

refugeeONE

*Make a world of difference
in the life of a refugee family.*



CO-SPONSORS & MENTOR TEAMS 2017

RefugeeOne
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refugeeone.org



Dear friends,

Refugees have lost nearly everything, save their courage, dignity and hope. RefugeeOne and those who partner with us do more than help refugees survive – we help them live fulfilling and flourishing lives.

As a refugee myself, I personally know the difference that caring individuals make to someone new to the U.S. I also know the extraordinary relationships that form when people like you welcome refugees into their lives.

Today, during the worst refugee crisis of our time, I thank you for being part of a welcoming community. As a Co-Sponsor or Mentor Team, you can make a world of difference in the life of a refugee family.

Melineh Kano, Executive Director

How Can Our Group Help?

Moving far away, learning a new language, and adjusting to a different culture are very difficult things to do alone. Finances are also a cause of stress.

RefugeeOne and our Co-Sponsors and Mentor Teams alleviate those struggles by assisting with rent and basic needs and providing friendship to a family for 6 months. Your financial support and friendship will change their lives – and yours.

There are two ways your group (congregation, business, school, neighborhood or alumni association, family, etc.) can help a refugee family.

- **Co-Sponsors:** Be the first friendly face the refugee family sees when they land at O'Hare. Before they arrive, you may set-up their apartment, stock their pantry, and make a welcoming meal. Others in your group will visit them weekly for their first six months to help them practice English and discover the great opportunities Chicago has to offer. You will raise \$6,000 to \$8,000 to help with their expenses. As a co-sponsor, you'll have the opportunity to be involved with a refugee family from the very beginning and maximize the possibility of forming a long-term and meaningful relationship.
- **Mentor Teams:** Your group will be matched with a refugee family after they've been here 1 – 4 months. You will visit them weekly for six months and help them integrate into American society by practicing English, exploring Chicago, and sharing about our different cultures. You will raise \$4,000 to help with their expenses.

About RefugeeOne

Since 1982, RefugeeOne has helped more than 16,000 refugees build new lives in Chicago after they fled war, terror, and persecution. Alongside volunteers like you, we are there to greet refugees at the airport, support children in school, assist with integration into American culture, help adults learn English and employable skills, and connect them to their first jobs. Our goal is to help refugees become self-reliant in as few as 6-9 months.



What will we do?

We recommend you start by forming a resettlement team of several people who are especially interested in assisting refugees. Choose one person to be the contact with RefugeeOne.

| | | Co-Sponsors Choose at least 3, but as many as you want. | Mentor Teams Choose 3 to 5. |
|----|---|--|---|
| #1 | <p>Financial Assistance: On average, it takes \$8,500 to help a refugee family of 5 to become independent. RefugeeOne receives some government funds to assist but there's always a gap.</p> <p>Set a fundraising goal for your group – and be prepared to surpass it! Our partners regularly remark about the amazing generosity they experience when they simply ask for support.</p> <p>RefugeeOne will share what other groups have done to raise funds, equip you with peer-to-peer fundraising tips, and set you up with a custom fundraising webpage.</p> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Required \$6,000 to \$8,000 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Required \$4,000 |
| #2 | <p>Home Sweet Home: Help set up an apartment for an arriving refugee individual or family. RefugeeOne staff secures apartments for every refugee but your group can assist by collecting the items needed to furnish it (see page 6). When it's time to set-up the apartment, organize volunteers and a small moving truck or cargo van.</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| #3 | <p>Airport Arrival: Organize a small group of people to join RefugeeOne staff in welcoming the refugees at the airport and transporting them to their new home. The arrival of the family can be a profoundly moving experience for your group, as well as the refugees. We encourage you to make a welcome sign and bring balloons or flowers.</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| #4 | <p>Pantry Provisions: Stock the individual or family's home with 2-3 weeks' worth of food. We will provide a grocery list based on where your refugee family is coming from.</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| #5 | <p>Welcome Meal: Prepare a culturally appropriate meal, ready for the family to enjoy immediately upon arrival at their new home. We'll have menu suggestions for you.</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| #6 | <p>Mentor: Visit the family once a week during their first six months. We highly recommend "job sharing" – meaning that 3-4 households or individuals alternate visits.</p> <p>Practice conversational English and reinforce what they learn in class at RefugeeOne. Show them the nearest grocery and drug stores, introduce them to public transportation, ensure they have the basics they need, and plan outings to discover Chicago.</p> <p>Keep each other and RefugeeOne informed about the progress and challenges you're observing. RefugeeOne will set you up with a Google doc or another tool so your team can communicate easily.</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Required |
| #7 | <p>Social Visits: If a weekly mentorship is not possible, you can choose to do similar activities as mentoring, but on an occasional basis for six months.</p> <p>[Note: If your group chooses both #6 and #7, please limit your total visits to twice per week to respect the family's independence and other priorities.]</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| #8 | <p>Tutor Children: Provide a one-on-one tutor to visit each child weekly. Although many children arrive in Chicago with little or no education, school policy requires that they be placed in grades based on their age. Help them practice English, catch up with their classmates, complete their homework, and have fun.</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| #9 | <p>Job Development: RefugeeOne's employment team will help each employable adult learn English, apply for jobs, and learn to communicate with employers. You can help the family prepare for employment by practicing interview skills. You can also help by connecting us to employers that might be open to hiring authorized, hard-working refugees.</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Seem like a lot to bite off?

Consider partnering with neighboring congregations, community groups, businesses, and individuals. We can connect you with groups that have collaborated well to help a refugee family.

What help is available to us?

For each refugee we serve, RefugeeOne provides case managers, daily English classes, job readiness training and job search assistance, mental health care, medical case management, and special programs for women, youth, and seniors.

For our Co-Sponsors, RefugeeOne will:

- #1 Provide a dedicated one-on-one co-sponsorship staff person to assist your group throughout your co-sponsorship.
- #2 Coordinate a mentor training at a convenient time and location for your group. At this training, you'll learn about the family your team is co-sponsoring, get basic training in intercultural communication, review the responsibilities of RefugeeOne's case manager and other staff as well as the expectations for you as mentors, and receive recommendations for mentoring activities.
- #3 Notify you of information regarding overseas processing of the refugees, anticipated arrival dates, flight arrival information, and any changes along the way.
- #4 Act as a liaison with the landlord to get you access to the family's apartment before they arrive.
- #5 Welcome the family with you at the airport, alongside bilingual RefugeeOne staff who speak the family's language.
- #6 Provide background checks on the individuals who will mentor and/or tutor the family each week.
- #7 Provide monthly emails with resources for teaching English, free activities to do together, and other tools that will help you support a refugee family.
- #8 Answer your questions, provide ongoing support, and share updates from the family's case manager, English teacher, youth program staff, and others working with the family.
- #9 Meet with your team at RefugeeOne 2-3 months into your mentorship to introduce you to staff working with your family and discuss the challenges and progress you are observing.
- #10 Hold a debrief meeting to reflect on the experience, solicit your input, share a summary of monies RefugeeOne expended to support the family you mentored, and discuss other opportunities for you to continue helping refugees.
- #11 Use your input to strengthen the training and program for future Co-Sponsors.



For our Mentor Teams, RefugeeOne will:

- #1 Offer multi-team mentor trainings. At this training, you'll learn about the family your team has been matched with, get basic training in intercultural communication, review the responsibilities of RefugeeOne's case manager and other staff as well as the expectations for you as mentors, and receive recommendations for mentoring activities. Check out www.refugeeone.org for the next quarterly training.
- #2 Provide background checks on the individuals who will mentor and/or tutor the family each week.
- #3 Introduce several members of your team to the family at their home, bringing an interpreter to assist with the initial introduction and confirm your visiting schedule.
- #4 Answer your questions and share updates from the family's case manager, English teacher, youth program staff, and others working with the family.
- #5 Provide monthly emails with resources for teaching English, free activities to do together, and other tools that will help you support a refugee family.
- #6 Meet with your team at RefugeeOne 2-3 months into your mentorship to introduce you to some staff working with your family and discuss the challenges and progress you and they are observing.
- #7 Hold a debrief meeting to reflect on the experience, solicit your input, share a summary of monies RefugeeOne expended to support the family you mentored, and discuss other opportunities for you to continue helping refugees.
- #8 Use your input to strengthen the training and program for future mentor teams.



Frequently Asked Questions

What is the difference between refugees and immigrants?

Refugees are people who have fled their countries to escape war or persecution. Many have witnessed or been victims of horrible atrocities. Refugees receive their official status from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and are selected for resettlement by the U.S. Departments of State and Homeland Security after extensive background checks and a 4- to 25-year wait. While most immigrants may safely return to their home countries, the fear of persecution prevents refugees from any attempt to return.

Where do refugees come from?

In 2017, RefugeeOne expects to resettle more than 900 refugees. Most will hail from Burma, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Syria, in addition to as many as 15 other countries.

Where will the refugees live?

In most cases, housing is located near RefugeeOne's Chicago office to allow refugees easy access to our programs and services. This includes Chicago's Rogers Park, West Ridge, Albany Park, and other neighborhoods with direct public transit to our offices.

When do refugees start working?

When refugees arrive, they are legally able to work as Permanent Legal Residents. Most begin working within 3-4 months of arrival after progressing through English classes at RefugeeOne.

Where do refugees work?

Generally, refugees with low English skills work in entry-level positions. RefugeeOne partners with more than 100 businesses, including hotels, factories, retail stores, and maintenance companies, to refer qualified, screened applicants. Some of our top employers include Tyson Foods, Five Star Laundry, Hilton Hotels, and Eli's Cheesecake. If you know of an employer that might be open to hire authorized, hard-working refugees, let us know!

How long does our commitment last?

We ask you to visit the family for six months, ideally each week. You can be helpful right from the start, but know that the family's first few weeks are the busiest as they attend to appointments, test for English training, and more. Planning your visits for evenings and weekends will generally work best for them. After 6 months, you'll have helped the family build basic life skills. Many Co-Sponsors and Mentor Teams remain friends after 6 months, but the frequency and your relationship naturally change.

How are our group's financial contributions used?

Your contributions are used for rent, utilities, household items, mattresses, work uniforms, medications, and/or food as the family becomes self-reliant.



Home Sweet Home

Co-Sponsors are invited to set-up a home for their refugee family. RefugeeOne will find the apartment but your group can assist by gathering the items below and setting everything up before the family arrives.

The quantity of items marked with an asterisk (*) will vary, based on the number of people in a family.
Items in ***Italics*** must be new. All others can be gently used.
Please maintain quality control to support the dignity of our clients.

Kitchen Items

- Dishes*
- Drinking glasses*
- Coffee mugs and saucers*
- Silverware*
- Steak knives*
- Silverware divider
- Set of mixing bowls
- Set of pots and pans
- Set of baking pans
- Serving bowls and dishes
- Set of cooking utensils, including measuring cups and spoons
- Chef's knife and paring knife
- Tea kettle for stovetop
- Can/bottle opener
- 4 small plastic food storage containers
- 4 large plastic food storage containers
- Dish drying-rack with tray
- Broom with dust pan
- Mop and bucket
- Matches or lighter
- Cutting board***
- Colander***
- Potholders***
- Kitchen towels (two sets)***
- Dishwashing soap***
- Paper towels (minimum 2 rolls)***
- Large kitchen garbage can (with lid)***
- Large garbage bags***
- All-purpose spray with bleach***
- Scouring cleanser***
- Scouring pads and sponges***

Bedroom Items

- 40 hangers
- Alarm clock
- Laundry soap
- Laundry basket
- Blankets****
- Comforters****
- Baby blanket (if necessary)****
- Sheet sets including pillow cases****
- Pillows****

Furniture

- Bed frames (RefugeeOne will provide new mattresses)
- Chest of drawers for clothing
- Kitchen/dining table and chairs
- Sofa
- Armchairs
- Coffee tables
- Lamps

Bathroom Items

- Waste basket
- Plunger
- Toilet brush
- Towel sets (bath/hand/washcloth)****
- Several bars of hand/body soap****
- Shampoo****
- Deodorant****
- Toothbrushes, toothpaste, and dental floss****
- Disposable razors****
- Shaving cream/lotion****
- Feminine supplies (pads, not tampons)****
- Toilet paper and facial tissue****
- Disposable diapers (if necessary)****
- Shower curtain w/hooks***
- First aid kit and oral thermometer***
- All-purpose spray cleaner w/bleach***
- Scouring cleanser, pads, sponges***

Miscellaneous Items

- Iron and ironing board
- Pads of paper/notebooks/pens/pencils
- Postage stamps
- CTA bus passes
- Gift cards (Walgreens, CVS, Jewel, Target, Walmart)
- Bilingual dictionary
- Toys, children's books, stuffed animals
- Window fans
- Vacuum cleaner or carpet sweeper
- T.V. with digital converter box
- Radio/CD player
- Calendars (wall and personal calendars)***
- Fire Extinguisher***
- Portable shopping cart***
- 40- and 60-watt light bulbs***
- AA, AAA & 9-volt batteries***

Are there other ways we can help?

Refugee assistance projects of a smaller scale are also extremely important and needed throughout the year. Below are alternative ways you can make a real difference.

- #1 **Organize a drive** to collect pots and pans, blankets, school supplies, cleaning products, and other items refugees will need. Check out the 2017 Calendar of Donations on our website to know what we currently need.
- #2 **Volunteer** in our after-school program, at our office, in English classes, or alongside our Medical Case Manager. Visit refugeeone.org to see current volunteer opportunities.
- #3 **Hire a refugee.** Give a refugee a chance to prove themselves at their first American job. We partner with local employers to refer and support qualified candidates.
- #4 **Donate.**
 - \$2,500 buys new beds and furnishings for a family of four
 - \$950 covers one month's rent for a one-bedroom apartment
 - \$500 purchases household items and toiletries for a family of four
 - \$100 provides a 1-month CTA pass for a refugee to travel to work
- #5 **Advocate** for policies that welcome refugees and treat them with dignity. Check out our website for information about campaigns you can assist with.



refugee**ONE**

For more information about becoming a Co-Sponsor, contact:

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For more information about forming a Mentor Team, contact:

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