

2011 World Refugee Day June 20, 2011



Driven from their homes by armed conflict and persecution, refugees flee in search of safety. Many take shelter in camps and remain there. Some will be able to return to their countries after conditions improve. A few will be able to integrate into their host country or resettle to a third country, such as the United States.

Finding a sense of home in a new country is a long-term process. Refugees work hard to find housing, learn English, find

employment – and also become a participant in their new community. This process of integration includes adaptation between both refugees and host communities.

The New American Services program of Lutheran Social Services of North Dakota works with the United States government to help refugees establish a home in North Dakota after they are approved for admittance into this country.

North Dakota accepts about 400 refugees annually. The goal of our work is to help refugees achieve economic self-sufficiency as soon as possible.

Lutheran Social Services of ND has been resettling refugees since 1946, beginning with Eastern Europeans displaced after World War II. Since then, through the resettlement of Indo-Chinese in the 1970s to the present resettlement of refugees from the continents of Africa and Asia, the New American program has provided healing, help and hope to the world's most valuable people.

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Who is a Refugee?

A refugee is a person who, "owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country."

Defined at the 1951 United Nations Convention on Refugees

Refugee Facts

- 13.6 million: Number of refugees & asylum seekers worldwide
- 8.2 million: Refugees who have spent 10+ years in camps
- 26 million: People forcibly displaced within their own countries
- 74,654: Refugees resettled to the U.S. in fiscal year 2009

Sources: Church World Service, Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants

For More Information Contact:

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Lutheran Social Services of North Dakota links refugee families with church congregations, mentors and volunteers who help New Americans make the transition into the community and a new country.

- Speaks to organizations who wish to learn about the international, national and local refugee programs. Arranges for representation of speakers from various refugee groups.
- Provides cultural information about New Americans in our area.
- Arranges Service Learning and other small group volunteer projects for area schools, congregations and service clubs.
- Arranges for in-kind and financial donations to benefit refugee families.

New American Services is an affiliate of Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services (LIRS) and Episcopal Migration Ministry (EMM).



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