

What can I do to help?

Educate Yourself

There are many misconceptions about refugees. Learn the facts and teach others. "Torn From Home" is a great place to start. Make sure to look at the exhibit resources for additional information, such as books, websites, discussion groups, and other organizations.

Get To Know Your Neighbors

If you know of newcomers to your community, invite them to your social networks to speak, or simply to come and meet others.

Lend a Hand

Offer to help newcomers with basic tasks, such as grocery shopping and other errands. Also, see this brochure for a list of household items you can donate to local refugee families. Sometimes the smallest gestures of kindness can make the biggest difference.

Volunteer

There is a range of ways you might volunteer with Catholic Family Service, including offering translation services, helping with administrative needs and even "adopting" a refugee family.



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www.catholicfamilyservice.org



www.dhdc.org



www.ldcm.org

ACTIVE voice

www.activevoice.net

Items needed for donation

Kitchen Items:

- Silverware
- Dishes
- Pots, Pans
- Bake Ware
- Mixing Bowls
- Serving Dishes
- Kitchen Utensil Sets
- Can Opener

Household Items:

- Towels
- Sets of Sheets, Blankets, Comforters (every size)
- Pillows (new only)
- Alarm Clocks
- Light Bulbs
- Hangers
- Throw Pillows
- School Supplies

Toiletries:

- Toilet paper
- Shampoo
- Toothbrushes
- Toothpaste
- Deodorant Razors

Cleaning Supplies:

- Dish Soap
- Bathroom Cleaners
- Kitchen Cleaners
- Sponges/Cleaning Rags
- Paper Towels
- Laundry Detergent
- Waste Baskets
- Mop & Broom
- Trash Bags

Furnishings:

- Twin/Full/Queen/ King Mattresses, Box Springs, Bed Frames
- Couches/Arm Chairs
- Dining Table & Chairs
- Dressers/Nightstands
- Lamps
- Coffee/End Tables

Baby Items:

- Car Seats
- Cribs
- Strollers
- Diapers
- Baby Bottles

Note: CFS currently lacks the capacity to store large quantities of donations for extended periods of time. To find out what items are needed immediately, please call 806.376.4571.

Who can I contact for more information?

Catholic Family Service treasures the time our volunteers give in helping our clients. Contact Liz at 806.376.4571 for donation and volunteer opportunities.

Torn From Home: My Life as a Refugee was created by Lied Discovery Children's Museum, Las Vegas, and was sponsored by Pam and Pierre Omidyar.

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TORN FROM HOME: My Life as a Refugee

Refugees in Our Community: Amarillo



TORN FROM HOME:
My Life as a Refugee

www.tornfromhome.org

What is a Refugee?

- A person who is fleeing a well-founded fear of persecution.
- Unlike an immigrant, who chooses to immigrate, a refugee has no choice.
- Refugees are targets for many reasons, including race, nationality, ethnic origin, gender, religion, lifestyle, or tribe.
- They are victims of discrimination, greed, war, and hatred.
- Most refugees in Amarillo are honest, hard working people who just want a peaceful life for their families.

How Do Refugees End Up in Amarillo?

- When refugees are forced to flee their homeland, they usually find themselves in a neighboring country. Often, that country does not accept refugees or has no place for them.
- When war causes mass persecution, refugees are often thrown into makeshift camps, where they live in crowded conditions with meager rations and exposure to harsh climates.
- The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) sends representatives into these camps to interview refugees, hoping to find a better place for them.
- If interviewed, and the UNHCR staff person finds him or her to have a valid claim of persecution, a refugee can apply to a country that accepts refugees, asking permission to live there.
- There are 16 countries that accept refugees for resettlement.
- When the United States accepts a refugee, their background is thoroughly checked.
- The Catholic Family Service resettlement program is one of the top ranking programs in the U.S., based on cost of living, the availability of good, affordable housing, the number of refugees who become employed, and the number of refugees who move away within 90 days of being resettled.

Imagine you were unexpectedly thrust out of the home you have always known, into a land where they practice different customs and speak a language you do not understand. Your professional credentials are not recognized, and your possessions are left behind.

You must start all over, build a new life in a foreign place, and learn a new language. This is the experience of many refugees resettling across the United States.

About the Refugee Program at CFS

- Catholic Family Service has been resettling refugees since the fall of Saigon in the mid-seventies. Amarillo is home to people from over 20 different countries.
- There are Christians of all denominations, Muslims, Buddhists, Yazidis, and Mandaean among the refugees living here.
- Some have PhD's, MD's, Masters and Bachelors degrees.
- Some are artisans, mechanics, architects, metal workers, painters, carpenters, housewives and farmers.
- Some are illiterate. Others are well educated.
- Some were very poor before they came. Others had a comfortable life and were very respected in their communities before the war came, and they lost everything.
- Refugees come to the U.S. hoping to find work and a peaceful life for their families.
- Refugees often resettle in areas with available jobs that require little existing English literacy.

What Happens to Refugees Here?

- CFS receives only \$425 per refugee with which to rent the apartment, turn on utilities, and shop for all the things the family will need, such as sheets, blankets, pillows, food, cleaning supplies, etc.
- CFS also must furnish the apartments with the help of donated furniture and volunteers.
- When the family arrives, CFS staff greet them at the airport and take them to their new home.
- Depending on where the refugee family comes from, some may need help understanding the thermostat, toilet, garbage disposal, and even electric lights.
- Any urgent medical needs are taken care of immediately.
- Once the family has had a day or two to rest, the case manager goes over basic information with them, finding out their background, history, interests, and work experience.
- The family begins attending our English-as-a-Second-Language and Literacy classes.
- They attend a health screening given through the City of Amarillo Department of Health where they receive vaccinations and any medical tests they need.
- Children are enrolled in school.
- Then, CFS works to find the adults in the family good jobs.