

# Empowering Refugees – Welcoming New Neighbors in Southwestern Ohio

## The Current Situation in Afghanistan

Catholic Charities Southwestern Ohio is deeply pained by the recent events in Afghanistan. We join with Pope Francis in praying for the day when “the battered population of that country - men, women, elderly and children - return to their homes and live in peace and security in total mutual respect” (Angelus, August 15, 2021).

In 2006, Congress first authorized a bipartisan humanitarian program to provide Special Immigrant Visas (SIV) for Afghans and Iraqis, which included resettlement services and legal permanent residence for the applicants and their families. The White House has announced the emergency relocation of 30,000-50,000 Afghan SIV applicants. For other displaced Afghan citizens, the journey of dislocation and possible resettlement could take years. For most displaced persons, an abiding hope for eventual peace and return to their home country remains. For those who are resettled as refugees, return is not possible.



**Urgent Need: Referrals for affordable, low cost housing near public transportation.**

**To Learn More, visit [www.ccswoh.org](http://www.ccswoh.org)**  
Questions? Want to get involved?

Call Dan Sarell at (513) 672-3710 or  
[dsarell@ccswoh.org](mailto:dsarell@ccswoh.org)

## Catholic Charities At the Ready

As the official refugee resettlement agency for the Greater Cincinnati area, Catholic Charities Southwestern Ohio has resettled over 12,000 refugees since 1980. Catholic Charities is ready to welcome and support them to rebuild a new life in Greater Cincinnati. There is already a pipeline of refugees fleeing from other countries whom we are resettling, including the Congo, Syria and Sudan. We know Cincinnati is a welcoming and generous community. Your participation in our mission is a living testament that our region is world class in compassion and hospitality.

### Donate

Gifts of all sizes are welcome at  
[www.ccswoh.org/donate](http://www.ccswoh.org/donate).

The first step in empowering the lives of refugee families is to support Catholic Charities Southwestern Ohio’s Refugee Resettlement Services. Catholic Charities welcomes donations of all sizes to empower our staff and community to provide the essential services of welcoming families and helping them get on their feet and longer term assistance, such as English, job readiness and computer / digital literacy classes.

### Volunteer

Volunteers are needed at all levels of time commitment. Explore service opportunities at [ccswoh.volunteerhub.com](http://ccswoh.volunteerhub.com). Help set up housing, welcome families when they arrive, teach classes, mentor youth and young adults, pick up donations, and drive families to and from medical and other appointments.

### Advocate and Network

Stand in solidarity by your voice and participation. We need caring advocates to spread the word and mobilize supporters. Please invite Catholic Charities to share our mission with your group, class or faith community.

## Stories from World Refugee Day 2021

This Summer, Catholic Charities hosted a "virtual" World Refugee Day celebration on Facebook Live. You can watch the recording on our YouTube channel. Among those featured in the event were Mekonnen from Eritrea; Byaombe and his wife, Tamasha from the Congo; as well as two young refugees, Ida and Mario.

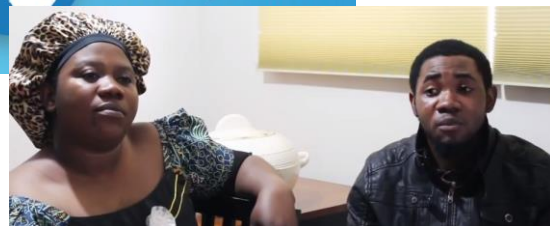
Mekonnen, who fled the war and oppressive conditions in Eritrea, now worries about his kids, who are still living in very difficult conditions. However, thanks to Catholic Charities, he is now working, sending money home, and grateful to live in a society that elects its leaders and enjoys freedom of speech.

Byaombe and Tamasha anticipated a lot of racism as Black Africans in the United States. However, they met so many people who do not discriminate by race, religion and background. He credits the staff at Catholic Charities for helping him get a job, an apartment for his family, and for the opportunity to go to school, to read and learn English.

Ida and Mario have benefited from Refugee Resettlement's Youth Mentoring Program, and both are entering college programs this fall. Mentors, like Ron Burwinkel, say they learn as much about life and culture as their mentees, with whom they work to assist with school work, improving English and adapting to American culture.

These are just a few of the success stories our caseworkers and volunteers experience as they enrich each others' lives and our community by their contributions and solidarity.

Volunteering and donating to Refugee Resettlement empowers families and young people, like these, to escape violence and despair, to live in hope and aspire to the same American dream that our immigrant ancestors shared.



*"We resettled with peace and security, thanks to Catholic Charities." – Byaombe and Tamasha*

## Steadfast in Our Mission

When the headlines show people fleeing en masse from the most dangerous situations, this is usually just the first perilous step on a journey that may take five to eight years, or more, before less than 1% are permanently resettled. There are over 26 million refugees worldwide.

We have been blessed to resettle and support several SIV Afghan families in recent years, including those who have assisted our military. We are prepared to welcome new families, SIV's and refugees, directed to us by the State Department. Our staff are now dedicated to finding affordable housing with access to public transportation. Ambitious targets have been set to move from record lows in 2020-21, to record highs in welcoming refugees, from less than 7,000 to a hoped for 125,000, by October 2022.

Thanks to the support of funding partners and donors, Catholic Charities Refugee Resettlement Services remained open over the past four years when most resettlement of refugees stopped due to administration policies. Catholic Charities adjusted services to provide ongoing support to recent arrivals.

With government policies now being reversed, our prayer and expectation is that we will once again welcome more families to safety and a new home in our community.

**Donate Online at [www.ccswoh.org/donate](http://www.ccswoh.org/donate) or mail a check to**

**CCSWOH / ATTN: Refugees, 7162 Reading Road, Ste. 600, Cincinnati, OH 45237**

**To apply to volunteer, visit [ccswoh.volunteerhub.com](http://ccswoh.volunteerhub.com). To learn more, visit [www.ccswoh.org](http://www.ccswoh.org).**