



HEARTS & HOMES FOR REFUGEES

Welcome Convene Educate Advocate

Hearts & Homes for Refugees is a nonprofit grassroots humanitarian organization that works with U.S. State Department-designated agencies to welcome, assist and advocate for refugees. We are building welcoming communities of partners and volunteers —families, neighbors, community organizations, faith and civic groups—committed to the time-honored tradition of welcoming refugees. Hearts & Homes educates, inspires and equips people of goodwill to create safe and inclusive communities for our new neighbors.

OUR VISION

We envision welcoming communities that offer tolerance, respect and refuge for those who have been forced to flee their homes due to violence and persecution.

OUR GOALS

- Resettle refugees in our communities through [Community Sponsorship](#).
- Facilitate more welcoming by sharing our collective knowledge, best practices, resources.
- Create opportunities for volunteers to engage in refugee support activities.
- Raise awareness about the plight of refugees.
- Advocate for the continued acceptance and protection of those fleeing violence and persecution.
- Expand the network with new partners and supporters.
- Promote this scalable model, equipping others to replicate community building and adopt the refugee resettlement community sponsorship model.

HOW WE ACCOMPLISH OUR MISSION

Practice & Promote Refugee Resettlement through [Community Sponsorship](#)

Volunteers from Hearts & Homes for Refugees resettled the first community-sponsored refugee family in Westchester County in 2016. Since then, twelve more community sponsors have welcomed nearly 100 refugees. Hearts & Homes continues to mentor and coordinate volunteer groups or individuals, to seed more community sponsors to partner with resettlement agencies in resettling refugees. The time and resources offered by community sponsors to arriving refugees offers better chances for successful integration and independence.

Our [Helping Hands](#) program is a short-term version of this support, also known as “community sponsorship-lite” and matches volunteer teams with refugees who are beyond the first 12 months of resettlement and to those who have been granted asylum.

Establish and Lead a Dynamic Network for Collaboration and Growth: Hearts & Homes for Refugees created this network known as [The Westchester Refugee Initiative](#) in 2018, to convene people of goodwill, educate, mobilize support and advocate for refugees here in Westchester County, NY because we believe our voices are louder and actions stronger when we work together to support refugees in their integration and goals as independent new Americans. *Bringing together and growing a diverse coalition makes us a stronger force for welcoming refugees.*
Please [click here](#) for an INFOGRAPHIC of WRI network Members & Partners.

Pandemic Response Refugees are often among the most vulnerable populations, experiencing the double trauma of displacement and pandemic, many with little to no safety network or family support systems. Hearts & Homes for Refugees responded by sharing reliable information about the virus, unemployment benefits, the federal stimulus and more; supporting mask-making projects with refugee sewists; connecting refugees online to Zoom meet-ups and English tutoring; collaborating with partners to provide food boxes for families and bags of books and games for kids; and funding crisis grants and gift cards for families in need. For more details on how we have been assisting the most vulnerable among us during the pandemic, see our [Covid-19 Relief Impact Report](#).

Direct Assistance As part of our holistic approach to resettling and welcoming our new neighbors, we offer complimentary services and assistance, often in collaboration with our many partners. This includes **Donation Drives** (for winter coats and boots, toiletries, school supplies) to serve the needs of refugees and asylees locally. Our **Tutors** support adults learning English and children who need help with their schoolwork. We help connect children to summer and afterschool activities. Mentors on the **Employment** Committee assist refugees with resume writing, interview prep and job networking. We also collaborate with organizations and individuals across the county to provide clothing, furniture and household goods on an as-needed basis.

[Getting Refugee Children Ready for School](#) [2020 Winter Boot and Coat Drive](#), Personal Procuts Drive

Education Our education efforts foster cross-cultural understanding and welcoming attitudes. We regularly present at local high schools and colleges, placing our efforts within the global context for refugees, and emphasizing how we can take local action. Our Refugees in Literature project is an educator-selected collection of titles by and about refugees for grades K-12, accompanied by classroom guides. Bringing Refugees in Literature into schools and libraries offers opportunities for conversation and critical thinking to help children discover truths about refugees and their journeys.

Community Outreach Staying connected and communicating across the network is a powerful way to amplify, educate and spread the messages of welcoming. Creating and jointly participating in [Activities and Events](#) – speaking engagements, community activities – are ways to inspire, educate and motivate support for refugees. We regularly invite refugees, SIVs and asylees themselves to share their experience. Our programs foster cross-cultural understanding and welcoming attitudes. Talking about our work and sharing opportunities to get involved in welcoming inspires others and often translates into commitments from volunteers, donors and community partners. **Advocacy** is a powerful tool in shaping policies that strengthen the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program. We offer

tools, alerts and action steps via email and social media. Our WRI [Advocacy Plan & Toolkit](#) promotes grassroots participation in advocating for local and national policies that support refugees. From petitions to postcard writing, the Toolkit offers guidelines and instructions on advocating for refugee resettlement in the U.S. and dignified, just immigration policy.

Ambassadors What better way to spread the word about welcoming than through the voices of those who have been resettling, advocating and supporting the welcoming movement?

Those who have been strong advocates of refugee resettlement and the welcoming movement are invited to become Ambassadors to help spread the word about refugees and resettlement and WRI. Listen here to Hearts & Homes' first refugee/SIV Ambassador, Reshad Ahmadi, on the [Immigrantly](#) podcast.

Westchester County - A model for others

Our vision for Westchester County serves as an example and can inspire and guide others to become welcoming communities. Welcoming the stranger seeking refuge is a core value embraced by many Americans. Hearts & Homes for Refugees has been an active proponent of tapping into this and expanding community grassroots support of refugees across the country. The public-private partnership model of community sponsorship is growing in popularity throughout the country and, if shared and adopted, could result in a paradigm shift in the way we welcome and support refugees. We actively engage in networking outside Westchester County to inspire and share our work in the belief that this is how we can welcome more refugees with stronger than ever outcomes as new Americans.

We are proud to be founding members of the [Hello Neighbor Network](#), a national coalition of grassroots organizations working in post-refugee resettlement in the U.S. who come together to grow and inspire change. Click here to learn more about the [HNN](#).

Will you join Hearts & Homes for Refugees?

[WAYS TO GET INVOLVED](#)

[UPCOMING EVENTS](#)

[2019 Impact Report](#)

[Newsletters](#) Can you support our efforts to help our Westchester County new neighbors and to build our capacity to inspire, educate and equip others?

To participate, email: helping@heartsandhomesforrefugees.org.

Click to [DONATE](#)

Hearts & Homes for Refugees is a nonpartisan organization that welcomes concerned individuals from every faith and civic background.

www.HeartsandHomesforRefugees.org

Follow us:  



Please [click here](#) to see the Network



Network Members, Friends, Partners & Supporters

August 2020

[Hearts & Homes for Refugees](#) (coordinator and founder)

[Catholic Charities of New York](#)

[HIAS New York](#)

[American Muslim Women's Association](#)

[Christ Church, Pelham](#)

[Community Church of the Pelhams -- CCOP](#)

[Community Unitarian Universalist Congregation at White Plains --CUUC](#)

[Ethical Culture Society of Westchester](#)

[First Unitarian Society of Westchester -- FUSW](#)

[Fourth Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Westchester](#), Mohegan Lake --4UUCW

[Greenville Community Church](#), Scarsdale

Inter-Faith Council of New Americans Westchester (ICNAW)

Beth El Synagogue (New Rochelle), Community Unitarian Universalist Congregation at White Plains, Ethical Cultural Society of Westchester, New Rochelle United Methodist Church, Temple Israel of New Rochelle, Temple Israel Center of White Plains

[Neighbors for Refugees](#), Larchmont/Mamaroneck -- NFR

PART One (Pleasantville Armonk Resettlement Team)

Congregation B'nai Yisrael, Pleasantville Community Synagogue

Rivertowns for Refugees

Irvington Presbyterian Church, Temple Beth Shalom, Social Action for 10591, Irvington High School, Church of St. Barnabas Irvington, Grace Episcopal Hastings, Christ Episcopal Church, Zion Episcopal Dobbs Ferry, Irvington Activists, Temple Beth Abraham, Greenburgh Hebrew Center, Sacred Heart, Reformed Church of Tarrytown, All Saints Episcopal Church Briarcliff, South Presbyterian Church, St. Matthew & Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Church of the Immaculate Conception, Christ Episcopal Church & San Marcos

[Sisters of the Divine Compassion \(RDC\)](#)

[St. John's Lutheran Church](#), Mamaroneck

[Students for Refugees](#) *Founded by Scarsdale High School, with branches in the following Westchester High Schools: Mamaroneck, Pelham, White Plains.*

[Woodlands-Bet Am Shalom](#), White Plains

Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. / Zeta Nu Omega chapter -- AKA

[Capuchin Franciscans](#)

[Community Synagogue of Rye](#)

[Congregation Emanu-El of Westchester](#), Rye
[Congregation Kol Ami](#), White Plains
Greater NYC Families for Syria
[Huguenot Memorial Church of the Pelhams](#)
Interfaith Committee for Refugee Resettlement - ICRR, Rye
Christ's Church, Rye Presbyterian and Rye Community Synagogue
[JCC Harrison](#)
[Manhattanville College](#), Purchase
[Maryknoll Society](#)
[Multifaith Alliance for Syrian Refugees - MFA](#)
[Muslim Peace Fellowship](#)
Northern Westchester Interfaith Coalition for Refugee Resettlement - NWICRR
Northwest Yonkers Neighbors for Refugees
[Sarah Lawrence College](#), Bronxville
Scarsdale Synagogue
[Venezuelans and Immigrants Aid \(VIA\)](#)
[Veterans for American Ideals](#)
Westchester Coalition Against Islamophobia
[Westchester Reform Temple](#), Scarsdale
White Plains-Scarsdale Refugee Resettlement Group

[4 Corners Pizzeria](#)
[Immigrantly](#)
[Ball Chain Manufacturing](#)
[Junior League of Pelham](#)
[Pelham Picture House](#)
[Pineapple Fund](#)
[Real New York Tours](#)
[United Way of Westchester and Putnam](#)
[Welcoming America](#)
[West End Collegiate Church](#)

Beyond Westchester

Amnesty International [Longer Table](#)
Church World Service [#GreaterAs1](#)
[Emma's Torch](#)
[Episcopal Migration Ministries](#)
[Fellowship of Reconciliation](#)
[Hello Neighbor](#)
[IRIS](#)
[Keeping Our Promise](#)
[Princeton University, Religion and Resettlement Project](#)
[RCUSA](#)
UNHCR [#WithRefugees](#)
[Welcoming America](#)

