

## Help Refugees Through the Circle of Welcome

Circle of Welcome connects faith and community groups directly with refugees and other arrivals who have a special status and need help. Volunteers from these groups walk with families, couples, and individuals as friends, supporters, and advocates, and help them become self-sufficient and established in the community more quickly.



### HOME SAFE IN MINNESOTA

Refugees and others who have a special status arrive in the United States legally after being forced to flee violence and persecution. Once they arrive in Minnesota, LSS Refugee Services works to secure safe and affordable housing for them. Part of welcoming refugees to their new home is helping them build connections to their community.

That's where the Circle of Welcome comes in, offering transformative, neighborly support for refugees during the challenges of resettlement. The impact of many different neighbors coming together to walk alongside a newly-arrived neighbor is truly life-changing.

### BY THE NUMBERS

Many groups have been a part of LSS' Circle of Welcome program since its inception and have a decades-long history of welcoming new neighbors. Over the past year, we've worked with over 30 congregations and community groups. Please consider how your community can get involved.

### WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

Groups are matched with a family, couple, or individual by staff at LSS who schedule and facilitate an initial meeting between the volunteer team and the refugee(s). LSS provides support to the Volunteer Team throughout their time commitment, and will conduct trainings, check-ins, and closing meetings. Faith and community groups of different shapes and sizes are welcome!

LSS provides two models of engagement with our Circle of Welcome program. The partnership between the local resettlement agency, volunteers, and the refugees themselves reinforces the Long Welcome as an essential component to the refugee's successful integration.

- **Circle of Welcome Team Program:** The more traditional format, a volunteer team pledges monetary support of \$6,000-8,000 as well as in-person support for 6 months for a family arriving in Minnesota. Activities might include setting up an apartment, helping adults find jobs, practicing English and running errands.
- **Circle of Welcome Mentor Program:** It isn't just families settling in Minnesota! With a varied time commitment and a more flexible monetary commitment, our Mentor Program pairs volunteers with newly arrived refugee individuals or couples. Mentor volunteers perform many of the same tasks and activities as the traditional model.

### WANT MORE INFORMATION?

Please reach out to Lynn Mullin,  
Volunteer Program Coordinator.

[Lynn.Mullin@lssmn.org](mailto:Lynn.Mullin@lssmn.org)

612.470.8806

Thank you for all the ways you help refugees in our community!

# Refugee Services - Help a New Neighbor!

## Volunteer Opportunities

- Moving Volunteer
  - Assist with setting up an apartment for newly arrived refugees, or with picking up and delivering furniture.
- Direct Action Team
  - Join our Facebook Group to assist with one-off donations and events:  
<https://facebook.com/groups/lssmndirectaction/>
  - Or email [Kara.Barkman@lssmn.org](mailto:Kara.Barkman@lssmn.org) to join the email list.
- Donation Assistant
  - Assist with organizing the donations we receive.
- Childcare Assistant
  - Assist with childcare during events for parents who are attending classes and trainings run by LSS.
- 1:1 English Language Coach
  - Assist refugees practice their English language skills, and provide tutoring support outside of ESL classes.
- Advocacy
  - Advocate for immigration policy change through [www.lirs.org/advocate/](http://www.lirs.org/advocate/)
- Circle of Welcome
  - Our most intensive volunteer option – directly provide in-person support to a refugee individual, couple, or family as they begin to settle into life in the U.S. This program is a longer time commitment and comes with a monetary commitment as well.

## Financial Donations:

Organizations like LSS rely on volunteers and philanthropic support to carry out this work. Please consider making a contribution today to help welcome refugees. Visit [www.lssmn.org/get-involved/donate](http://www.lssmn.org/get-involved/donate)

## High Priority Donation Needs:

### Sponsor a Family: Winter Gear

- Winter is fast-approaching, and many of our families do not have coats, hats, gloves, etc. Learn how to sponsor a family and provide essential winter clothing for them!
- We are accepting winter gear all winter long!

### Quilts and Blankets

- Especially Queen/Double and Twin sizes

### Hygiene Kits

- For more information on what to include and how to properly assemble hygiene kits, please email [Kara.Barkman@lssmn.org](mailto:Kara.Barkman@lssmn.org)
- This is a great project for a family or group of youth!

## Other High Need Items:

- Backpacks for older youth
- Stew pot/Saucepans with lid
- Mop with bucket
- Gift cards (Target, Walmart, Cub Foods, etc.), Gas Cards, and Bus Cards
- Dish Soap
- Laundry Detergent

## Questions?

### Donations

Kara Barkman,  
Volunteer Facilitator

[Kara.Barkman@lssmn.org](mailto:Kara.Barkman@lssmn.org)

612.400.9647

### General Involvement

Lynn Mullin,  
Volunteer Program Coordinator

[Lynn.Mullin@lssmn.org](mailto:Lynn.Mullin@lssmn.org)

612.470.8806

## We have Donation Drop-off Hours!

Monday: 1:00pm- 5:00pm

Wednesday: 10:00am- 1:00pm

Friday: 8:00am- 12:00pm

During these times, bring donations to the Minneapolis 2400 Park Avenue office! Check-in with the front desk, and our staff will be down to meet you!