

Resources for Refugees of Central PA “Adopt a Refugee Family” Initiative

Neighbor [ney-ber]: a person who shows kindness or helpfulness toward his or her fellow humans: *to be a neighbor to someone in distress.*

About Us: Resources for Refugees of Central PA is a grassroots initiative dedicated to meeting the needs of recently resettled refugees.

We believe that when the families thrive, we all thrive. Through this initiative, you will meet your neighbor ...but our hope is that through your efforts that you will make a friend.

Goal: To make refugee families feel welcome by pairing them with volunteers that are dedicated to being a good neighbor.

Our intentions:

- To facilitate a neighborly experience for both our Americans volunteers and our Refugee families that focuses on visits and time rather than fundraising and dollars.
- To partner volunteers that share in the best interests of their assigned family/families.
- To create an atmosphere where our volunteers feel welcome to share with us what *is/is not* working for them.
- To assure our volunteers that they are under NO OBLIGATION at all to a family-financially or otherwise.
- Our partners will openly communicate with one another to share feedback, coordinate shared visits or avoid providing overlapping efforts.
- That the experiences of our volunteers will help us grow and strengthen this initiative.

**“THE PARTICULAR REFUGEE CAMP WE WERE IN,
THEY WERE HUNGRY FOR PLAY, THEY WERE
HUNGRY FOR ANY KIND OF NORMALCY.”**

CONNIE SELLECCA

“Be a Good Neighbor” Suggestions:

CHECK IN ON THE FAMILY

- Inform us if you notice their basic needs are not being met (children clothed in unseasonable outfits, the heat isn’t working, there is a leak in the residence, etc.)

SHOW THEM THE COMMUNITY

- The things that we take for granted may be entirely new to them! Feel free to show them where to mail a letter, get groceries, enjoy a walking path or park, send laundry, etc.

POP BY FOR AN OCCASIONAL CUP OF TEA/COFFEE

- If you are uncomfortable going alone, let us know and we will pair another volunteer with you!

SET UP PLAYDATES WITH YOUR CHILDREN

- The kids ALWAYS play well together even without a common language! Bring a ball or Frisbee and let them have fun!

HOW TO COMMUNICATE:

- Occasionally we can coordinate with the family's social worker to have an interpreter to accompany you or phone in on a visit.
- More often, we use Google translator or gestures. If you notice a situation in which communication is IMPERATIVE (legal/medical/etc.) please let us know!

HOW WE PAIR YOU WITH A FAMILY:

- We try to pair you with a family based on your **location** (for convenience).
- Sometimes we can match a volunteer with a family that can directly benefit from or share a particular *skillset or hobby*:
 - Bilingual
 - Sewing/Cooking hobby
 - ESL educational experience
 - Comfortable working with Children/Elderly
- We also match a family that shares your *availability*. This is not intended to be an overwhelming time commitment, but we'd like them to be home/not working during the hours you are typically available.
- We may also try to initially pair a family with children with a volunteer that also has children.

WHY WE PAIR YOU WITH A VOLUNTEER:

IT TAKES A VILLAGE! We try to pair you with another volunteer to help "share the load" so our refugees have plenty of visitors even if you have a particularly overwhelming or busy month.

We will try to pair you with a friend if you prefer! If not, we hope you'll make a friend with your partnering volunteer.

You do NOT have to volunteer together, but our hope is that in tandem at least, you can help each other to make the family feel welcome.