



Autumn 2017

A Publication of The Episcopal Refugee Network of San Diego

## REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT IN SAN DIEGO A LONG JOURNEY

TO BE RESETTLED INTO ANOTHER COUNTRY THOSE FLEEING THEIR HOMELAND, MUST MEET THE CRITERIA TO BE OFFICIALLY RECOGNIZED AS A REFUGEE BY THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES.

After status has been determined the vetting process begins with a lengthy series of in person interviews to corroborate their story. If there are inconsistencies the process stops and they are denied. If they make it through the interviews they proceed through a series of health screenings and begin the security and background checks, a system consisting of 14 databases. This process takes an average of 18-24 months. After successfully being vetted refugees are eligible to be resettled into another country.

In San Diego County, resettlement agencies such as Catholic Charities, Jewish Family Services, Alliance for African Assistance and the International Rescue Committee, under contract with the federal government,



resettle an agreed upon number of refugees. Resettlement agencies are responsible to secure housing, enroll children in school and enroll adults in employment training services. Services provided by resettlement agencies are provided for a limited amount of time. A common goal is to have adults stabilized and employed within 6 months of arrival, before many of their services end.

More Refugees are resettled in San Diego than any other County in California. According to local resettlement agencies, slightly over 4,000 Refugees were resettled in San Diego County last year (*fiscal year October 2015 – September 2016*).

# REFUGEE NET UPDATES



## RESETTLEMENT FACTS

**THE UNITED NATION REFUGEE AGENCY ESTIMATES THERE ARE OVER 65 MILLION DISPLACED PERSONS.**

Most have fled conflict zones trying to save their lives. A small portion, 22 million are deemed refugees and less than 1 percent (189,000) are lucky enough to be resettled in one of 30 countries such as the USA, Canada and Australia. After resettlement, these refugees face challenges in their new home countries, such as a language barrier, learning how to use transportation and finding a primary care physician. This is where RefugeeNet staff step in to provide the help they need to become productive members of society.

## A SUMMER RECAP

**A RECORD NUMBER OF STUDENTS FROM REFUGEE NET'S TUTORING PROGRAM, 34 IN ALL, ATTENDED WEEKLY SWIM LESSONS THIS SUMMER.**

Along with our partners at the City Heights Swim Center and St. Andrew's By the Sea, we know the importance of providing recreational opportunities for kids and more importantly, the chance to learn life-saving skills.

As the swimming program wrapped up camperships began. RefugeeNet wishes to thank members of Trinity Escondido for their help in shopping for supplies. 40 refugee children attended Camp Stevens in July. Your donations and the generous camperships offered through Camp Stevens made the weeklong experiences available to these children, who would otherwise not have the chance to participate in the enriching experience

## GEARING UP FOR SCHOOL

**THE TUTORING PROGRAM IS A GREAT PLACE TO DONATE YOUR TIME AND TALENTS, TO HELP REFUGEE KIDS SUCCEED.**

Eager new tutors will join veteran tutors, as we kick off the new school year mid-September.

We'd like to acknowledge partners such as: the Bishop's School of La Jolla, Point Loma Nazarene College and the University of San Diego, who provide consistent, invaluable support to RefugeeNet's Tutoring program. They make it possible to help up to 100 children per week, throughout the school year.

Tutoring resumes mid-September.

New tutors are welcome, no experience necessary!

For more information please contact:

Program Manager Katherine Bom (619) 283-1337.



# ALL IN A DAY'S WORK

## REFLECTIONS OF CLIENT STORIES BY PROGRAM MANAGER KATHERINE BOM

**SAMIRA, A SINGLE MOM OF FOUR FROM DARFUR, Sudan** came to our office seeking help to resolve IRS issues. The IRS was withholding her income, even though she had filed tax returns. I took her to the IRS office where we learned she needed an attorney. So we went to the Legal Aid Society and found an attorney who was willing to work on her case for free. It took seven months, but she finally received a refund. I was involved as her interpreter and caseworker, throughout the process. Which was needed, since she would not have known how to proceed without our help.

**A SINGLE MOM OF FIVE,** living in two-bedroom apartment in the City Heights area, asked me to help her apply for low-income housing. The apartment they living in, was in bad condition and full of mice. The family couldn't afford to move out. Searching for low-income apartments in San Diego is difficult. I told the single mom, not to be discouraged. We filed several applications for new apartments. I continued to follow up on the status of her applications and updated the family information in order to stay on waiting lists. One day, we got lucky as a four-bedroom apartment became available for rent. Because the rental office policy was first-come, first-served, I immediately rushed

to that building to put down a deposit to secure the apartment. Now this family is living very comfortably in a big space and a nice neighborhood.

**A FAMILY OF EIGHT, FROM DARFUR SUDAN,** ran into a challenge applying for green cards. They came to RefugeeNet's office to seek help. I took them to USCIS Immigration Office in Chula Vista to apply for green cards. No one in the family could speak or write English.

I interpreted and filled out their applications for processing. Within four months they received their green cards.

**A NEW REFUGEE FAMILY FROM SYRIA** was referred to RefugeeNet through a friend who happened to be one of our clients. I met the family and took them to apply for Social Security, next to the County office to apply for Medi-Cal, and then to the Department of Motor Vehicles to get their IDs. I assisted them

in registering their kids for school and for WIC (for their youngest ones). In addition, I found a doctor who speaks their language, which is Arabic.



These stories are typical examples of how staff help refugees as they assimilate into their new lives. If you'd like to become involved, there are opportunities to help refugees learn to use public transportation, fill out a job application or speak English. For more information contact: Program Manager, Katherine Bom (619) 283-1337

# PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Dear Friends,

Over the past several months I've had the opportunity to speak at many parishes, sharing stories about refugee experiences, information about the resettlement process and promoting volunteer and partnership opportunities with RefugeeNet. I would like to acknowledge the efforts of St. Andrew's by the Sea, Trinity Escondido and St. James' by the Sea.

Thank you to the helpers at St. Andrew's by the Sea for supporting the refugee children who participated in the swimming program. Much gratitude to those at Trinity Escondido who shopped for the campership supplies, used by refugee children, who attended Camp Stevens. Lastly, great appreciation to St. James' by the Sea for awarding RefugeeNet a grant to help with the purchase of a van.

Collaborative efforts like these are an integral part of the Diocesan wide support, it takes to keep RefugeeNet operating. We are grateful to be part of such a caring community.

*"If you want to lift yourself up, lift up someone else."* – Booker T. Washington

*Lisa DuSolt, President, RefugeeNet Board of Directors*

## REFUGEE NET'S UPCOMING EVENTS

**SAVE  
THE  
DATE**



**SATURDAY MAY 12, 2018**

**FARMER AND THE SEAHORSE RESTAURANT WILL BE THE  
VENUE FOR REFUGEE NET'S ANNUAL FUNDRAISING GALA**

## 8TH ANNUAL PIE & COFFEE FUNDRAISER

**CAFFE CALABRIA • 3933 30TH STREET • SATURDAY NOVEMBER 4 • 2 P.M. – 4 P.M.**

WHILE THERE, MEET OUR STUDENTS AND YOUR \$10 TAX-DEDUCTIBLE DONATION GOES TO SUPPORT THE TUTORING PROGRAM

FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL (619) 204-0545 OR SEND E-MAIL TO [DDORN2000@YAHOO.COM](mailto:ddorn2000@yahoo.com).

## I WANT TO SUPPORT REFUGEE NET

I am enclosing \$ \_\_\_\_\_ for this needful cause.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

To donate, please include this form with a check and send to:

RefugeeNet, 4265 Fairmount Avenue, Suite 130, San Diego, CA 92105

Or you can donate by credit card online, through our website [refugee-net.org](http://refugee-net.org)

To contact us by phone: RefugeeNet office – (619) 283-1337

The Network has its own 501(C) 3 tax exempt status.