

NEW U.S. CITIZENS CELEBRATE ACHIEVEMENTS, COMMUNITY; FESTIVAL RECOGNIZES ACHIEVEMENT OF THOSE WHO STUDIED, HELPED

Saint Paul Pioneer Press (Minnesota)

JULY 25, 1999 Sunday

Copyright 1999 St. Paul Pioneer Press All Rights Reserved

Section: LOCAL; Pg. 4B

Length: 321 words

Byline: Shuchi Anand Staff Writer

Body

Seventy-seven year-old Dona Raquel Mendoza **celebrated** a **new** identity Saturday at the Freedom **Festival** on St. Paul's West Side. After more than 50 years as a resident alien, Mendoza became a **U.S. citizen** this year.

"I am so old, I can't remember things anymore," Mendoza said, explaining one of her difficulties in taking the citizenship test. It took her three years of English classes at the Jane Addams School of Democracy in St. Paul to pass.

Mendoza's and 14 other **new citizens' achievements** were **recognized** by the West Side **community** at the **festival**, organized by Jane Addams School. Several state officials, including **U.S.** Rep. Bruce Vento, State Rep. Carlos Mariani and District Immigration and Naturalization Service Director Curtis Alijetz were present.

"I think it is really important, this issue of immigrants becoming **citizens**," Mariani said. "They have been the lifeblood of our country for years."

The Freedom **Festival celebrates** those who have worked especially hard in the pursuit of freedom, said Jennifer O'Donoghue, one of the **festival's** coordinators. In addition to **new citizens**, several **community** volunteers working with the school were honored. Members of the National Guard also posted the flag.

The Jane Addams School offers **community** education, including language and legal aid for immigrants struggling to acquire citizenship.

"The immigration work is very satisfying because it allows people a basic security, so they can work and plan for the future of their family," said Karen Ellingson of Oficina Legal, the nonprofit organization that has provided legal aid for immigrants at Jane Addams since 1983. Ellingson and fellow lawyer Lenore Millibergity also were honored at the **festival**.

For Mendoza, citizenship will make travels to her native Mexico easier and finally will allow her to vote.

Shuchi Anand can be reached at sanand@pioneerpress.com or at (612) 228-5490.

Classification

Language: ENGLISH

NEW U.S. CITIZENS CELEBRATE ACHIEVEMENTS, COMMUNITY;FESTIVAL RECOGNIZES
ACHIEVEMENT OF THOSE WHO STUDIED, HELPED

Subject: CITIZENSHIP (96%); IMMIGRATION (92%); US STATE GOVERNMENT (90%); LEGAL AID (87%); **FESTIVALS** (78%); US FEDERAL GOVERNMENT (77%); NATURALIZATION (77%); NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS (75%); ASSOCIATIONS & ORGANIZATIONS (75%); DEMOCRACIES (73%); MIGRATION ISSUES (69%); VOLUNTEERS (69%)

Organization: IMMIGRATION & NATURALIZATION SERVICE (56%); IMMIGRATION & NATURALIZATION SERVICE (56%)

Industry: LEGAL AID (87%); **FESTIVALS** (78%)

Geographic: UNITED STATES (79%)

Load-Date: October 23, 2002