



We believe in resettling
refugees, reuniting families,
and realizing dreams.



Global Refuge is a nonprofit serving newcomers seeking safety, support, and a share in the American dream. We have been a leader in resettlement for 85 years, dedicated to the “long welcome” — supporting immigrants, asylum seekers, and refugees through advocacy, care, and empowerment to restore a sense of home.

750K+

More than **750,000 newcomers** welcomed by Global Refuge since 1939



We Believe...

Immigration is American

Welcoming newcomers isn't just our duty—it's an inherent part of our identity. As both descendants of immigrants and New Americans ourselves, we hear our past in their stories. As human beings, we empathize with our new neighbors' greatest fears and highest hopes. Since our inception in 1939, Global Refuge, formerly known as Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service, has embraced over 750,000 immigrants and refugees, offering a compassionate welcome to those escaping war, famine, violence, and persecution. As experts in the work of welcome, we advocate, care for, and empower newcomers to realize the American dream.



Global Refuge is one of 10 refugee resettlement agencies in the United States and one of two organizations the U.S. government entrusts with serving unaccompanied refugee minors.

90+

More than 90 nonprofits in our national partner network



We Believe...

The best welcome is long-lasting

Our commitment to the “Long Welcome” sets us apart. We walk alongside newcomers at every stage of their journey, working to restore a sense of home, establish community, and promote success. From securing homes to finding employment and accessing essential resources, our comprehensive services aim to empower individuals and families. For unaccompanied children, we engage loving foster families, providing transitional care for as long as necessary. The passion and expertise of our people, our vast partner network, and our steadfast Lutheran heritage have combined to shine brightly as a beacon of belonging, opportunity, and grace for more than 85 years.



We Believe...

We can do more together than we can do alone

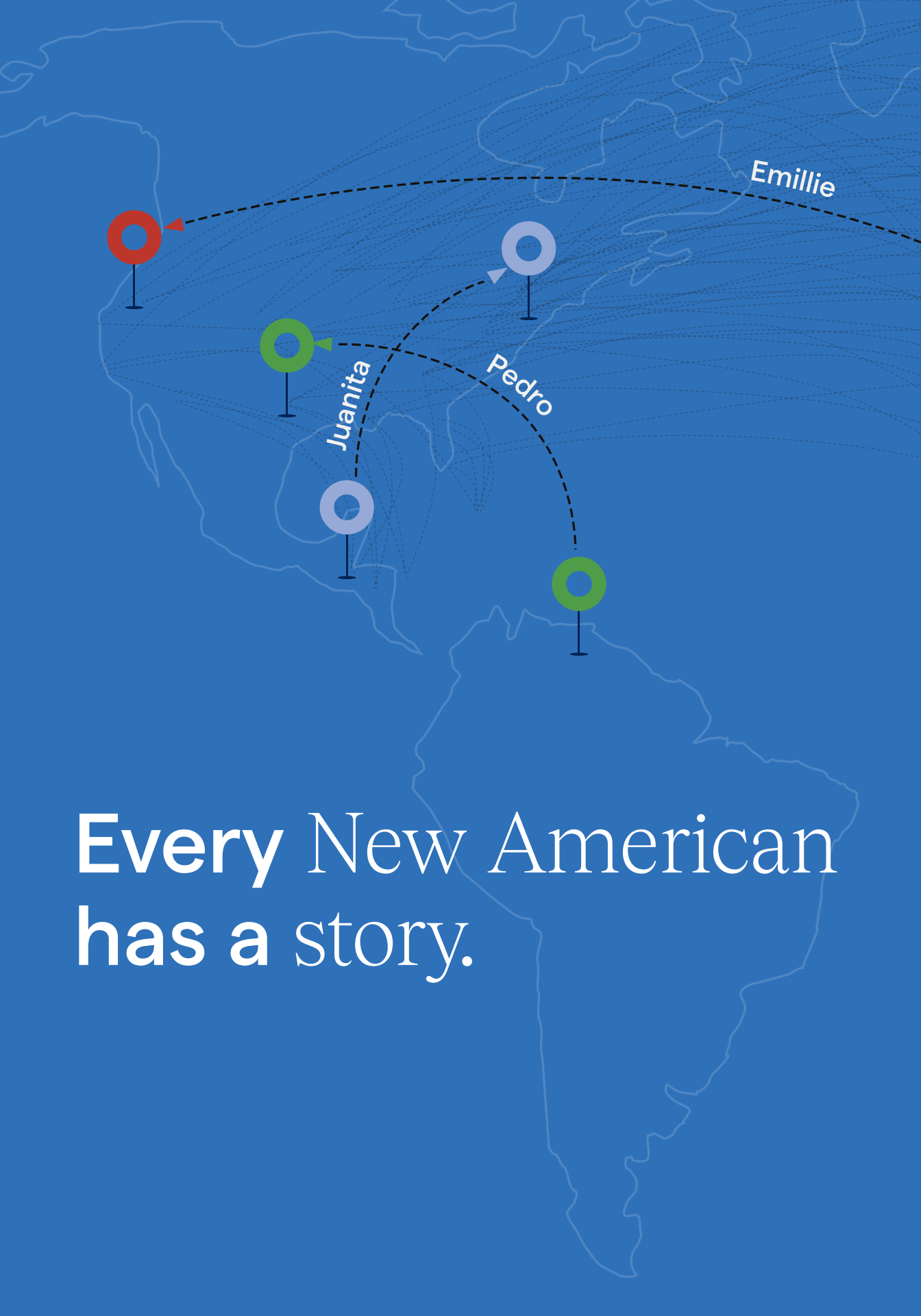
Impactful change comes through collaboration. Together, we can advocate for a refugee resettlement program that meets the needs of the millions of people displaced by humanitarian crises. We can support a sense of home for unaccompanied children as they seek to reunite with loved ones. We can work to ensure climate migration is a U.S. policy priority. By opening our homes to immigrant children and inviting New Americans into our communities and workplaces, we can create a more inclusive and welcoming society. Together, we can shine a light on the work of welcome and ensure that our country stands as a beacon of hope to those most in need of protection. Join us!



Global Refuge has played a key role in welcoming refugees and asylum seekers through major humanitarian crises from WWII to the war in Ukraine.

50K+

50,000+ volunteers in our national network



Every New American
has a story.



Behind every statistic is a human being. The thousands of immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers in the United States bring with them a complex tapestry of struggles and successes, fears and dreams—personal histories that enrich the American cultural fabric and embody the beautiful diversity of our country.

Here are three such stories: of Emillie, Juanita, and Pedro, all of whom started their new lives with the support of the Global Refuge network.

Emillie Binja

A life of service

For a small Lutheran congregation in Clackamas, Oregon, the warm, welcoming smile of Pastor Emillie Binja is a constant presence.

But her journey to the community was a difficult one. At just 8 years old, Emillie's world forever changed when her family fled the political turmoil of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, seeking refuge in Uganda. She spent most of her childhood in a refugee camp there, unable to speak the language and facing hostility from local groups who had become violent toward anyone they deemed a foreigner.

"The biggest insecurity for refugees is that you always know you're an outsider," she says. "At some point, someone will say you don't belong, and you need to leave. And sometimes that 'need to leave' could cost you your life."

For 15 years, Emillie's family sought refuge, applying for status in various countries in pursuit of a new beginning. Their long wait ended when, at 24, Emillie and her family found sanctuary in Tacoma, Washington, welcomed by a compassionate host family and aided by the services of the Global Refugee network.

As she adapted to her new life, Emillie found her calling – a calling to ministry. Recognizing her innate gifts of communication and compassion, her church pastor saw in Emillie the makings of a minister. Her empathy and wisdom beyond her years soon led her to Creator Lutheran Church, where she now stands as a beacon of faith and guidance for her congregation.

"Faith requires taking that one step, crossing over that river, and getting over that fear to say, 'I'm going to see what God is calling me into,'" she says.

Buoyed by her unwavering faith and resilience, she crossed that river—leading her to her true purpose in a community she can finally call home.



“I have always wanted to have home.”



Juanita

Fostering love and hope

Navigating senior year with a load of advanced-placement classes, cross country and track meets, and the normal teenage pressures can be overwhelming for most high schoolers. But for Juanita, it was just another challenge she was more than prepared to overcome.

Juanita's journey as a New American began at age 11 when she immigrated to the U.S. from Guatemala with her father. Unfortunately, her father was soon deported, leading to years of constant relocation, changing schools, and adapting to new communities. Through it all, Juanita remained focused on her singular goal: getting into college.

"I just had this really big dream of continuing with my education and learning more things," she says. "I couldn't throw that away that easily."

After months in temporary housing in Arizona, Juanita eventually found the stable home she had been hoping for since coming to America. Ascentria Care Alliance, a part of the Global Refuge foster care network, found a loving family in Worcester, Massachusetts who was eager to welcome Juanita into their brood, making her an instant big sister to three younger foster siblings.

"They were so welcoming. It felt good. I just felt happy and excited," she says.

Her foster parents, both educators, were an ideal match, wholeheartedly supporting Juanita's laser-focused goals on higher education—a value instilled in her at an early age.

"My biological parents were always big into education, even though they didn't have the opportunity [themselves], and I value that," she says. "I really appreciate my foster parents because without their help, I don't think I would be here now where I am."

And where is she? At the prestigious Smith College on full scholarship, pursuing her dreams and making her families in Guatemala and the U.S. immensely proud.



“I know they’re not my biological parents,
but it feels like it.”



Pedro*

An artist's journey to America

Take a walk down the busy sidewalks of downtown San Antonio, Texas and you just may find an artist named Pedro* greeting you with a smile that's as bright and cheerful as his colorful paintings. That's because the former math and physics professor from Venezuela is grateful to have found safety, stability, and a renewed sense of purpose in his long journey to the United States.

As an outspoken opponent of his country's political dictatorship, Pedro feared for his safety and fled to escape persecution. Crossing through Colombia, then to Ecuador, Peru, and Mexico, Pedro almost drowned while attempting to cross the Rio Grande to the United States. If not for the help of a compassionate bystander — whom he calls an angel — he may not be alive today. "Too many people lose their life in this river," he says. "I am alive thanks to God, I know that."

His initial days in America were truly a test of endurance. In a foreign land, without a grasp of the language or a place to call home, Pedro didn't know where to turn. "In the beginning, I didn't have money. All my money I paid to get here. It was no easy life."

He sought refuge in a San Antonio church, where he was introduced to the Global Refuge team, who helped him complete his asylum application, secure an apartment, and enroll in English classes.

"They guided me on what I needed to do as a newly arrived immigrant," he says. "They explained the process and have helped me so much."

Pedro now makes his living pursuing his passion for art, selling his canvases on the street, not just to earn money, but to spread joy and connect with people. "To sell pictures on the street is a different experience," he says. "It's a spiritual experience."

Firmly rooted in his life as a New American – and inspired by the kindness that was shown to him upon arrival to the U.S. – Pedro volunteers with a local non-profit to provide first aid to immigrants and refugees in need of medical care.

"I would like to continue my service, helping people in the United States," he says. "In my heart, I like to help people so much. Maybe God had a plan."

**Name has been changed for security reasons.*



“I would like to continue my service, helping people in the United States.”



As a Global Refuge supporter, you change lives every day.

Join us in the work of welcome. Learn more at globalrefuge.org/get-involved



Volunteer

Change lives in your own backyard. Every day, our community of volunteers from around the country dedicate their time to welcoming new neighbors and educating their community members or congregations on issues related to immigration and refugees.



Advocate

Raise your voice alongside those seeking safety. Follow Global Refuge to stay abreast of important legislative efforts and join us in demanding policy changes that support New Americans.



Give

Give the gift of welcome. Your donations make our vital work for families, individuals, and children possible. Make an immediate impact with an online donation or explore other ways to give.

Global Refuge is a 501(c)3 organization with a 100% rating from Charity Navigator and a GuideStar Platinum transparency rating. Ninety-one percent of every gift supports programs that have a direct impact on immigrants and refugees.

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