



Rev. Monica Styron
Chair, Social Justice Committee
Presbytery of Cayuga/Syracuse

Via e-mail

April 10, 2024

Dear Rev. Styron:

Greetings on this spring day! I hope this finds you well.

The past support for rental assistance support for refugee families, which has come from individuals, local churches, and from the Presbytery, has been life changing for many of our refugee families, and we cannot thank you enough nor sing the praises of your generosity loudly enough! In a recent meeting with Assemblywoman Pam Hunter, whose father and mother raised her to be a Presbyterian, we told her of your past gifts to us, and she said it made her all the prouder to be a Presbyterian.

Thank you for your phone call following up on my request of March 13th for support for rental assistance for our refugee clients. As you know, our agency has been asked to support almost double the number of refugees this year, with 1,000 people from Afghanistan, Burma, Congo, Somalia, Ukraine, Syria, and more. People continue to seek the shelter of the United Nation's High Commissioner on Refugees, and to come to the United States to start their lives over after war, terrorism, and environmental devastation. They have been through a great deal to make it here and we feel humbled to be given the task of helping them.

As you know refugees receive a one-time grant of \$1,075 to start their lives here. They can also receive limited-time rental subsidies, food stamps, and medical benefits. These supports are not meant to cover all expenses, and refugees are expected to find work as soon as they are able. We help them do that with employment services every day. Many refugees work very hard to become self-sufficient, as this is the goal. One of the men we resettled from Bhutan just 17 years ago recently bought a building on James Street in Syracuse to house his growing home health care business which now serve 1,400 people across NY state every day. His example is why it is important for our nation to continue to bring refugees here, with their dedication to work and making a better life for their children.

We are seeking your support, as you have done in the past, to assist us in extending the hand of Love. The current situation for low-income rental apartments is dire. We see it on the news every day. Our agency has a small but mighty crew of staff and volunteers who work very hard to

1010 James Street, Syracuse, New York 13203 • phone: 315-449-3552 • fax: 315-449-3103
www.interfaithworkscny.org

secure housing for the families. We work with 110 landlords across the community to make sure the people are adequately housed. We rent the apartments, pay the security deposit, get the utilities set up, and completely furnish the rooms, all with donations.

We are writing to request that the Presbytery once again join us in this work. Would you consider providing a \$30,000 donation to support rental assistance as you have done in the past? This funding would be used for *one-time* support for families who come upon a circumstance beyond their control, where one-month's rent would prevent them from becoming homeless.

Here are a couple of cases that we have recently encountered:

- A father was laid off and is seeking another job. He needs one month's rent until he is employed again.
- The primary breadwinner of the family became ill and needed some bridge funding to get through this period.
- We have helped in a family situation where domestic violence requires an immediate move for the safety of the parent and children, and the victim-spouse needs support with a security deposit.
- A single mother with a child who is ill needs some extra time to address the child's health needs and has to take some time off work to be with the child at the hospital and at home.

These are real situations, and it points to the fact that refugees come with nothing to fall back on when an emergency hits. Because they are resilient, having made it through the crisis in their home country, they will work hard to address the new problem and to get back on track.

Again, we do not see the Presbytery's funds being used for a long-term situation, but rather to help someone through a gap in their income.

If you could see your way to provide this assistance once again, please know that your gifts would be gratefully received and used with care to make every dollar count. We will report the outcomes of the families to you, as well as track the numbers of people your gift impacted so that you can report this to your people.

We ask with all respect, knowing that you work hard to raise and secure these funds yourselves, every day.

With Sincere Thanks for Your Consideration,



Beth A. Broadway
President/CEO