

About *RefAmerica*

Why: The goal of *RefAmerica* is to promote a warm welcome for, and full inclusion of, recently arrived refugees in America. We seek to provide small groups of participant refugees with the tools both to tell their stories and to help forge for themselves, their families and their fellow refugees – like generations of Americans before them – a new American story.

Who: Refugee participants have arrived in the U.S. within the past three years and have come to the U.S. through the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program. They are hosted during their program by American host families, joined in the program by American counterpart participants, and mentored by the program's university interns.

RefAmerica's Summer 2020 team will be comprised of:

- between six and ten recently arrived refugee teens (ages 16-19) drawn from around the U.S. and
- a comparable number of American counterpart participants from Montgomery County, MD, and surrounding areas.

What: *RefAmerica* is a month-long program in leadership, public-speaking training, cross-cultural exchange, team-building, the narrative method, and learning about the United States, its American immigrant stories, and the power of personal story. It is a sister program of New Story Leadership for the Middle East.

RefAmerica encourages program participants to tell their stories to American audiences, to explore their role within a greater American story of immigration and integration, and to make a difference as young leaders, particularly in fostering cross-cultural understanding and helping welcome refugees in their American home communities.

When: The summer 2020 program takes place from June 26 - July 26.

Where: Washington DC; Montgomery County, MD and environs

How: *RefAmerica* relies on volunteers and individual donations. To learn more about *RefAmerica*, apply to the program, host a *RefAmerica* refugee participant, make a donation, or otherwise become involved, please email Liane Dorsey at refamericafoundation@gmail.com.

Donations to *RefAmerica* can be made on the *RefAmerica* fundraiser page at <https://www.charity.gofundme.com/o/en/campaign/refamerica-welcoming-refugees-resettled-in-the-united-states> or by a check made out to New Story Leadership and annotated "for *RefAmerica*." (Thanks to the kind fiscal sponsorship of New Story Leadership, all donations to *RefAmerica* are tax deductible.)

RefAmerica seeks to promote mutual understanding through shared experience and learning.

Our Objectives

1. To provide participant refugees:
 - a. training in leadership and public-speaking
 - b. training in the narrative method and telling their stories
 - c. a chance to visit the nation's capital and through this visit to learn of the history and government of their new home and to experience some of its traditions
 - d. opportunities to share their stories and their new American story with fellow Americans
 - e. an opportunity to forge familial bonds with American host families and American peers
 - f. a chance to learn further what it means to be an American
 - g. a chance to learn more about American immigration and American immigrant stories
 - h. a chance to forge a new story with fellow American and refugee participants and to tell that story
 - i. a chance to make a difference as leaders, particularly in fostering cross-cultural understanding and helping welcome other refugees in their American home communities
2. To provide Americans the opportunity to welcome these refugees and to hear their stories
3. To provide native-born or naturalized American participants:
 - a. training in leadership and public-speaking
 - b. training in the narrative method and telling their stories
 - c. a chance to learn about the refugee experience and refugee resettlement
 - d. a chance to share American traditions with newly arrived refugees and to learn about and/or experience traditions of other cultures
 - e. a chance to deepen and broaden their experience of Washington, DC and understanding of what it means to be an American
 - f. a chance to learn more about American immigration and American immigrant stories
 - g. a chance to forge a new story with fellow American and refugee participants and to tell that story
 - h. a chance to make a difference as leaders, particularly in fostering cross-cultural understanding, advocating for refugees, and helping welcome refugees in America