

January 2015

## Finding a Common Bond: Sara Chapple-Sokol '04 Serves Boston's Immigrants

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### Recommended Citation

Clark, Andrew (2015) "Finding a Common Bond: Sara Chapple-Sokol '04 Serves Boston's Immigrants," *Colby Magazine*: Vol. 103 : Iss. 2, Article 13.

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.colby.edu/colbymagazine/vol103/iss2/13>

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*Students enrolled in classes at the Irish International Immigrant Center with education coordinator Sarah Chapple-Sokol '04, third from right.*

## FINDING A

# COMMON BOND

### **Sarah Chapple-Sokol helps Boston's immigrants build better lives**

The former vault room for the Boston Stock Exchange, in the city's Downtown Crossing area, now houses a different sort of asset.

It's been converted into a classroom at the Irish International Immigrant Center, an organization that has expanded over the decades to serve immigrants from around the world. "Our largest [non-Irish] single population is Haitian," said

the center's education coordinator, Sarah Chapple-Sokol '04, who runs down the list of first homes of students: Guatemala, El Salvador, Albania, Morocco ... .

Chapple-Sokol oversees classes in citizenship, English, and computer studies, courses that attract recent and longtime immigrants bent on improving their lives and the lives of their children.

The Boston-born Chapple-Sokol says the impetus for wanting to work with people from international backgrounds started at

Colby. In 2002 the anthropology major studied in Cape Town, South Africa, with Professor Catherine Besteman—working in a township, living with South African families, tutoring high school students—an experience she said has shaped her post-Colby life. “Everything I’ve done, a lot of different things—it’s part of the same arc that started at Colby.”

Once back from Cape Town, “I became much more interested in the international world, and I wanted to work with people from other countries,” she said.

The French-speaking Chapple-Sokol launched her English Language Learners (ELL) career teaching English in Dijon. Last year she finished a master’s degree in intercultural relations at Lesley University in Cambridge, Mass., and she’s since put that knowledge to work training Brazilian domestic workers to resolve conflicts with American employers.

At the center Chapple-Sokol coordinates education services, works with grant writers, collaborates with the management team, and writes articles for the *Irish Emigrant*, a Boston paper geared toward those she’s devoted her time to helping. She writes profiles of students and teachers and news about the center’s programs. “I really enjoy getting to interact with the students,” said Chapple-Sokol, who also works part time at the Brazilian Immigrant Center.

She also enjoys watching people from different cultures interact with each other. “One of the best parts of this work is when I’ve gotten to watch friendships form,” she said.

Said Chapple-Sokol, who studied conflict resolution in her master’s program: “If people could just sit and talk with each other and find a common humanity ...” —Andrew Clark

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Everything I’ve done, a lot of different things—it’s part of the same arc that started at Colby.

—Sarah Chapple-Sokol ’04



*Sarah Chapple-Sokol '04 with students. Chapple-Sokol traces her interest in the immigrant experience to Colby and study in Cape Town, South Africa, with Professor Catherine Besteman.*