

Sierra Vista Community Church 2022 Refugee Bicycles for Work Mission Project

Project Background:

Sierra Vista Community Church located at 890 Morse Avenue in the Arden Arcade Area of Sacramento County is a federated Christian congregation made up of the existing Sierra Arden United Church of Christ, Congregational Church and the progressive wing of the University Presbyterian Church, PC(USA).

Our two congregations formally federated three years ago and selected Presbyterian Pastor Bob Azzarito to lead our new Sierra Vista Community Church congregation. At the time we federated, both churches had their well-established mission projects, and the decision was made to continue to support all of those mission projects.

Sierra Arden UCC (now Sierra Vista Community Church) had been a community partner of the International Rescue Committee since 2016, focusing on helping newly resettled refugees in the Sacramento Area to have a successful transition to their new lives in America.

In 2018, the local I.R.C. office asked our congregation to focus on providing both new and gently used bicycles to the breadwinners in our new Afghan refugee neighbor's families, along with safety gear like helmets, locking cables, front, and rear lights, etc. The purpose of these bicycles was to provide a no cost means of transportation to and from work for those breadwinners who could not afford an automobile or who did not have a driver's license. These bicycles coupled with discount bus passes, which allowed them to mount their bicycles to the front of the bus, so they could take work located beyond their local neighborhoods. These bicycles are in great demand by our refugee neighbors and our church's congregation is the only IRC community partner who provides bicycles to our refugee neighbors.

In 2021, we delivered 8 gently used and 22 brand new adult bicycles to the I.R.C. for distribution to our refugee neighbors at a total cost of close to \$6,000.

In 2022, our regional I.R.C. office has been tasked with resettling 1,200 new Afghan Families into our area and thousands more across Central California. The need for housing, furniture and bicycles will be even greater. These refugee families both need and want to become self-supporting as soon as possible. If your congregation would like to explore becoming a provider of bicycles or gently used furniture to your new refugee neighbors, those gifts will go a long way towards allowing these refugees to feel secure in their new homes and allow the family breadwinners to find work as soon as possible.

To find out how you can get involved with this vital mission outreach project, contact: Hector Guzman at The International Rescue Committee: (916) 496-5619 or email: Hector.Guzman@rescue.org.

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