, 28, who came here from France two years ago. "But this time, I win more than money."

A month ago, thousands of hopeful illegal immigrants sent 15 million immigration applications to the Merrifield, Va., post office for a chance at one of the 40,000 lottery slots.

"We really beat the odds," says Wolfsdorf, who made 150 copies of each application.

"You couldn't even see the carpet," said clerk Lucy Kwan. "Paper was everywhere."

"We had five suitcases and boxes, I mean cartons, stuffed full of paper," says lawyer Michael Davis, who took them to Washington, D.C., and battled record crowds in Merrifield.

"When you saw how many people were (at Merrifield) and mailing massive numbers ... we felt there was no way Postal Service workers could process them all in time."

So Davis began going to other post offices and mailing to Merrifield. "I guess we did something right."

So did Sharon Rocklin, 27, a British citizen from South Africa six years ago.

"I had nothing to lose," she says. "I haven't stopped smiling since I found out I won."

"It hasn't been easy," says Rocklin. She worked as a New York nanny before spending her last \$ 200 on moving to Los Angeles. "I'm definitely, absolutely becoming an American citizen. I haven't come this far to leave."

Same goes for Latvian immigrant Anne Chulskaya, a University of California, Los Angeles research technician.

Chulskaya, 37, came to visit her cousin, actor Ed Asner, months before the 1989 fall of the Berlin Wall.

"We came just like visitors, but then I wanted to stay in freedom," she says.

## Immigration lottery winners getting good news

Elsewhere, **winners** expressed similar sentiments:

"I can go to school, **get better** employment," says Belfast native Sharon McComb, 21, of Long Beach, N.Y., who works as a nanny.

"It's opened up a whole new life to me," says Chris Purcell, 40, a County Kerry, Ireland, native living in Louisville.

"I've been living like a fugitive for 10 months now," says Purcell, who mailed 300 applications. "I've been blessed."

Mary Horigan, 25, a part-time cashier at a Manhattan diner who emigrated from County Tipperary, Ireland, says winning will ensure a **better** future for her son John, 2.

"Now, I'll be able to **get a better** job, go to college, apply for credit cards," says Horigan. "We never had medical insurance. Now, I can apply for that. It's amazing what it means."

Contributing: Bruce Frankel

## Notes

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## Graphic

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PHOTO; b/w, Chris Martinez, AP

CUTLINE: **WINNERS** CIRCLE: **Immigration** lawyer Bernie Wolfsdorf stands with clients, from left, Mathias Pellam, of Paris; Sharon Rocklin, a British citizen from South Africa; and Anne Chulskaya of Latvia.

## Classification

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