



RefugeeNet

An Episcopal Outreach in San Diego



AUTUMN 2015

A PUBLICATION OF THE EPISCOPAL REFUGEE NETWORK OF SAN DIEGO

Teen Volunteers & Youth Empowerment

CONGRATULATIONS!

TEN OF OUR STUDENTS GRADUATED FROM CRAWFORD HIGH SCHOOL — TWO WITH HONORS.



Ruby and Charlie Lynn, long time volunteers

SHEE SHEE AND HER FAMILY ARRIVED IN San Diego in 2012 from a Thai UN Refugee Camp. Now a Price Scholar at City College, she hopes to become a nurse. She interned at UCSD Hospital this summer, and now is doing her community service project at MidCity Pediatric Clinic. Her Price Scholarship will provide financial and academic assistance for two years.

Teen Volunteers

We partnered with the Bishop's School to provide the third one-week Summer Cultural Exchange Program, and Bishop's students continue to tutor refugee kids weekly. Bless their parent's for driving them to City Heights and providing snacks for everyone!

Charlie and Ruby Lynn have volunteered for many years, Ruby Lynn told us, "I began because I was interested in helping kids with their schoolwork. I liked to have conversations with them where they can practice their English. I like that I can have an impact. I have known the students so long and I care about them. Over time, it became all about

the relationships. It's really exciting too when you know you are helping them, when you can see they get it." Ruby is a senior at the Grauer School and her brother Charlie is now a freshman at Haverford College in Pennsylvania.

Summer Fun

Camp Stevens and their donors sponsored 65 refugee kids to a week at Camp. When this program began, parents were reluctant to send their kids. "Camp" meant a UN Refugee Camp to them. Now, kids can hardly wait to sign up. Their younger brothers and sisters are waiting eagerly to turn 11, so we partnered with the City Heights Swim Center to provide swim lessons on Wednesday for six weeks for 8 to 10 year-old children.

Rayler is a citizen! Rayler and his family are Karen, who arrived here from a Refugee Camp in Thailand when he was in the 9th grade. His family, Crawford High teachers, and some of our tutors attended the ceremony on Flag Day at the Cabrillo Monument with the proud 19 year-old. We all congratulate him.

How Do THE REFUGEES COME TO US?

“ A refugee is someone who has fled from his or her home country and cannot return because he or she has a well-founded fear of persecution based on religion, race, nationality, political opinion or membership in a particular social group. The first step for most refugees is to register with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in the country to which they have fled. UNHCR has the mandate to provide international protection to refugees. UNHCR determines if an individual qualifies as a refugee and, if so, works toward the best possible durable solution for each refugee: safe return to the home country, local integration, or third-country resettlement.”

U.S. Department of State state.gov/j/pr/ml/ral

THE VAST MAJORITY OF THESE REFUGEES will receive support in the country to which they fled until they can voluntarily and safely return to their home country. A small number of refugees will be allowed to become citizens in the country to which they fled, and an even smaller number — primarily those who are at the highest risk — will be resettled in a third country. While UNHCR reports that less than one percent of all refugees are eventually resettled in third countries, the U.S. welcomes over half of these refugees, more than all other resettlement countries combined.



Applicants are thoroughly examined by the UN and then by the State Department, Homeland Security and other agencies, and a U.S.-based Resettlement Agency must provide a “Sponsorship Assurance” for each individual. It’s a long and complicated process, usually taking 18 to 24 months from the time of a UN referral. Congress mandated the program, but success requires assistance from public and private organizations and thousands of individuals to welcome and assist refugees from around the world.

How Do REFUGEES COME TO SAN DIEGO? WHAT DOES REFUGEE NET DO?

Nine Resettlement Agencies are contracted to resettle refugees in about 190 communities in the U.S.

REFUGEES ARE MATCHED TO A COMMUNITY whose resources are best able to serve them, or with a relative. They are taken to an apartment with basic furnishings, some food and clothing. They are helped with applications for a Social Security card, school enrollment for children, and enrollment in English classes, and are encouraged to find work. This reception program assistance ends after three months. After one year refugees must apply for permanent residence and after five years they are eligible to apply for U.S. citizenship.

After refugees are cut-off from the reception program, RefugeeNet helps them find appropriate resources for assistance. Four of our staff are refugees who speak many languages (as well as English), live in refugee



communities, and understand their unique problems. Clients seek our help through the staff, or other members in their community.

We provide translation/interpretation services at medical appointments, job interviews, public agencies, schools, etc. We assist in filling out applications and explaining the bills and notices they receive in the mail. We distribute food on Tuesday and Thursday in North Park, and directly to apartments, and help with food delivery in El Cajon on Mondays. We're there to assist in any way we can.

We have a Youth Enrichment program after school on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. This program serves refugee children of all ages, providing tutoring with homework and language skills. The opportunity to converse with native English speakers may provide the greatest benefit to them. Adult and high school volunteers are the driving force of this program. Our summer program offers special lessons in math and science, field trips, swimming lessons and a week at Camp Stevens for many, along with continued conversation in English.

SAVE  the DATE

FOR THE NEXT
AMAZING JOURNEY GALA

SATURDAY, MAY 7, 2016

We are located at:
4265 Fairmount Avenue, Suite 130
San Diego, CA 92105

Please visit our website to see what we do as a charitable organization:
refugee-net.org

Also, "Like" us on Facebook:
facebook.com/ERNSanDiego

A Message from the President

“It’s complicated to explain, because it’s complicated,” is a phrase Yogi Berra might have used. Because of the current refugee crisis, we wanted to use this newsletter to answer some of your questions.

We’re a nation of immigrants. I emigrated from Jamaica to attend graduate school at UCLA. Most of you remember stories from grandparents or great grandparents about coming to America, and some of those stories may have been about persecution and suffering. We are a nation who reach out to the persecuted, suffering and newcomers. You can help refugees living in San Diego now by making a donation to help pay our refugee staff to do their casework, feed a hungry family, clothe a child for school or bring blankets for winter. Volunteer to help collect or distribute food, teach a child her ABC’s, or help a teenager with math. It’s not just our work – it’s everyone’s contributions that make a difference!

Thank you, Joyce Justus

I Want to Support RefugeeNet

I am enclosing \$ _____ for this needful cause.

Name _____ Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

E-mail _____

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

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

UNHCR facts

- The number of refugees of concern to UNHCR stood at 13 million in mid-2014, up from a year earlier.
- A further 5.1 million registered refugees are looked after in some 60 camps in the Middle East by United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), which was set up in 1949 to care for displaced Palestinians.
- Refugees remain in exile for an average of 17 years.
- The refugees of concern to UNHCR are spread around the world, with half in Asia and some 28 percent in Africa.
- More than half of all refugees of concern to UNHCR live in urban areas.

Refugee Council USA

- Since 1975, the U.S. has resettled over 3 million refugees, with annual admissions figures ranging from a high of 207,000 in 1980 to a low of 27,110 in 2002.