

The 2012 Award was presented to Slavica Park (left) at the WCI International Conference in Denver, Colorado by Caroline Adair Dimmers, daughter of founder Marian Adair.

Ms. Slavica Park was born in Bosnia. In 1991, nineteen-year-old Slavica fled the growing tensions in Bosnia to join her father, who was already living in Germany. There, she worked for a major international organization to help others displaced by the Bosnian War that began in 1992. Her duties included post-traumatic stress counseling and teaching cross-cultural orientation.

In 1997, Slavica received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology from the University of Darmstadt in Germany. That same year, she emigrated to the United States as a refugee – alone, with limited funds, and with even less English. She ended up in Denver, Colorado where she supported herself by working nights, cleaning office buildings. Her days were spent studying at the Emily Griffith Technical College (EGTC), where she enrolled in the English as a Second Language (ESL) program. One short year later, she was hired as an Office Assistant in the ESL Department.

For the next fourteen years, Slavica worked at various positions in the ESL department: Office Manager, Co-Trainer for the Colorado Refugee ESL Tutoring Program, Student Advisor for ESL Vocational Student, and Cultural Consultant for the Spring Institute for Intercultural Learning and the Colorado Department of Education. In 2003, she became Dean of the Language Center at EGTC. During her tenure, the ESL program for refugees has grown to include specialized instruction to prepare refugee students for the workplace through intensive language and cultural orientation training.

Slavica has worked on the boards of the Colorado Refugee Network Council and the Literacy Coalition of Colorado. She is fluent in English, German, and Serbo-Croatian.

Slavica has persevered through adversity and has worked to advance marginalized women and men. She is a remarkable woman!