



New Friends Among Us

"We call upon all people of good will, to welcome the newcomers in their neighborhoods and schools, in their places of work and worship, with heartfelt hospitality, openness, and eagerness both to help and to learn from our brothers and sisters of whatever religion, ethnicity, or background."

—*Welcoming the Stranger Among Us: Unity in Diversity, A Statement of the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops*

Upcoming Event

Do you need help or know some who needs help applying for U.S. Citizenship? The Ohio Chapter of the American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA) is offering Citizenship Day at the Legal Aid Society of Cleveland on April 17th, 2010. This is by appointment only. Call to Reserve an Appointment Time @ 216-687-1900!



Welcoming the Stranger

A newsletter published by Migration and Refugee Services
Catholic Charities Health and Human Services

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From the Director



Tom Mrosko
Director

It is difficult for many of us to think about anything other than the humanitarian crisis in Haiti. We at MRS in Cleveland have been called by many people interested in helping and we would like to continue to direct them to Catholic Relief Services which is leading efforts to provide assistance to the affected populations. Globally and domestically, the Catholic Church has been a beacon of hope for many people affected by natural disaster, war, and civil strife. This is evident in the challenging work that MRS faces every day and proven how the Diocese of Cleveland is a beacon of light to so many Refugees from the moment they arrive at Cleveland Hopkins Airport from around the globe.

Often we are told by new volunteers or colleagues that "we never knew Catholic Charities and the Diocese had such a ministry" and I am always pleased to tell them that this type of work has been going on since 1948. People are surprised to learn that our office welcomes over 255 refugees a year from around the world. Often, new volunteers realize right away the monumental task our office is charged with. From finding and furnishing a home with less than a week's notice for a family of nine, to teaching people how to use public transportation, how to shop, learn to drive, or learn a new job. This list could go on and on. People always ask "how can someone work with refugees without speaking their language"? My answer is always the same, "you will be surprised what you can do when you do not have a common language."

Catholic Charities MRS has connected and developed many positive relationships with parishes and Catholic entities throughout the Diocese. Assistance and volunteers come from Lorain, Painesville and Akron. We have broadened our network of partners locally to include other social service agencies, schools, and hospitals with one main goal: to provide better services to new arrivals and refugees. This concept has been successful at enhancing services to refugees and developing programs that address unmet needs.

I encourage you to continue to support Catholic Charities and our Office by connecting with us. No matter how far away you are or whatever gift you can provide, it will be appreciated. Please contact us to come to your parish or organization to speak and continue to spread the word of this wonderful mission.

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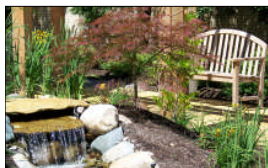
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Stacy Dever
Volunteer
Coordinator

Recognizing Our Community Partners

St. Augustine Health Campus has been serving senior adults and the chronically ill for over forty years. St. Augustine reflects a rich heritage of ethnic and cultural traditions that value family relationships and friends. Their continuum of care is second to none providing assisted living, short-term rehabilitation, skilled nursing, long term care and end of life care. They also specialize in care for those with traumatic brain injury, MS, diabetes, stroke, wound care and HIV/AIDS. After fleeing their country, due to persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution, most refugees are housed in United Nations refugee camps, some for many years. Prior to a refugee's departure to the United States from the camps, the UNCHR provides a health screen to the Resettlement Office insuring that each refugee is free from communicable disease and includes other health information including physical disabilities. Over the past few years we have had several refugees who have been very seriously physically injured and/or ill which resulted in their inability to use their limbs. Finding available and appropriate care for this type of disability is often difficult, especially when the need is immediate. Without hesitation, St. Augustine Manor threw open its doors and has worked closely with us, providing skilled nursing and long term care to these refugees. They have provided excellent care and easily overcame the cultural differences and language barriers. Several of their nurses were former refugees and helped assist in care and translation for these patients. We want to thank the staff at St. Augustine Manor for their compassion, dedication and the difference they are making in the lives of these young men.



A relaxing outdoor garden and fountain at St. Augustine Manor

Welcoming the Stranger

Overview of Our Services

Cleveland Catholic Charities Migration and Refugee Services is one of 104 national affiliates of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. As the largest resettlement office in Northern Ohio, we expect to serve over 225 refugees and asylees this year.

MRS provides vast resettlement services designed to aide refugees become self-sufficient as soon as possible. Staff members offer employment services and case management services in culturally appropriate languages and customs. Currently our staff of ten speaks ten different languages. MRS has a robust volunteer program geared at providing an avenue for volunteers to share their most special gifts and talents in a way that will serve refugees. MRS provides training and direction for volunteers.



Dennis Morgan
Employment
Training Coordinator



Julie Bell
Employment
Training Coordinator



Khwateer Nayef
Program Aide



Abdi Nuno
Case Manager

Pay It Forward

Bishnu Pradhan arrived in Cleveland with her two children, Anil and Ayusa, to be reunited with her extended family in 2009. Her entire family fled Bhutan in 1992 and spent the past 17 years living in a Beldangi refugee camp in Nepal.

While Bishnu was in Nepal she became very involved in many social issues concerning the rights of women. She received certification in women's health education and social rights while working for UNHCR in the refugee camp. Bishnu's passion for helping people was immediately evident as soon as she arrived in Cleveland.

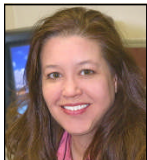
Many friends and neighbors turn to her for advice and support. Bishnu came to the office and asked to be an official volunteer for the office. She went through training and helps with mentor introductions and many health care appointments for her community. In addition to her volunteer work, Bishnu is also employed part time with ASIA Inc. as a case worker. Bishnu is a tremendous asset to her family and community. Her dream is to continue her education and become an advocate for women's rights by practicing law.



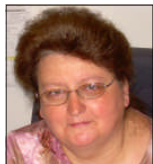
Why Should I Hire Refugees?

- Catholic Charities MRS Service Support
- Pre-Screened by Homeland Security Department
- Reliability
- Dedication and Loyalty
- Resourcefulness
- Strong Desire to Work

Looking to hire?
Call Dennis Morgan
at 216-939-3747!



Sandra Ortegon
Office Manager



Jenny Kutsar
Case Manager



Martin Dek
Case Management
Coordinator

On His Way to Becoming an Employee of the Year!

Ali Osman has been working at the Courtyard Marriott in Independence since August 2005. During this time Ali has won numerous awards for his great performance on the job. Ali keeps himself busy providing rides to other refugees that work in nearby hotels. Ali's life in America began five years ago when he left a refugee camp in Kenya to start a new life here. Ali says that he likes his job and what life in America has given him. He is now married to Isho and they recently welcomed a son, Muhammad. In his spare time, Ali likes to play soccer and spend time with his family. Courtyard Marriott in Independence has become an employer for two other refugees from Somalia, Fatuma Ali and Jamilo Muhammad.



A Job at a Chocolate Factory! by Julie Bell

A job in a chocolate factory, now that would be a dream come true. The caramel, the sugar, the nuts, oh, did I say the chocolate? I was driving by Malley's Chocolate Factory. I decided to stop. I had my refugee information and my business card. Perhaps they were looking for employees.

I introduced myself and before I could say anything else I hear, "send her back here". I met Mr. Malley who was familiar with refugees working at another candy facility. "These were hard working, determined people." "True survivors," he was told.

We met with Ken Roskey, the plant manager, and the rest is history. Indra, a refugee from Bhutan, and Noor, a refugee from Iraq, had only been in the United States a short time. They were the lucky ones. Most refugees struggle to find employment.

The two young women proved Mr. Malley right. They are hard working and determined. The sad thing is neither one likes chocolate...



Weaving Culture, Knitting Community by Kim McDonald

Traditional textile production and weaving are ancient and beautiful threads in the fabric of human experience. Many world cultures continue to practice and preserve these art forms as a way of life, relying upon them for both material and economic needs, and as a source of cultural and social identity. On the Westside of Cleveland, Cudell Fine Arts Center ran a popular weaving program for decades and, although that program came to an end as older weavers retired or passed away more than 20 years ago, approximately 12 viable looms remain in the historic Cudell Fine Arts building, awaiting the eager hands of a new generation. Nepalese refugees from Bhutan are eager to carry on this tradition by learning our traditional American style of weaving. Others, like the Karen people of Burma, continue to practice their highly prized and expert weaving methods that are part and parcel of their traditional culture. The Karen people are eager to share and showcase their artisanal work in the community and to pass this important knowledge on to their own children as well. Refugees from Burundi and other nations will soon begin work on sewing and creating eco-friendly items for local fair trade projects and businesses. All together they will be known as the *Refugee Artisan Cooperative*.

During weekly weaving sessions, vital tasks such as English language acquisition and skills needed to navigate a new society and culture will be provided with the help of art instructor Rebecca Garcia, and ESL teacher and cross-cultural trainer, Kim McDonald. Interest by local business owners has been quite encouraging- some promising assistance, purchase or pre-order of products.

These new members of our society require time, space and support to begin again, as they strive to adjust and integrate to a new life in our city. The refugees in our community have been given a chance to start anew and we have been given a chance to help them. For more information, contact Rebecca Garcia at rjogarcia2@gmail.com



Call to Action
Looking for donations of yarn supplies, bus passes, bicycles and volunteers to assist with classes and transportation.

Appreciation of Our Donors

To everyone who has made an investment in the refugees we serve, on behalf of all the staff of MRS, we would like to thank you. We want you to know that your gifts make immediate differences in the lives of our refugees.



Anne Mengerink
Assistant Director



For Their Financial Gifts:

Phyllis Sheehan Bambeck
Barney Barnovsky
Scott and Audrey Embacher
Mary Moore Farrell
Sr. Jean Glorioso, HM
Dr. and Mrs. Winston Ho
Gail and Alan Holocker

St. Joseph Church (Strongsville)
Paul and Jane King
Harry and Deborah McDonald
Shirley Mooney
Cynthia Di Nardo
Lynn Shenkelberg
James and Rosemarie Tighe
Adam and Martha Zachlin

Your cash gift is fully deductible according to the IRS tax code. Please send your check to Migration and Refugee Services, 7800 Detroit Avenue, Cleveland, Ohio 44102. For more information, please call Anne Mengerink at 216-939-3735.

For Their Gifts of Goods:

Karen Alyward
Barney Barnovsky
Bonnie Bell
Breadsmith
Center for Civic Engagement / CWRU
Annette and Steve Dever
Amy and Troy Stevens
Chagrin Falls High School
Anne Dabb
Jean Gallagher
Marian Heyink
Angela Lowery
Holy Angels Parish
Humility of Mary Ministries
John Carroll University

Kathy Meyers
Magnificat High School
Sandra Shapiro
St. Angela Merici School
St. Bridget School
St. Ignatius High School
St. Leo the Great Church
St. Raphael Church
West Side Irish American Club
Dr. Tom Crawford

A special thanks to Stacy Dever for her work in soliciting, collecting and distributing donations!

To stay in touch with upcoming events as well as current needs, please visit us on the on the web at
www.clevelandcatholiccharities.org/mrs

A Family Affair by Ellen Mullarkey

I knew that the US State Department and NGOs sponsored refugees from around the world. I knew that there are many refugees serving in our military. I had no idea that there were so many refugees presently in the US, much less so many in Cleveland. I got involved in 2008 because I was asked by my friend Stacy to give hygiene classes to Congolese refugees. I speak French so I thought it would be fairly easy to do. The class was very basic. It was about why you use shampoo, toothpaste, deodorant, diaper care for babies, hand lotion, Chap Stick in the winter, etc. Americans take this all for granted. In refugee camps these things don't exist.

This class showed me how desperate this community is for help. Many people have not seen traffic lights, ovens, refrigerators, elevators, etc. They have not lived in a building with electricity so they need a mentor to help them figure out these basic functions of everyday living in a modern society. I get to help these people become Americans without losing their identity and culture. They have included my family in their religious celebrations and blessings. My husband Matt and my 17 year old son Casey attended a special "man blessing" where they were blessed with *dika* on their foreheads and were presented with traditional Nepali hats. It was an amazing experience for both of them to be completely out of their comfort zones and so intimately connected with the Bhutanese community. My daughter Chelsea also volunteered as a summer intern with MRS while home for summer break.

There are cultural differences. But these are small in comparison to the millions of ways we are alike. It is amazing what they have learned in one year! It's amazing what my family and I have learned in one year!



Mission Statement

We have been carrying out our mission of “welcoming the stranger” and celebrating unity in diversity since 1948. We have welcomed refugees and immigrants arriving from all corners of the globe. We respect the dignity of each person and provide a supportive environment where each individual and culture is celebrated. Building upon the courage and strength of these newcomers, we seek to empower them to achieve self-sufficiency and independence.

Refugee Highlights

- Regina and her four children from the Congo reunified with her husband in January. This is a wonderful event that we were happy to assist with.
- Three people graduated from the STNA program and received state licensure. They are being employed in Cleveland
- MRS has enhanced services and programming that gives us the opportunity to work with refugees in various capacities from the time that they arrive up to five years.
- The Legal Aid Society of Cleveland in Partnership with Catholic Charities organized an adjustment of status day at the Legal Aid Society that helped 48 refugees obtain permanent residency.

Other Needs

- Looking for individuals willing to help with 6-8 pre-school age refugee children on Tuesday and Thursday from 9-12.
- We are looking for lamps, pots and pans, mops and brooms, laundry detergent, adult bicycles
- Call Stacy Dever at 216-939-3708.

Baking This World a Better Place!

Breadsmith is more than a bakery. In addition to making great tasting, healthy bread our mission is to be a good neighbor. We want to be a part of the community, serve the people, including those who are less fortunate and provide a fun, warm atmosphere in our store.

Towards this goal, the bakery holds fundraisers for local organizations, supports community organizations and donates the left over bread from each day to various food banks and kitchens for the less fortunate.

Breadsmith donates bread every Thursday to refugee families. Enjoy Great Bread at 18101 Detroit, Lakewood.— Sabine and Ginius Macys, owners



Reflection from Bishop Richard Lennon

As many of you are aware, the topic of comprehensive immigration reform generates a great deal of heated discussion on talk radio shows and cable television political commentaries. This discussion involves complex political, economic, social, and legal issues, as well as implications for our international relationships. Yet it is the religious and moral principles related to migration about which I write today.

I am greatly concerned about the apparent disconnect between the Church’s rich social teaching, and the assertions advanced in the immigration debate by the opponents of comprehensive reform, including many Catholics. Scripture reminds us that we are created in God’s image, a people journeying through this earthly life to our ultimate and eternal home with the Father.

In the Old Testament, we hear God’s call to Israel to care for the alien, “for you were once aliens yourselves in the land of Egypt” (Deut. 10:19). The Holy Family was forced to flee to Egypt to escape the terror of Herod (Mt. 2:13-15). Jesus challenged his followers to see him in all those marginalized by society; “I was a stranger and you welcomed me” (Mt. 25:35). In more modern times, the Church has continued to speak on behalf of the human dignity of all, including those undocumented immigrants who come to our country seeking a better life for themselves and their families.

While I recognize that there are a range of political and economic positions relating to this issue, the Church’s social teaching on welcoming the stranger is clear. Pope Benedict XVI, in his most recent encyclical entitled, *Caritas in Veritate* (Charity in Truth), affirms the significant contribution of migrants to the economic development of both the host country and their countries of origin. “Obviously, these laborers cannot be considered as a commodity or a mere workforce. They must not, therefore, be treated like any other factor of production. Every migrant is a human person who, as such, possesses fundamental, inalienable rights that must be respected by everyone and in every circumstance.” [No. 62] (Excerpts from the Bishop’s letter to parishes, Jan. 2010)



Save the Dates for June 18th, 19th and 20th

WORLD REFUGEE DAY

Voices Worth Hearing. Art Worth Sharing.
Building Hope In The City. Wall Eye Gallery, Saigon Plaza, West Side Ecumenical Ministry. Check out our web site for more details.

www.clevelandcatholiccharities.org/mrs



Guest Speakers

If you would like to know more about our services, we would be pleased to arrange a presentation to your organization or group at a mutually agreed upon time and location. Please call Anne Mengerink 216-939-3735 or e-mail her at aemengerink@clevelandcatholiccharities.org to learn more. Thanks!

Migration and Refugee Services, Catholic Charities Health and Human Services

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You can also reach us at our General Information number of 216-281-7005!