

WholeHeart REFUGEE ALLIANCE

Providing a path forward through
teaching, teamwork, and trust

MISSION STATEMENT

Since 2018 we have helped Afghan families bridge the gap between initial resettlement and self-sufficiency through home visits, mentoring, ESL classes, delivering essential items, and connecting families with community partners. We utilize a vibrant interfaith network of resources to welcome refugee families as they integrate and become self-reliant in their new communities.

COMMUNITY NEED

Ninety days to establish the foundation for a new life is not enough. Often this is the only support refugee resettlement agencies can offer families who have left behind everything they have ever known. The loss of extended family support systems, lack of familiarity with a new culture, language, and government systems, plus difficulty affording necessities are universal challenges refugees face during their first few years in the United States. WholeHeart Refugee Alliance steps in to help bridge this gap until families are self-sufficient.

ABOUT US



In 2018 a group of ESL teachers volunteered to organize an English class for refugee women in Tukwila, WA. Newly arrived Afghan women, whose families came to the U.S. on Special Immigration Visas, were isolated at home with young children, no transportation, and unable to access community classes. Our teachers established an innovative English class held within walking distance of the women's apartments, offering free childcare onsite. Classes focused on

acquiring skills and building confidence to begin life in a new country. Our teachers developed relationships of trust with their students, and were welcomed into the women's homes, where it was the teachers' turn to listen and learn. Word of mouth quickly spread among refugee families that the "teachers" were approachable, caring, and resourceful. Our outreach services developed after seeing firsthand the real needs refugee families face. Many agencies and individuals became acquainted with our group's extensive community network, and strong connections with the refugee community. In the Fall of 2021 during the massive influx of Afghan refugees to the Puget Sound region, we were invited to become an official partner with the 501(c)(3) Essentials First, a sister organization of the Muslim Community Resource Center.

SERVICE MODEL

Relationships of trust build communities. Our teachers and volunteers utilize a vibrant interfaith network of resources to welcome refugee families as they integrate and become self-reliant. Through home visits and referrals, we first assess families' essential needs; then, our unique system of grassroots networking allows us to source and deliver crucial items that are unaffordable for families. We provide English classes and collaborate through community partners to assist with problem solving such as employment, neo-natal services, food/housing insecurity, transportation needs, affording technology, apartment set-up, and many other lifelines. We connect struggling families with reliable community and government resources and individually assist them through the process. We have personally met with, and served, over 500 Afghan individuals and families in their South King County homes.



PHILOSOPHY ~Providing a path forward through teaching, teamwork, and trust~

PROVIDING encompasses “donate, contribute, supply, offer, equip, support, nourish” and includes both what donors can provide to us and in turn what we can provide to the families.

A PATH FORWARD is inclusive, welcoming, and empowering.

THROUGH TEACHING is where the group began back in 2018. There are dozens of examples of how we teach families. We taught English classes for women, met them at library story time, in small conversation groups, and in online ESL classes since COVID. We visit parents in their apartments and model how to read with their children and play with educational toys. We show men and women how to apply for jobs, enroll in training programs, advocate for benefits and utility relief, navigate a lease, and more. We teach them what is within our scope and what they can do themselves. Much more than mentorship, we all experience two-way learning and growth. With open hearts, the families have also taught us many things: the meaning of true hospitality, hard work with no complaints, optimism through adversity.

TEAMWORK denotes the myriad of ways we operate, among ourselves, with other agencies, community groups, and individuals. We partner and pool resources with the Muslim Community Resource Center, SCM Medical Missions, Essentials First, Bear Creek United Methodist Church Afghan Ministry, Tukwila Clothing Bank, LDS Bishops' Storehouse, Deseret Industries, Asian Community Referral Services, Open Arms Perinatal, OneAmerica, Congregation Kol Ami, Undaunted Women, Umeed for All Refugees, Afghan Health Initiative, Renton Salvation Army, Turkcha, Operation Choose Kindness, pre-apprenticeship programs, cooperative Ramadan deliveries, churches, synagogues, mosques, and others. Many individuals and small groups in our networks support families with donations of money or goods, act as a monthly diaper sponsor, gather welcome baskets of supplies, help procure items, or provide friendship to newcomers.

AND TRUST is the glue that binds us all together in a most important, relational way. We trust each other to do what is within our capabilities and strengths at any given time. Families trust us as they reach out, not only with tangible needs but also with their problems and concerns. This may define how we are different; we are approachable, beyond the confines of a specific job description or agency. Families trust our advice. They are secure that our relationship is on-going. We convey to families that they can become self-sufficient and make wise decisions. Trust builds a foundation for empathy, encouragement, belonging, and ultimately... confidence.

IMPACT



Since 2018 we have worked with Afghan men and women with a wide range of English, education, and career experience. For example, our ESL classes were the first formal education experience for several women who had been denied the opportunity to attend school in Afghanistan. Over time these women have gained skills and confidence to get a drivers license, their first job, and enroll in classes at the community college. Their increased independence helps the whole family thrive. Long-term relationships with individual families allow us to support our new

neighbors as they set and achieve their goals ~ successes we celebrate together!

PLEASE JOIN US IN WELCOMING OUR NEW NEIGHBORS!



**WE BELIEVE THERE IS
ENOUGH IN THIS WORLD
FOR EVERYONE:
ENOUGH FOOD, ENOUGH
MONEY, ENOUGH ROOM,
ENOUGH CARE- IF WE
UNLEASH OUR CREATIVITY
AND UNCLENCH OUR FISTS**

WholeHeart
REFUGEE ALLIANCE