



LSS REFUGEE SERVICES

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Lutheran Social Service Refugee Services offers hope and a helping hand to refugees as they start anew in Minnesota. After years of fleeing persecution and waiting in refugee camps, LSS Refugee Services helps individuals and families rebuild their lives.

Through our different services, and with the help of many volunteers and community members, LSS Refugee Services strives to address the needs of all refugees and walk beside them as they start their new lives in the United States.



**Lutheran
Social Service**
of Minnesota



Save the Date

Ramadan Iftar Dinner Fundraiser

Details:

Thursday May 31, 2018

7:30-10:00pm

Center for Changing Lives

2400 Park Ave South

Minneapolis, MN 55404

Cost: \$25

Iftar is the traditional, nightly breaking of the fast during the holy month of Ramadan. People fast from dawn to dusk every day, and after hours of no food and water, gather together to feast and connect.

Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota's (LSS) Refugee Services is honored to share in the faith tradition of many of our newly-arrived refugee families, and we are delighted to invite members of the greater LSS community to join us in building bridges of friendship. Registration and ticket info will be available later in March.

Spotlight: Guled, Refugee AmeriCorps member



The Refugee AmeriCorps Initiative is a nationwide AmeriCorps program that was established in 2015 to assist with the integration and community engagement of refugees.

What is a quote that you live by?

G: "Unity is Strength, Division is Weakness." I love this quote because it says a lot about humanity. We should always stand together and become strong rather than dividing and becoming weak.

What is the most impactful story you've witnessed?

G: The story that fascinated me most was when one of the people I work with told me how he got rejected several times by the UNHCR, and how he went through nightmares but never lost hope that

one day he would eventually live a normal life. That was a story I will forever remember.

What brought you to work at LSS, and what is your day-to-day like?

G: I studied social science in college. I have been with LSS for a year and a half. I usually start my work at 9am, I collaboratively plan my day and make sure that the most urgent work gets done as soon as possible.

What is the greatest take away of this career path?

There are a lot of important take aways from this path but the most fundamental ones I would say are relationship building and time management skills. I see myself very different from when I arrived.

Any comments you would like to share about the cut in refugee arrivals to the United States?

G: I could talk about this all day but I'll just be brief and clear: refugees do not choose the situation they are in, it just happens to them. The world needs to understand that welcoming refugees costs nothing. America is well known for welcoming refugees and it is saddening to see this [cut] go into effect. I pray to witness every American, regardless of their ethnicity, race, or religion wake up one day and choose peace over conflict, embrace over rejection, and love over hate.

Refugee Student Success Program

We are thrilled to announce that our St. Cloud office has recently started a new after-school program! The Refugee Student Success program is an after-school tutoring program funded by the Minnesota Department of Human Services Resettlement Programs Office. We are partnering with the nonprofit Eradicating Achievement Gap & Learning Empowerment (EAGLE) Inc. to provide students with the tools necessary to achieve academic improvement and social-emotional well-being.

EAGLE provides academic support by assisting students with developing their

reading and math skills. LSS staff provides social and emotional support through one-on-one mentoring and cultural orientation.

Through cultural orientation activities, the students learn about and discuss topics related to cultural identity and adjustment, healthy relationships, effective communication, goal-setting, and bullying.

For more information on the Refugee Student Success Program, contact us at refugee.services@lssmn.org or call us at 612-226-9589.



Donation Wish List:

We are in need of these items for several newly arrived families in Minnesota. If you are able to donate any of these items, please call us at 612-226-9589 or email us at refugee.services@lssmn.org.

Thank you for helping us welcome our new Minnesotan neighbors!

- Paper towels
- Toilet paper
- Shampoo and conditioner
- Pots/pans (new or used)
- Large trash cans and large trash bags
- Brooms/mops
- large trash bags
- Your old laptops



Thank you, Faith Lutheran Church!

We could not be more thankful for our partnership with Faith Lutheran Church in Forest Lake, Minnesota. Over the past few months, members of Faith Lutheran Church have gathered household and bathroom supplies for *four* newly arrived families. They have collected vacuums, shampoo, kitchen towels, you name it! In addition to the supplies for these four families, Faith Lutheran Church members have also gathered sheets, pillows, school supplies, backpacks, and other household goods that will be used by dozens of families in our programs.

Thank you to Faith Lutheran for helping us make sure the families we serve are set up to succeed in their new lives here in Minnesota.

Halima Aden: New Face of Fashion



Halima Aden was born in a Kenyan Refugee Camp. When she was six years old, she moved to St. Cloud, Minnesota. Today, Halima is a new face of fashion.

When Halima moved to the United States 13 years ago, she didn't know any English. She remembers the resettlement workers who brought her family winter coats and the teachers who spent extra hours helping her catch up in school. Soon enough, she was enrolled in honors classes and participated in Mock Trial. She was voted Homecoming Queen her senior year.

In 2016, Halima entered the Miss Minnesota USA pageant as the first

contestant to wear a hijab and burkini. Although Halima didn't win the pageant, her career escalated instantly. A few days after the pageant, she got a call from the modeling agency IMG. Since then, she has appeared on five magazine covers including Vogue Arabia and Glamour and numerous campaigns.



"We don't get to choose our family, our community. We just inherit it. That was what the hijab was for me. It felt so natural, I didn't even really think about it, and I never thought about taking it off." Halima Aden