



# 2023 ANNUAL REPORT



Innovation and Impact:

# A Letter from Leadership

**This past year was, without question, the biggest year in Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service’s 84-year history. As you’ll see in these pages, not only did we grow our staff to an unprecedented team of over 600 people, we launched three major initiatives and massively expanded programming to serve more children and families than ever before.**

At the same time, global displacement and need have also been increasing at an incredible rate. To meet that need, stay true to our mission, and build on the momentum of our growth, we began to discern whether a rebrand would help us build a bigger table of supporters and allow us to welcome even more people. Our research determined that it would—and after an intensive, thoughtful process, we landed on Global Refuge as a name that would allow us to honor our special Lutheran legacy and enter our next 85 years with a renewed focus on the people we serve.

One of the core values we wanted to emphasize was that of grace, a central tenet of Lutheranism with significance for people of all faith and moral traditions. And that’s when it hit us—GRACE: Global Refuge for Advocacy, Care, and Empowerment.

A thread of GRACE runs through everything we do, from our efforts to mobilize communities and congregations to welcome, to our distinctive continuum of care for unaccompanied children, to our innovative refugee and immigrant mental health services. Our entire organization is grounded in human dignity and the provision of grace to those who have been forced to flee their homes—but we don’t stop there. We believe we must advocate alongside our new neighbors for systems and policies that support safety and opportunity, to care for individuals and families as people, not simply statistics, and to support the empowerment of immigrants and refugees regardless of where they are in their journeys.

We’re so proud of what we’ve accomplished and excited for what’s ahead—and we know that we can’t do it without you. We hope you enjoy following the thread of GRACE through the programs and stories shared in this report, and we look forward to an even bigger 2024!



*Krish Vignarajah*

**Krish O'Mara Vignarajah**  
President & CEO



*Elizabeth B. Wagner*

**Elizabeth Wagner**  
Board Chair



# Innovation and Impact: A New Chapter

On January 17, 2024, Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS) announced that we would now be known as Global Refuge. Though this Annual Report covers our work in 2023, before our official rebrand, we wanted it to reflect our new identity as supporters new and old learn more about our long legacy of welcome.

The Global Refuge brand fittingly conveys our mission of providing safety and support to refugees, asylum seekers, and immigrants from across the world. Our core vision remains unchanged: to foster a world of just and

welcoming communities, informed by our Lutheran heritage and decades of experience. Our faith-based identity remains integral to our organization, reflecting the spirit of love that shapes our work of welcome and strengthens our relationships with Lutheran communities and congregations, as well as with ecumenical, nondenominational, interfaith, and secular partners.

We cannot overstate our gratitude for your continued support, partnership, and commitment to welcoming newcomers. As we redouble our commitment to advocating alongside, caring for, and empowering newcomers, we hope you will join us in celebrating this new chapter.



Innovation and Impact:  
**2023 at a Glance**

Our work of welcome continues to grow at a record-breaking pace.



22,000

children and families served through our protection programs for unaccompanied minors



15,142

asylum seekers served through welcome and respite services



13,916

refugees resettled



1,012

new volunteers



950+

advocacy actions taken to support humane immigration policy



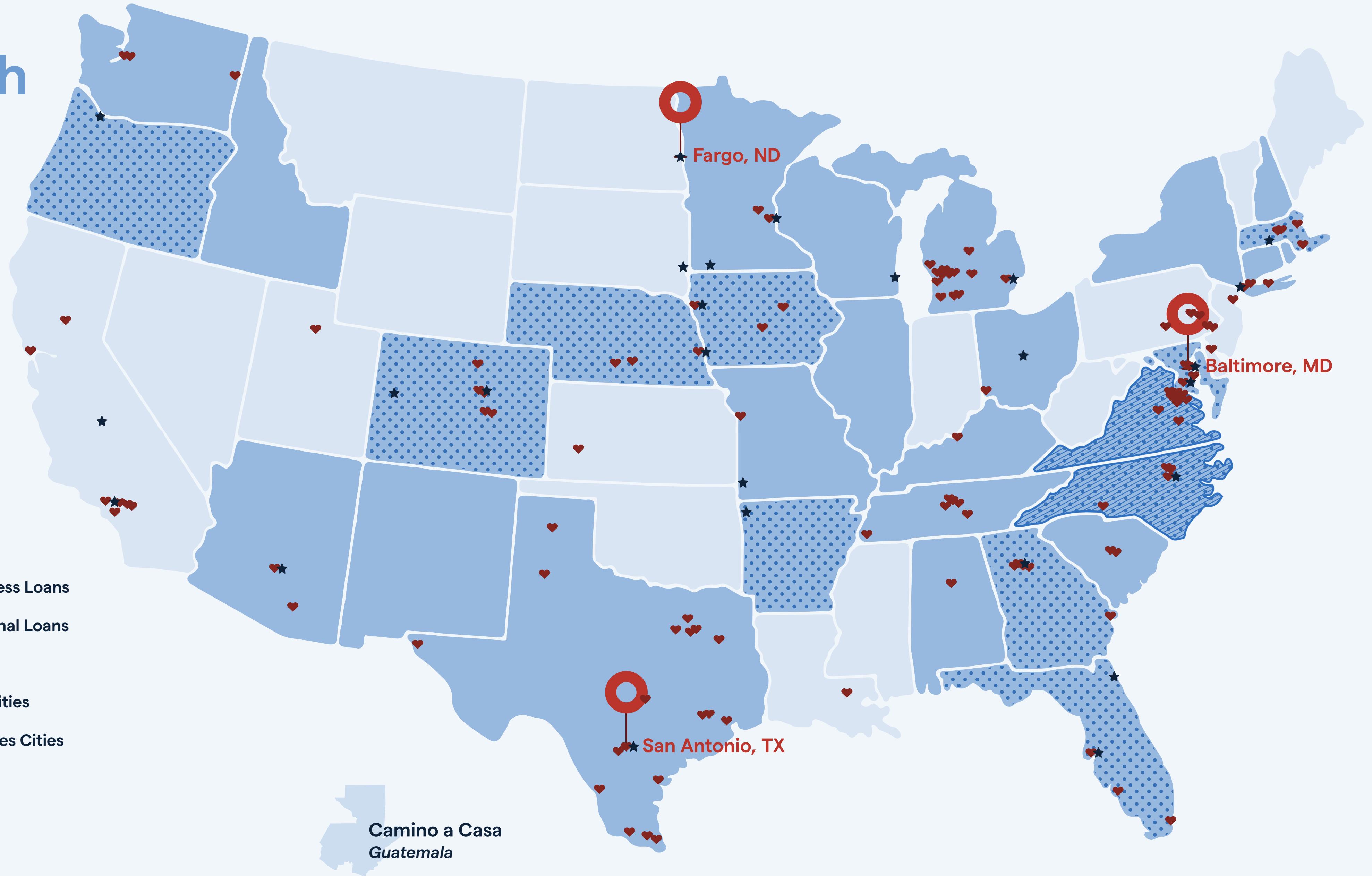
100+

cities across the country serving newcomers



# Innovation and Impact: 2023 Reach

- Global Refuge Field Offices
- New American Lending - Business Loans
- New American Lending - Personal Loans
- Mental Health Locations
- ♥ Children and Family Services Cities
- ★ Refugee and Integration Services Cities



# The Journey to Welcome

Immigration is, by definition, a journey. Sometimes it is a journey borne of hope—the belief that a better life is possible, that opportunity exists beyond the borders of your home, that the future can be brighter for yourself and your children somewhere else. Other times, it's borne of necessity—the desperation to flee a country besieged by war, the fear of violence just for being yourself, the knowledge that if you stay, you will not survive.

At Global Refuge, we know that the immigration journey does not end when a newcomer steps on United States soil—and, in many cases, that's where our journey together begins. We are there every step of the way, from a greeting at the airport or a change of clothes after an exhausting trek on foot, to the critical steps of finding a first apartment, a first job, and a grocery store that carries familiar foods. But we also know that those basic necessities can't replace what was lost—family, friends, a meaningful career, a sense of home.

That's why we're committed to the long welcome—and why we're continuously listening to the voices of those who have made that journey and responding with innovations in immigration and refugee resettlement that address their ongoing challenges and opportunities. Our journeys, like our stories, never truly come to an end—and we'll be there every step of the way.



The Journey to Welcome:

# Arrival

The path to safety and stability in the U.S. is always unique. Regardless of the routes that immigrants and refugees have taken, Global Refuge stands ready to support them as they take the first steps of their journey to rebuild their lives.

Our programs offer aid to those seeking asylum at the border, help refugees resettle, and ensure unaccompanied minors are protected and safe—no matter where their journeys began.



Photo Credit: Dan Koeck



# Refugee Resettlement

Our long legacy of welcome for refugees has expanded exponentially, both in the reach of our network and the services we offer.

When a refugee arrives at the airport, they are greeted by a member of the Global Refuge network and brought to a home that has been prepared for them in advance—stocked with modest furniture, culturally familiar foods, and all of the basic comforts of an American home.

Over the course of the next few months, our team supports the individual or family as they learn to navigate their new community, often bolstered by community volunteers in our [Circle of Welcome program](#). Adults are enrolled in English language classes, children are enrolled in school, and families are connected to community resources. We walk alongside them, offering support with everything from navigating public transportation to connecting with essential resources and meeting new friends they'll have for years to come.



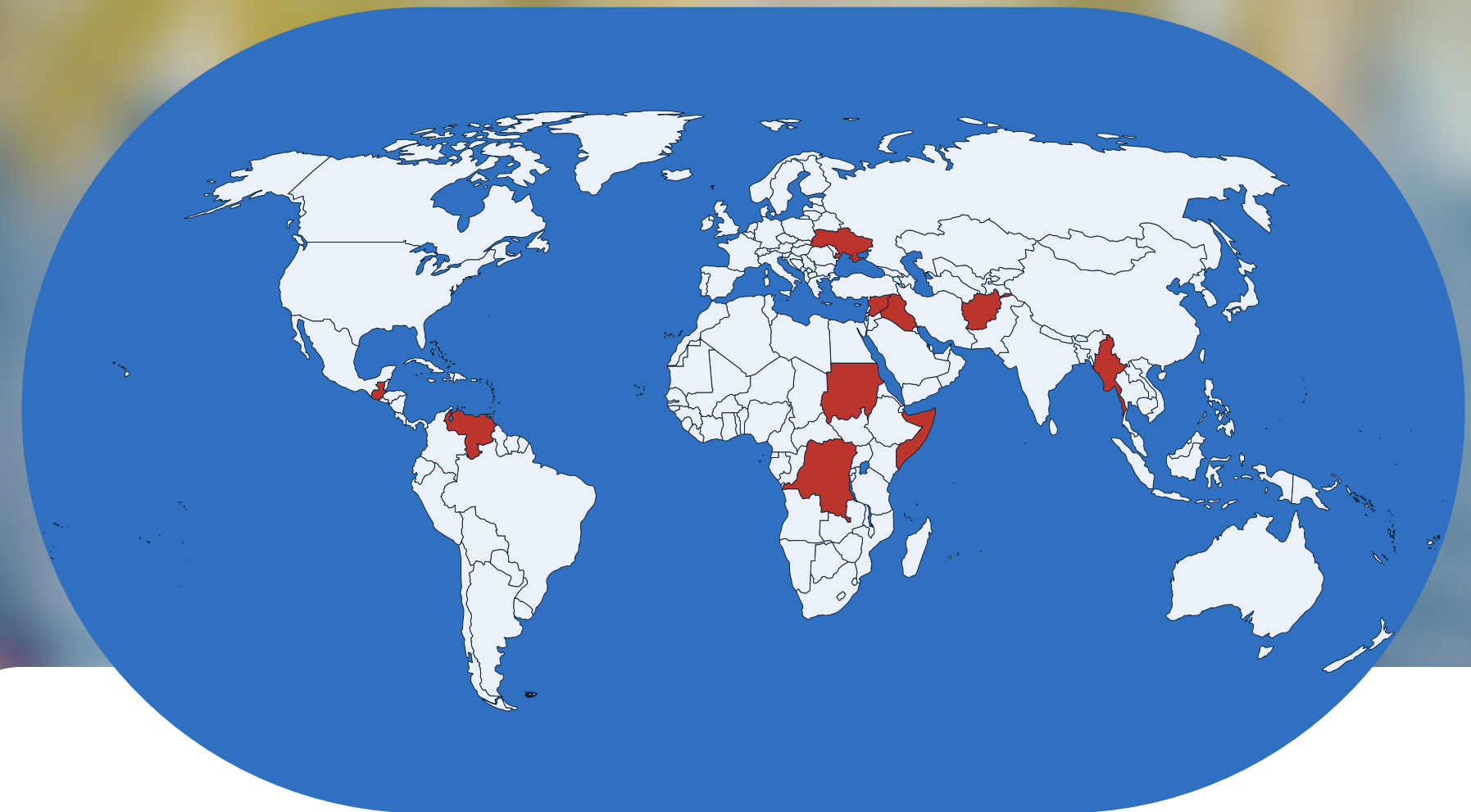
13,916

refugees resettled in 2023



59

partner offices across  
the country



## Top 10 Countries of Origin:

Afghanistan  
Democratic Republic  
of the Congo  
Syria  
Burma  
Somalia

Ukraine  
Venezuela  
Iraq  
Guatemala  
Sudan

## Augustine and Alim: Finding Community and Welcome

Augustine, Alim, and their six children spent years in a refugee camp in Malawi before being resettled in Fargo, North Dakota. There, they found built-in community at St. John's Lutheran Church, a member of the Global Refuge Circle of Welcome program. The program connects recently arrived refugee families with local congregations and community groups.

St. John's Lutheran Church members played a critical role in helping the family feel welcome in their new community, connect to resources, and navigate their new neighborhood, culture, language, and schools. "[They've] shown me a different kind of love that I never thought of," Alim says. "They loved us so much even though they didn't know us."



"We found a community that embraced us like friends."

-Augustine



## Roman and Sofia: Finding Hope in a New Home

In 2023, to mark the one-year anniversary of the war in Ukraine, we spoke with several refugees welcomed and resettled by our partner Bethany Christian Services. Roman and Sofia told us they never had plans to move to America, but once the Russian invasion of Ukraine put their lives and their future in jeopardy, they had no choice but to flee.

The Bethany Christian Services team welcomed the couple, helped them find a home, and connected them to a community network that supported them every step of the way. Now settled into their new home in America, Roman and Sofia look forward to rebuilding their lives in the country they now call home.

“This organization gave us a great push,” Roman says. “Our life is so much easier now.”

“We feel like we can stand  
on our own feet now.”

-Sofia



Photo Credit: Mariah Miranda



# Serving Unaccompanied Children

Every year, thousands of refugee and immigrant children and youth journey to the United States alone or without their parents and are taken into government custody. We're here to help.

Global Refuge's trauma-informed programs for children and youth offer a compassionate welcome and a soft place to land. While the children in our care have often faced violence and incredible challenges in their home countries or on their journeys to the United States, our team ensures all are protected, cared for, and given access to the services they need to thrive. We've offered our unique continuum of care since 1975, helping thousands of children find health and happiness.



22,000

children and families served in 2023



87

countries represented

The Forgione family first met Oleh in 2016 as part of an international exchange program. When the war in Ukraine began, they welcomed him into their home through the Uniting for Ukraine program.



## Juanita: On Track to Excellence

Juanita's journey as a New American began at age 11 when she immigrated to the U.S. from Guatemala, leading to years of constant relocation, changing schools, and adapting to new communities. Eventually, Juanita found the stable home she had been hoping for. Ascentria Care Alliance, a part of the Global Refuge foster care network, found a loving family in Massachusetts who was eager to welcome Juanita into their brood. Now, Juanita is attending a prestigious college on full scholarship, pursuing her dreams, and making her family in Guatemala and the U.S. immensely proud.

“I had this really big dream of continuing my education. I couldn't throw that away that easily.”

-Juanita



## Reunifying Families

When a child released from the Office of Refugee Resettlement is identified as having special needs or facing other challenges preventing them from reuniting with their family, our home study and post-release services team works with them to ensure that the child and family can live with one another safely.

Global Refuge maintains a national network of case managers whose focus is to inspect home environments, inform release decisions, and connect families to community resources. Our case managers work to empower families with the services they need to further their education, obtain legal representation, access health care, and find recreational activities and community.

### Protection in Practice

**Sisters Ana and Luisa\* made it to the U.S. after a dangerous three-week journey through Guatemala and Mexico. When they were released from an Office of Refugee Resettlement shelter into the care of an aunt, our post-release services team quickly identified a potential environmental danger for the girls and worked tirelessly to make sure they were protected. Thanks to the work of our case managers, who are highly experienced in trauma-focused care, the sisters were safely reunited with their mother. Now, the family is receiving free mental health counseling and legal assistance to help prepare for their asylum cases and keep them safe from harm.**

*\*Names have been changed to protect anonymity.*

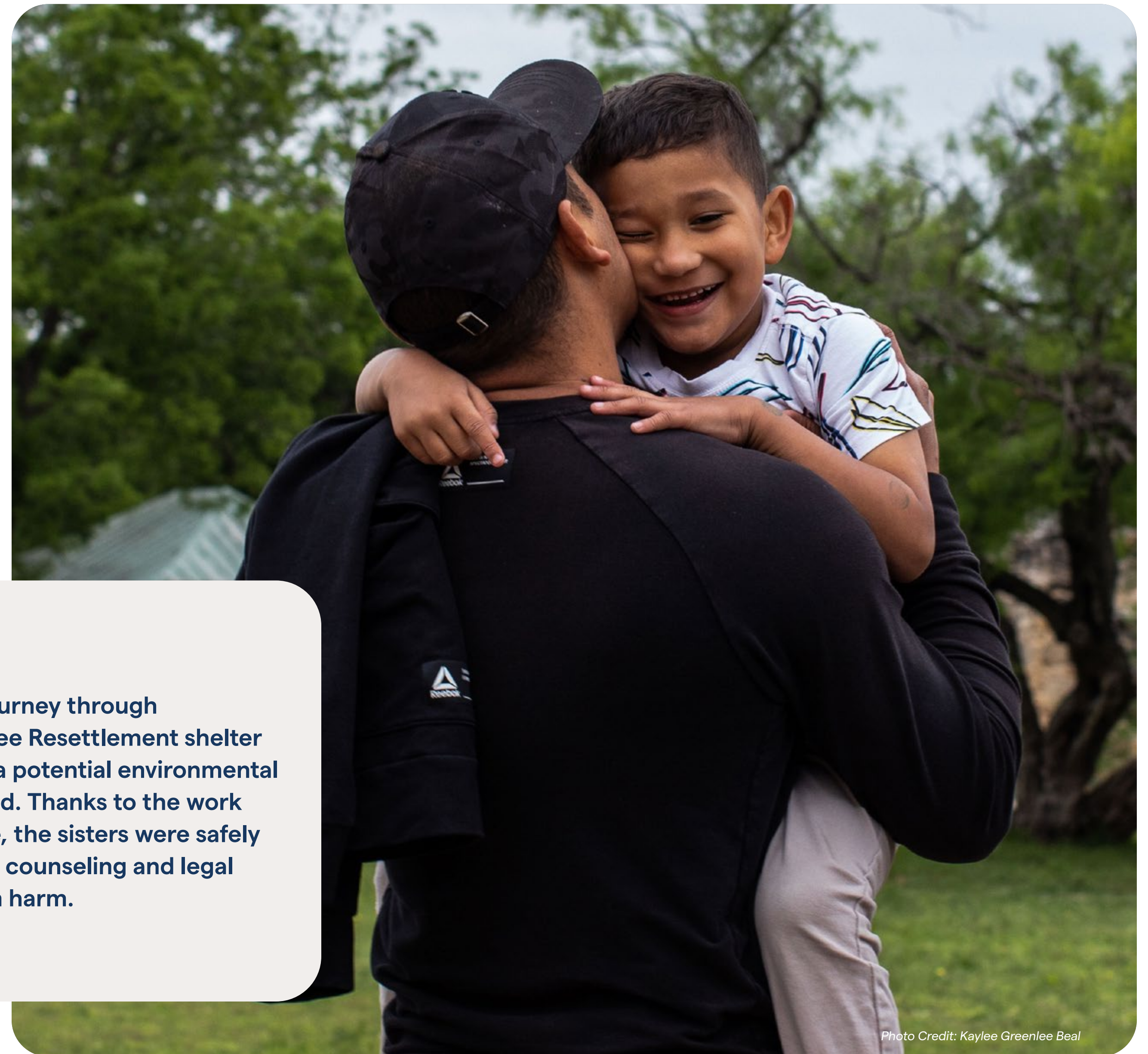


Photo Credit: Kaylee Greenlee Beal

# Welcoming Asylum Seekers

With the vast increase in the number of people seeking refuge at our southern border, the work of Global Refuge Asylum Services is more critical than ever.

People seeking asylum often face numerous barriers to accessing critical assistance and navigating the complex immigration system. Global Refuge walks alongside asylum seekers at the southern border providing short-term shelter, hot meals and showers, medical care, and supplies for the journey ahead.

Our long welcome continues with asylum seekers at their final destination in the U.S. Our asylum services team helps clients understand the legal process and documents required to pursue their protection claims. And we connect them with a dedicated bilingual case manager who works with them one-on-one to find housing, transportation, health care, employment, education, and mental health resources so they can begin to heal from their trauma.



# 15,142

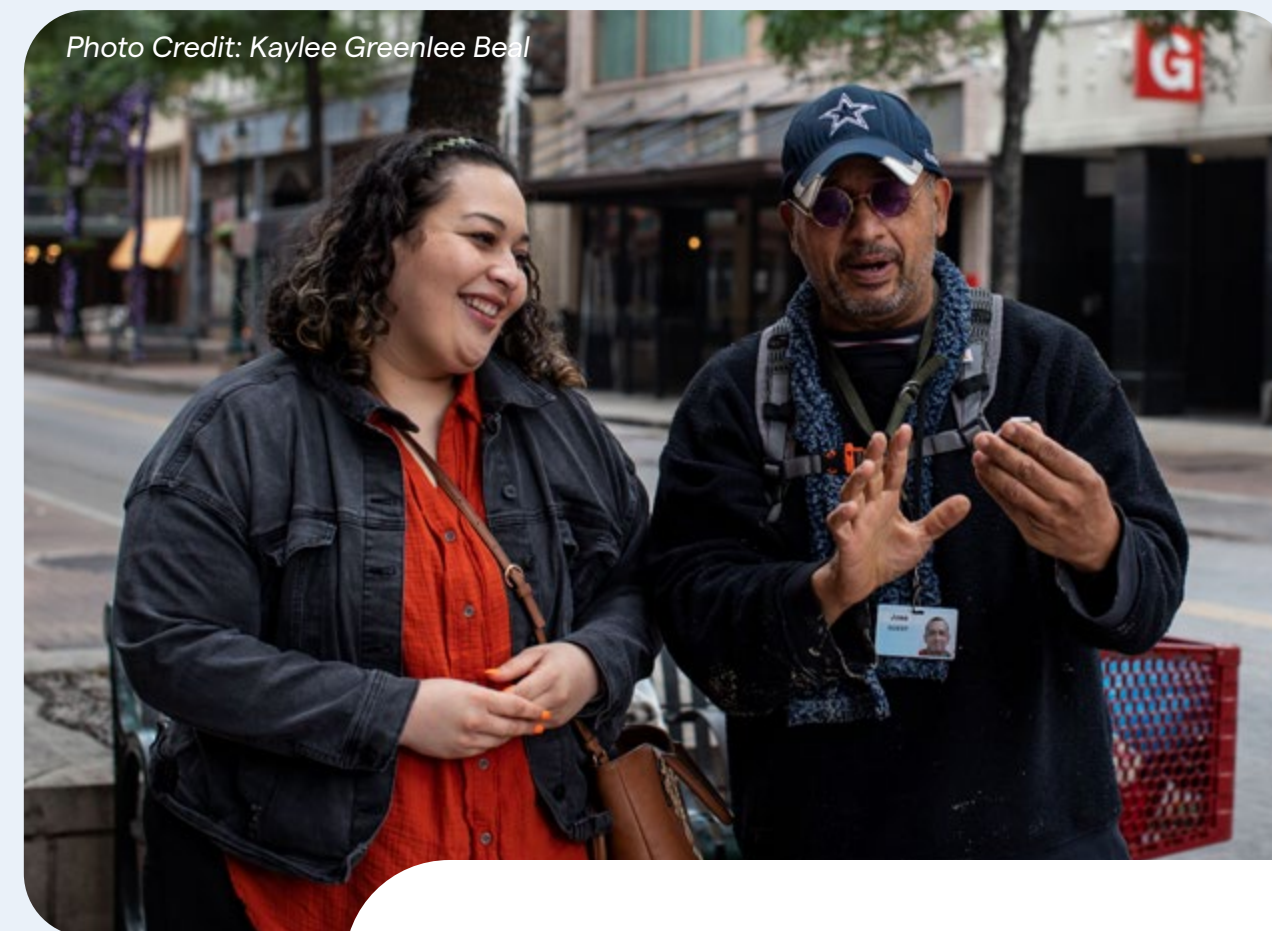
individuals served by  
Asylum Services



## Pedro: From Persecution to Empowerment

As an outspoken opponent of his country's political dictatorship, Pedro\* feared for his safety and fled to escape persecution. After a dangerous journey, he made it to America and sought refuge in a San Antonio church. There, he was introduced to the Global Refuge team, who helped Pedro complete his asylum application, secure an apartment, and enroll in English classes. He now makes his living pursuing his passion for art, selling his canvases at an open-air art market—and he pays it forward by providing volunteer medical services to other newcomers in need.

*\*Name has been changed to protect anonymity.*



“God sent good people ... who  
have helped me so much.”

-Pedro



## Ana Rosa: A New Beginning

Ana Rosa was forced to flee Venezuela after she and her three children, who are all deaf, were targeted by the political opposition. The family made a long, treacherous journey through Central America, including a stretch through a dangerous jungle where they had to tie themselves together to stay safe. When the family finally arrived in the United States, they were given a shower, a warm meal, support, and a chance to start over. With the help of Global Refuge, the three children all received life-changing cochlear implants to allow them to fully hear again—offering a firm footing from which to start their new lives in America.

“We did not know what the future held...  
but we did it, and thank God we are here.”

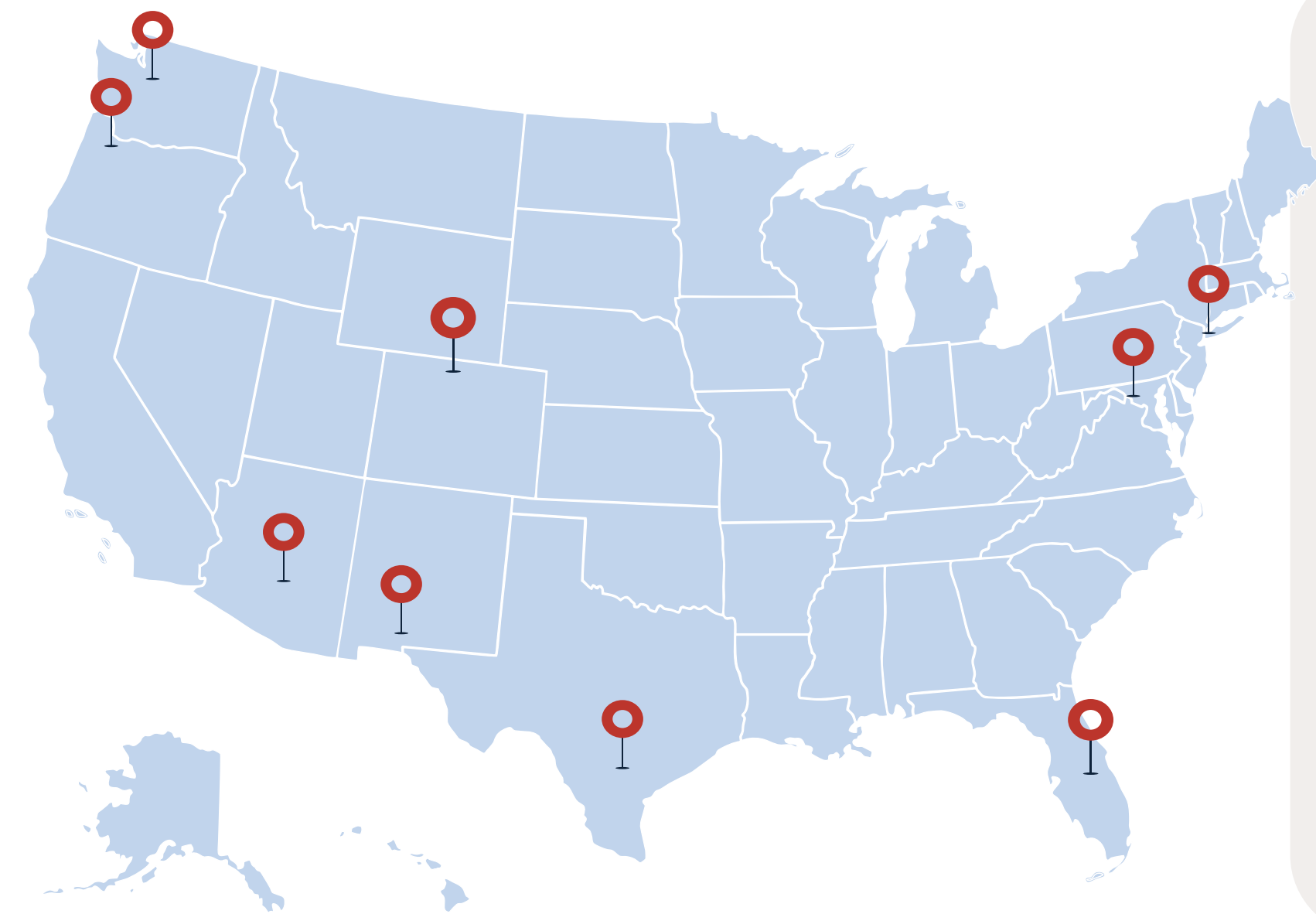
-Ana Rosa



# Our Welcome Centers

While certain services are initially available to asylum services, refugees, and those with other immigration statuses, our team recognized that newcomers needed a one-stop shop—a place where they could walk in the door and immediately have access to the support they need, from medical and mental healthcare to career development.

Located at affiliate offices across the country, our Welcome Center programming provides a next level of service, offering protection-centered and trauma-informed case management, legal support, and connections to essential community resources.



## Our Locations:

- Baltimore, MD
- Denver, CO
- Las Cruces, NM
- New York, NY
- Phoenix, AZ
- Portland, OR
- San Antonio, TX
- Seattle, WA
- Tampa, FL



# Our Welcome Centers



Photo Credit: Kaylee Greenlee Beal



## San Antonio

Our San Antonio Welcome Center was awarded a PaCE Health Equity grant by the San Antonio Area Foundation, providing nearly \$8K for general operations and an additional \$15K for capacity building to bolster the city's health equity initiatives focused on food security, housing stability, economic stability, and respectful healthcare access in the community.

“The Welcome Center will be more than a building, it will represent an opportunity to build a better Baltimore – not just for immigrants and refugees, but for all who call our city home.”

-Krish O'Mara Vignarajah

## Baltimore

Opened in 2023, the Baltimore Welcome Center connects refugees and asylum seekers to community and social services, legal assistance, education, and healthcare as they rebuild their lives.

The Journey to Welcome:

# Integration

The immigration journey is complex. Even after basic needs such as food, shelter, and a steady stream of income have been met, the transition to a new life in a new country has only just begun.

As newcomers settle into their communities, Global Refuge takes a holistic approach to address their diverse needs, offering a range of services designed to empower and uplift our newest neighbors while helping them cultivate a sense of home. From mental health counseling and care, to initiatives fostering economic independence, to help with navigating immigration cases, we know that the journey is exhausting and exciting—but always worth the work.



Photo Credit: Mariah Miranda

# Promoting Mental Health

For those who have fled violence, war, persecution, disaster, or other unthinkable situations, their often-dangerous journey to safety can leave lasting scars.

And even after finding refuge in the U.S., the process of resettlement and seeking asylum—adapting to a new land, new language, and new life—presents an entirely new set of challenges and uncertainties.

Global Refuge believes that addressing the mental well-being of refugees, immigrants, and asylum seekers plays a critical role in helping them achieve success. We designed our mental health programs with the goal of strengthening the overall wellness of recently arrived families and building stronger, healthier communities for all of us.



276

mental health clients served in 2023



41%

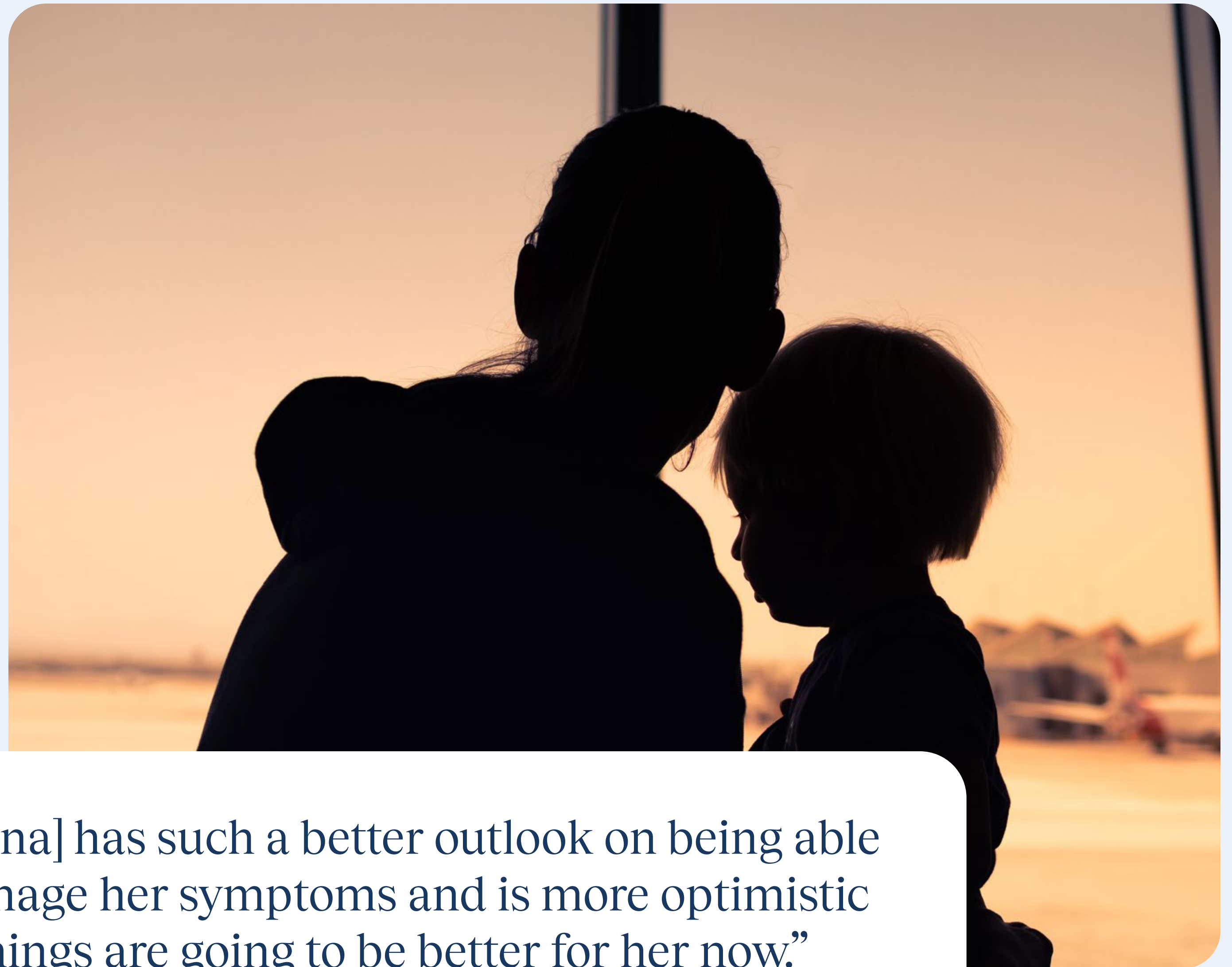
clients under 18



## Marina: Escaping Violence, Finding Victory

Marina\* was just a few months away from the hearing that would determine whether she and her children would be granted asylum in the U.S. or be deported back to extreme violence in her home country. But her extreme anxiety and PTSD made it impossible to plead her case in court. With the help of Global Refuge mental health services, Marina and her clinician addressed the most challenging symptoms that had prevented her from telling her story of violence and abuse. And after four months of therapy, she was finally able to communicate her story, was granted asylum at her court hearing, and is now a proud U.S. resident on her path to citizenship.

*\*Name has been changed to protect anonymity.*



“[Marina] has such a better outlook on being able to manage her symptoms and is more optimistic that things are going to be better for her now.”

-Madeleine Garcia-Welsh, Global Refuge clinician



# Economic Empowerment

For newly arrived immigrants and refugees, meaningful employment brings stability, independence, and a sense of purpose and belonging.

As newcomers grow in their careers and businesses, they not only support themselves and their families, they also help create stronger, more innovative communities. That's why Global Refuge goes beyond helping newcomers find their first job. Our programs focus on long-term success to ensure newcomers don't simply survive, but thrive.

## Preferred Refugee Employers

In 2023, Global Refuge launched the Preferred Refugee Employers (PRE) program, through which we connect our network partners with employers willing to hire refugees and provide support to improve their job access and success. PRE has onboarded 15 employers committed to refugee recruitment and retention best practices, resulting in over 100 hires.



## Flourishing in Fargo

In Fargo, North Dakota several of our Afghan clients have secured meaningful careers at manufacturer Cardinal Insulated Glass, part of our Preferred Refugee Employer network. In showing their commitment to following best practices for hiring New Americans, Cardinal reports that over 70% of their team leaders were born outside of the U.S.



“I’m proud to see [that] those teammates who came here [have] flourished, and evolved into team leaders who are having a big impact on our organization.”

-Mike Arnston, Cardinal IG, Global Refuge Preferred Refugee Employer



## Economic Empowerment: New American Lending

Global Refuge's recently launched New American Lending program offers personal and business loans that would usually be very difficult for newcomers to obtain due to limited or no credit history.

We also educate clients through training in financial literacy, small business management, and personal finances.

This personal approach to lending is essential to bridge the economic gap and make our communities financially stronger.



92%

loan approval rate



60

clients received career coaching



\$659,008

in loans distributed in 2023



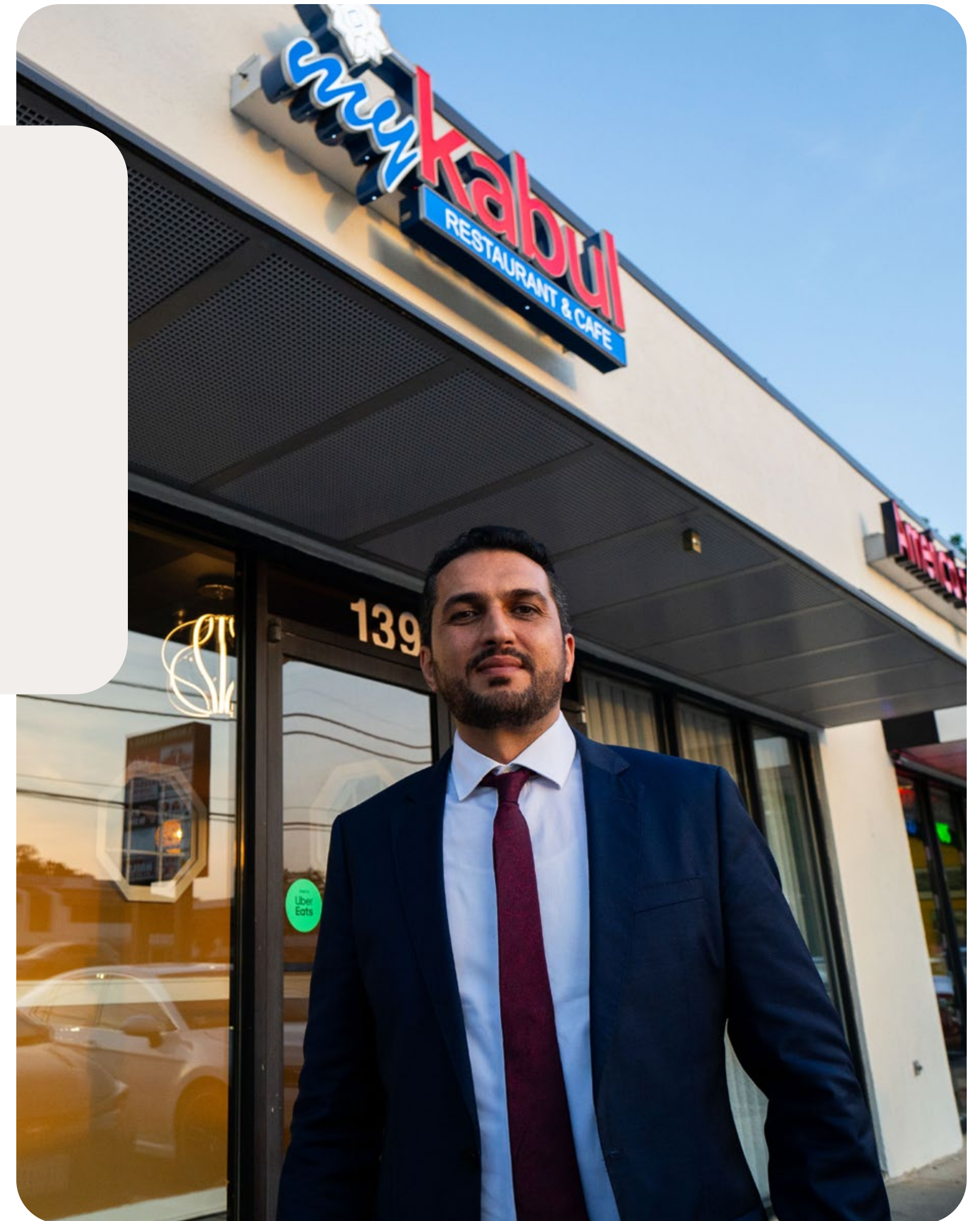
## Khalis: Breaking Bread, Building Community

After fleeing Kabul in 2021, Khalis Noori dedicated himself to assisting and resettling his fellow Afghans in the United States. Recognizing the need for a communal space—and a place to enjoy Afghan dishes he could not find at other restaurants—Noori opened MyKabul restaurant two years later. And with the help of a business loan from New American Lending, his restaurant has evolved into much more than a neighborhood eatery.

Noori employs fellow Afghan refugees, extends discounted meals to refugees from all backgrounds, and gives the local Afghan community a welcoming place to gather, share, and feel a sense of community.

“This loan has helped make my restaurant a place for all to come together under one roof. There is so much love here.”

-Khalis Noori



## Economic Empowerment: New American Careers

This year marked the launch of New American Careers, a recruitment firm created to foster stronger connections between immigrant and refugee jobseekers and companies invested in strengthening and diversifying our American workforce.

New American Careers provides meaningful job readiness, secure placement, and economic empowerment to the immigrant and refugee community. With services like resume building, interview coaching, and on-the-job training, our team helps clients chart a course for their careers and make a new way forward. We also partner with community colleges, vocational schools, and economic development offices in the community to provide additional resources for professional growth.

We work with organizations in hospitality, information technology, healthcare, and third-party logistics, giving employers direct access to a large pool of talented professionals who are eager to transfer their skills to the American workforce. It is our goal with New American Careers to create a cycle of economic empowerment that feeds back into our communities, strengthens our workforce, and contributes to a more welcoming society.



# Legal Services

Launched at the end of 2023, our immigration legal services program helps newcomers and their families navigate the U.S. immigration system and understand their options and legal rights so that they can feel empowered to integrate into their communities and achieve stability.

Our Legal Services team provides:

- immigration legal screening
- case consultations
- pro se assisted services
- direct representation (in limited circumstances)
- translation services
- assistance with case inquiries and escalations

We support clients in cases involving humanitarian forms of relief, family-based immigration, and citizenship/naturalization.



# Advocating for Displaced Afghans

In 2023, Global Refuge continued to lead the Evacuate Our Allies coalition and advocacy efforts to secure the long-term resettlement of Afghans who have arrived in the United States since the fall of the democratically elected government (2021).

We continue to press the administration to expand and enhance protection pathways for vulnerable Afghans who are still in need of protection. At Afghan Support Centers, our Legal Services team provides free legal consultations, case escalation advocacy, and assistance in filing immigration benefits applications.



16

Afghan Support Centers attended



25k+

individuals served



## 2023 Highlights

### Afghan Adjustment Act (AAA)

Global Refuge co-led ongoing bill negotiations and edits on a new introduction of the AAA with Senate co-sponsors.

### June Advocacy Day

With Human Rights First, we co-hosted Capitol Hill Advocacy Days for the AAA in June, securing more than 100 meetings.

### December Advocacy Day

Co-led the Evacuate Our Allies Coalition's December Hill Days, securing more than 100 virtual member/staff-level meetings.



The Journey to Welcome:

# The Long Welcome

Each immigration journey is unique—but, for a long time, the services available to refugees and immigrants on those journeys were not.

Our teams on the ground saw the need to expand our services beyond the basics...and even beyond borders. The result is an innovative slate of programming that continues to grow, and a team that continues to advocate for change in the world of immigration policy. We envision a brighter future for those seeking safety, and we won't be satisfied until we reach it. We're just getting started.

Photo Credit: Javier Aparicio and Oscar Leiva, Silverlight Photo & Video



# Serving Youth at Home

In 2023, Global Refuge was proud to announce an exciting international expansion with the launch of Camino a Casa, a new program for Guatemalan youth.

Each year, hundreds of thousands of young adults and children from Central America attempt to migrate to the United States, driven by poverty, instability, and violence. Unfortunately, under current U.S. immigration law, many are quickly returned to their home country.

But we believe that a better life is still possible—especially for children and young adults. Through compassionate individualized support, our Guatemalan repatriation program helps youth achieve their goals and build a brighter future at home.

The Camino a Casa program provides support to youth in Guatemala for up to 12 months to ensure successful reintegration. In conjunction with local partners, we offer comprehensive support, as well as supplementary income and connections to community resources. Each youth receives an individualized plan that focuses on their specific goals.

We look forward to continuing to expand this program to Mexico and beyond.



## Jose: Finding Hope at Home

When Jose's father suffered a traumatic brain injury two years ago, leaving him unable to work, Jose attempted to make the dangerous journey to the U.S. to find work so he could support his family. He did not make it and was deported back to Guatemala before he reached the border. With the help of Camino a Casa, Jose's father received funding to see a neurologist. He is now on seizure medication and will be returning to work soon. The program has also assisted Jose with enrolling in vocational training and is addressing other concerns within the home through individual and family counseling.





# Our Advocacy

In our mission to welcome, support, and protect refugees and immigrants, advocacy plays a key role. We bring critical issues to light and press for necessary actions from policymakers, legislators, and government officials.

Guided by our mission to create a nation of welcoming communities, we work tirelessly with faith partners, affiliates, supporters, and community leaders to champion policies that defend the rights and promote the well-being of those we serve.

## Advocacy in Action: Supporting Protection Pathways

In November, Global Refuge hosted a congressional briefing entitled “Growing Our Future: Innovation, Farmworkers, and Agriculture on the Frontlines of U.S. Carbon Emissions Reduction,” which provided insights into the critical intersection of climate change, migration, and agriculture policy.

President & CEO Krish O’Mara Vignarajah moderated the briefing’s panel of experts, which included Rep. Blumenauer (D-OR-3), Bill McKibben, founder of 350.org, and Matthew Kaplan of the Natural Resources Defense Council.




**Engaging and inspiring our youth**

In collaboration with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the team organized an Advocacy Day that connected 12 Global Refuge Ambassadors who participated in a young adult border immersion trip with their elected members of Congress.

# World Refugee Day

Each year, World Refugee Day is a time we amplify our voices to educate the public and our policy makers on the strength that refugees bring to communities, and various ways policies can be improved to promote refugees' integration and success.

During our in-person Advocacy Day on June 20th, 2023, **41 participants** and accompaniers joined us at the Capitol for **13 in-person meetings**.

World Refugee Day 2023 also gave us our most successful fundraising appeal ever, with over **960 donors** giving nearly **\$143,000**.



Photo Credit: Mariah Miranda



Photo Credit: Mariah Miranda



Photo Credit: Mariah Miranda



Photo Credit: Mariah Miranda



Photo Credit: Mariah Miranda



# Advocacy in Action

## #125Watch

This year saw the launch of 125 Watch, a Global Refuge initiative that led the charge in urging Congress and the Biden administration to fulfill its commitment to resettle 125,000 refugees in 2024. Because these refugee admissions goals cannot be achieved without appropriate funding and support from Congress and agency oversight, advocates, non-governmental organizations, and resettlement partners alike must hold the policymakers accountable.

Through 125 Watch, Global Refuge is tracking refugee admissions and arrivals in the U.S. through data provided monthly by the Refugee Processing Center. We encourage advocates to also join this effort by writing a letter to the White House, urging them to continue to prioritize strengthening our resettlement capacity, and stepping up as a resettlement leader given the record number of displaced people globally.



## Asylum Seekers and Unaccompanied Children

Global Refuge led and participated in many significant efforts to increase protections and opportunities for asylum seekers and unaccompanied children in 2023, including the #SaveAsylumNow event on the Hill, organizational support for the CHNV Parole Program and opposition to the government's proposed rule restricting asylum access, in-person leadership and technical expertise in advocating and applying for work permits for asylum seekers, and preparation of Global Refuge Vice President of Children and Family Services Lorie Davidson as a witness for a full Senate Judiciary Committee hearing focused on safeguarding unaccompanied children in the wake of discoveries of child labor abuse practices nationwide.

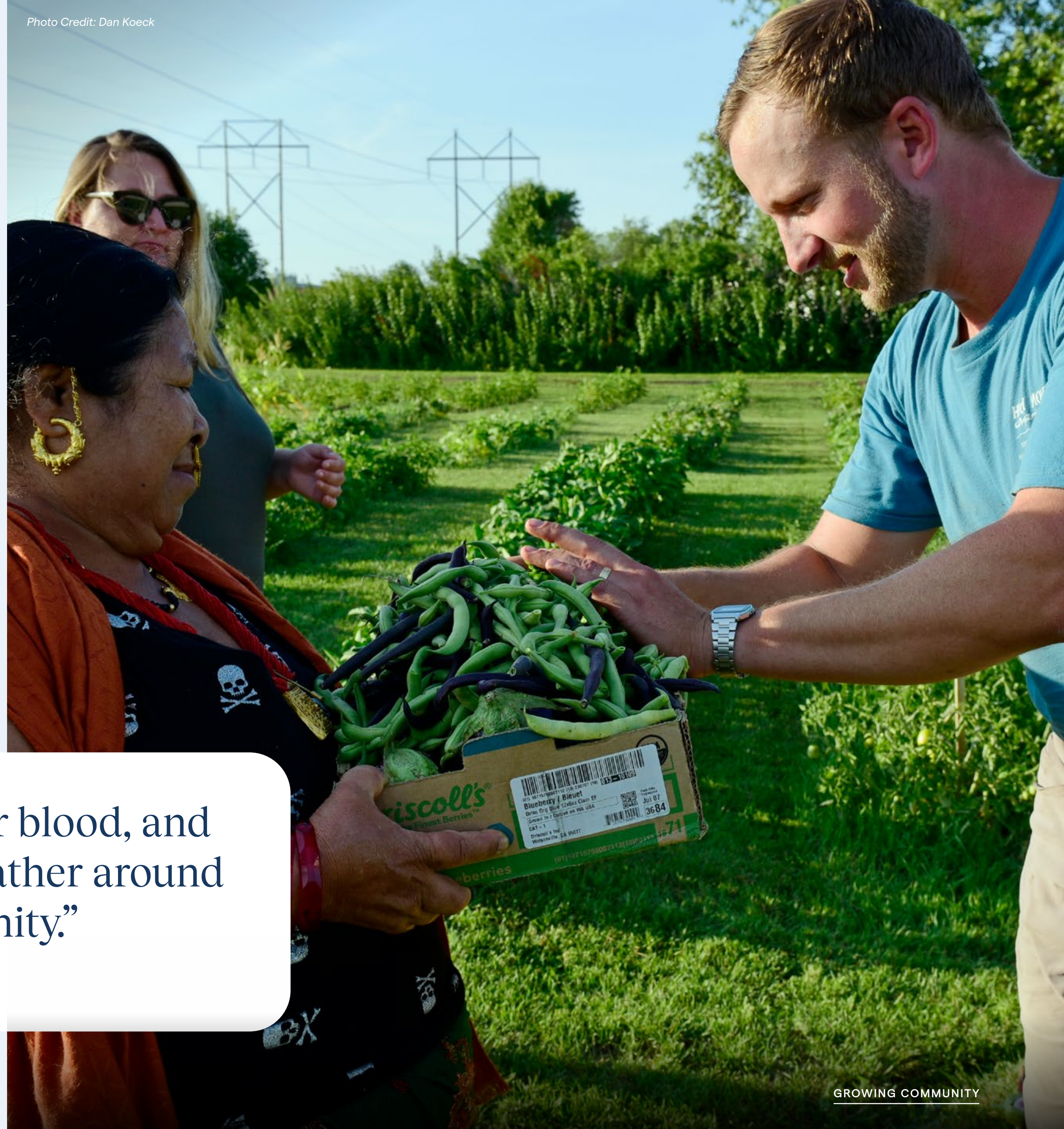


# Growing Community

In 2023, Global Refuge Fargo was excited to receive a grant from the Office of Refugee Resettlement for the Refugee Agricultural Partnership Program and immediately rolled up their sleeves to create a one-acre community garden.

Refugees, immigrants, and community members work together to grow and source their own sustainable produce—while building community from the ground up. The goal of this innovative program is to put nutritious, locally grown produce within everyone’s reach. And that’s exactly what it has done.

Over the past year, the garden has become a safe space for Global Refuge clients and the entire community, turning what was once an empty and neglected lot into a thriving melting pot of cultures and traditions.



“Gardening and farming is in our blood, and this is an opportunity for us to gather around and make friends in the community.”

-Kul Basnet, former refugee and Global Refuge case manager

# Supporting the Journey

At every step of the journey, the work of welcome is a community effort—both on the ground and behind the scenes.

Global Refuge has long been supported by our vast network of unsung heroes: donors, volunteers, community groups, congregations, and others who help create the vital infrastructure of immigration and refugee resettlement that allows our nation to thrive.



# Mobilization and Faith Relations

Since our founding in 1939 by Lutherans assisting other Lutherans fleeing persecution during WWII, faith has been integral to why we do this work.

Our Mobilization and Faith Relations team works with congregations and community groups across the country—offering theological resources, frequent immigration and refugee resettlement updates, guest lectures and sermons, and a slate of robust national programs intended to engage supporters of all faiths and backgrounds.



\$505k

raised from 300 faith communities



14

Synod Assemblies attended



## Emillie: From Refugee to Reverend

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

But her journey to the community was a difficult one. At just eight years old, Emillie's world forever changed when her family fled the political turmoil of the Democratic Republic of Congo, seeking refuge in Uganda.

For 15 years, Emillie's family searched for a safe home, 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 Refuge 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.



“It is only by grace that I was able to have my family (both biological and church) witness with me this day. My Spirit was full (just as my smile is) and continues to be full.”

-Pastor Emillie, reflecting on the day of her ordination

## Spreading the Word

As part of a broader engagement strategy, the Mobilization and Faith Relations team dedicated significant time and effort to attending Synod Assemblies and visiting congregations around the country to share more about the work of welcome and encourage people of faith to take action.

In an incredible show of grassroots community organizing, Global Refuge Ambassadors wrote and submitted resolutions to their Synod Assemblies that supported refugees and asylum seekers in their states. The resolutions will be passed on to the ELCA national assembly in 2025 to be adopted by the entire denomination.



40+

congregations visited



**Andrew Steele and Nassir Ahmad of the Development and Mobilization Team visited Trinity Lutheran Church in June during a celebration for Afghan families.**

*Photos: John Jones*





# A Network of Welcome

Every day, our vast community of volunteers and Ambassadors dedicate their time and talents to welcoming new neighbors and educating their communities and congregations about immigration and refugee resettlement.

Through programs, events, and on-the-ground support, our volunteer network shows support in ways large and small—but always impactful.



## First Friends

This year, Global Refuge volunteers helped respond to the historically high number of new arrivals along the southern border after the lifting of Title 42 by supporting our Field Offices and local affiliates. Volunteers assembled furniture and set up apartments for new arrivals, picked up families from the airport, provided food and bottled water, and even drove new neighbors around to show them where grocery stores and local schools were located.



# 1,012

new volunteer applications



# Hope for the Holidays

In its ninth year, Global Refuge's annual Hope for the Holidays™ program collected cards and monetary gifts used to buy presents for New American families. The program, which provides messages of love, dignity, and support to immigrants, grew this year from an initiative focusing primarily on those in immigration detention to a nationwide effort to share cards with asylum-seeking children and families across the country. Volunteers helped us spread holiday hope and joy by distributing thousands of greetings and gifts to immigrant families.



16,000

cards distributed



400

participating communities



100+

attendees at Hope for the Holidays event at HQ



Photo Credit: Marlayna Photography



Photo Credit: Marlayna Photography



Photo Credit: Marlayna Photography



Photo Credit: Marlayna Photography



## A Fresh Change

When immigrants are released from Customs and Border Protection custody, it is often with nothing but the ill-fitting government-issued clothes on their backs. To ensure that our new neighbors are welcomed with dignity, Global Refuge partnered with the Border Servant Corps and Lutheran Social Services of New York to launch Fresh Change.

To ensure that our new neighbors are welcomed with dignity, Global Refuge has partnered with Border Servant Corps in Las Cruces, New Mexico and Lutheran Social Services of New York to operate the Fresh Change program in the Southwest and New York.



# 1,633

Fresh Change bags packed by individuals and communities



# Building the Future of Welcome

Donors, corporate partners, advocates, and advisors across industries make the journey possible.

Many of our most exciting, effective programs are privately funded—allowing us the flexibility to meet our newest neighbors where they are and address some of the most critical challenges in resettlement today. With the support of our incredible network, we're changing the face of immigrant and refugee services at home and abroad. Join us.



50

states represented by donors



\$7.1m

raised to support immigrants and refugees



## Matt: Empowerment in Action

After Matt Jordan successfully turned around a struggling vehicle protection manufacturer, he made a substantial profit when the company sold. And he saw the windfall as the perfect opportunity to help others.

“I knew I wanted to do something worthwhile,” he said. “I did my research and found that Global Refuge was an organization I want to stand behind.”

Matt chose to give to refugee resettlement and empowerment efforts after seeing firsthand the impact of displacement on families around the world, including in Mexico, Ethiopia, and Turkey.

Last Christmas, Matt set up a \$100,000 matching gift fund to support Global Refuge. Through personal emails and social media appeals, he encouraged his network of friends, business contacts, and professional colleagues to give generously and join him in supporting the work of welcome.

In the months following, Matt increased his commitment to Global Refuge, joining our President’s Council and facilitating key sponsorship opportunities.

We are immensely grateful for donors like Matt Jordan who champion our mission with such dedication and passion.



“I’ve seen what a tough path it is for refugees. It takes a great deal of courage to leave your home not knowing what lies ahead.”

-Matt Jordan



# Corporate Giving Collective

Our partnerships with the private sector make a powerful and transformative difference in the lives of refugees and immigrants while providing significant advantages to our partner companies. We established the Corporate Giving Collective (CGC) to take these partnerships beyond philanthropy by inviting our partners to immerse themselves in the work of welcome through education, volunteer opportunities, and collaborative storytelling.

CGC members can participate in employee engagement opportunities with Global Refuge, get real-time insights into contemporary immigration issues, and access public-facing assets that demonstrate corporate social responsibility.



# \$779,758

in corporate partnerships to support innovative programming



## A New Legacy: The Dorothy Rossing Fund

Dorothy Rossing's dedication to the work of welcome began in 1981, when she led the decision for her congregation, Bethlehem Lutheran Church in DeKalb, Illinois, to sponsor a refugee family from Cambodia.

Going well beyond financial support, Dorothy invited the family to live in her home for several months until they knew enough English to function well in the U.S. Even while working full-time as her county's Women Infant Children nutrition program coordinator, Dorothy was a key part of the church team that found jobs for the refugee family, furnished their apartment, and supported them for many years in adjusting to American life.

Once settled, the Cambodian family brought other family members to the U.S., one of whom also lived with Dorothy for several months. She also welcomed many international students and others to live in her home for months at a time whenever she saw a need.

When she retired, Dorothy moved to Minneapolis and continued to provide a welcoming space for immigrants. One Togolese immigrant couple lived with her for four

months and worked diligently and successfully to bring their children to the U.S. Dorothy stayed close to the family, and years later when the mother and three children needed a place to stay, she invited them to live with her again for several months.

Seeing the need many immigrants have for short-term loans, Dorothy worked with her congregation, Lutheran Church of Christ the Redeemer in Minneapolis, to set up a Togo Loan Fund that provided loans to Togolese people and managed it for several years.

During these years, Dorothy also served as a Global Refuge Ambassador, setting up tables at numerous church events to tell others about the important work Global Refuge does in helping refugees and other immigrants resettle.

It's only fitting that Global Refuge's first-ever named endowment fund, used to support micro-lending for immigrants and refugees, was named in honor of Dorothy Rossing in 2023. She was a lifelong supporter of the work of welcome and has left an enduring legacy of supporting and uplifting immigrants as they become members of our community.



# Financial Statement

Global Refuge is a careful steward of the private donations and public funds that allow us to carry out our work of welcome.

Statement of Financial Position as of December 31, 2023

Based on audited financial statements

Statement of Activities & Changes in Net Assets for the year ended December 31, 2023

Dollars in thousands

## Statement of Financial Position

Assets	2023	2022
Cash & Cash Equivalents	\$29,987	\$14,594
Investments	33,669	28,799
U.S. Govt Receivable	37,152	41,832
Other Assets	3,713	3,255
Investment In Lutheran Center Corp	3,243	3,318
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$107,764</b>	<b>\$91,798</b>
<b>Liabilities and Net Assets</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2022</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>		
Accounts Payable & Other Liabilities	\$45,134	\$33,707
Long-term Debt	162	1,570
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>\$45,296</b>	<b>\$35,277</b>
<b>Net Assets</b>		
Without Donor Restrictions	\$61,973	\$53,880
With Donor Restrictions	495	2,641
<b>Total Net Assets</b>	<b>\$62,468</b>	<b>\$56,521</b>
<b>Total Liabilities and Net Assets</b>	<b>\$107,764</b>	<b>\$91,798</b>

## Statement of Activities & Changes in Net Assets

Support & Revenue	2023	2022
Contributions-Private Sources	\$7,761	\$28,143
U.S. Government and State	221,476	179,864
Fees and Other Revenue	1,585	1,564
<b>Total Support and Revenue</b>	<b>\$230,822</b>	<b>\$209,571</b>
<b>Expenses</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2022</b>
Expenses	\$215,586	\$177,876
Program Services	11,979	8,601
Management and General	3,250	2,425
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$230,815</b>	<b>\$188,902</b>
Change in Net Assets	\$5,947	\$19,435
Net Assets, Beginning of Year	56,521	37,086
<b>Net Assets, End of Year</b>	<b>\$62,468</b>	<b>\$56,521</b>



# Looking Ahead to 2024

From expanding our team to launching innovative programs to responding quickly to global crises, our organization made remarkable strides in 2023—and we've laid a strong foundation for the journey ahead.

As we sharpen our focus on strategically implementing the Global Refuge identity, we will continue to seek opportunities to widen our reach, build a bigger table, and engage with a broader audience to drive our mission forward.

In 2024, Global Refuge celebrates 85 years of serving newcomers seeking safety, support, and welcome. And while we have so much to celebrate, we also face great challenges. In addition to ongoing international conflicts, we cannot avoid the realities of unprecedented global displacement and surging anti-immigrant sentiment. But we're confident that with the steadfast support of the Global Refuge network of advocates, donors, volunteers, and others, we will be well-positioned to continue the work of welcome for the next 85 years and beyond.



# Leadership

\*As of December 31, 2023

## Board of Directors\*

### Executive Committee

**Ms. Elizabeth Wagner**  
**(Board Chair)**

Senior Vice President and Director,  
Institutional Wealth Management,  
Bryn Mawr Trust Company  
(Princeton, NJ)

**Ms. Bryn Parchman**  
**(Vice Chair)**

Port Discovery Children's Museum,  
Retired  
(Baltimore, MD)

**Ms. Michele Speaks**  
**(Secretary)**

Co-Chair, Warnock Foundation  
(Baltimore, MD)

**Mr. Dennis Wieckert**  
**(Board Treasurer)**

CPA, Retired  
(Alpharetta, GA)

### At-Large Members

**Mr. Matuor Alier**

Moorhead Area Public Schools  
(Fargo, ND)

**Ms. Diane Batchik**

Diane Batchik Consulting  
(Columbia, MD)

**Bishop Paul Erickson**

Greater Milwaukee ELCA Synod  
(Milwaukee, WI)

**Rev. Dr. Yared Halche**

Southeastern District LCMS  
(Ellicott City, MD)

**Mr. Muhsin Hassan**

Lever for Change  
(Chicago, IL)

**Ms. Virginia Hultquist**

Thrivent Financial, Retired  
(Greensboro, NC)

**Rev. John R. Moeller, Jr.**

Inspiritus  
(Atlanta, GA)

**Dr. Diana Pohle**

BioMarin Pharmaceuticals Inc.  
(San Jose, CA)

**Mr. Eddie Resende**

World Trade Center Institute  
(Baltimore, MD)

**Mr. Clarence Smith**

Huntington National Bank, Retired  
(Minneapolis, MN)



# Leadership

## President's Council

### **Diane Batchik**

Diane Batchik Consulting

### **Sindy Benavides**

Latino Victory Project

### **Charlotte Biern**

Make-A-Wish Greater Bay Area Foundation

### **Frederick Black**

Blackstar Strategies

### **Sylvia Black**

Blackstar Strategies

### **Angela Chee**

Zen Media

### **Kathy Collins**

Rice University, Retired

### **Christopher Davis**

Ford Foundation

### **Angela Dejene**

Dejene Communications

### **Judy Diers**

Diers Consulting, LLC

### **Habib Enayetullah**

Hilton

### **Rev. Mary Forell**

Pastor, Retired

### **Sarah Gerth van den Berg**

City Seminary of New York

### **Rev. Tom Grevlos**

Pastor, Retired

### **Christine Grumm**

Chris Grumm Consulting Group

### **Michael Hansen**

Hansen and Associates

### **Muhsin Hassan**

Lever for Change

### **Edgar Hatcher**

The Hatcher Group

### **Daya Khalsa**

Anchorum St. Vincent

### **Donna Kinzer**

DK Healthcare Consulting

### **Sean Long**

PowerTransitions LLC

### **Lori Lovelace**

The Vessel

### **Rev. Rufus Lusk**

Pastor, Retired

### **William McKibben**

350.org

### **Paul Miles**

We Raise Foundation

### **Bryn Parchman**

Global Refuge Board Chair, Port Discovery Children's Museum (retired)

### **Joanna Peña-Bickley**

Designed By Us, Design Corps

### **LeRoy Pingho**

Great Elm Solutions, Inc.

### **Sridhar Prasad**

The Bridgespan Group

### **Anne Richard**

US State Department

### **Lisa Scott-Benson**

Russ Reid

### **Rogers Smith**

University of Pennsylvania

### **Michele Speaks**

Global Refuge Board Secretary, Warnock Foundation

### **Linda Stoterau**

Former Global Refuge Board Member

### **Jose Antonio Tijierno**

Hispanic Heritage Foundation

### **Laurel Vicklund**

Peregrine Global Services

### **David Warnock**

Warnock Foundation

### **Reinhard Ziegler**

The Vessel



Global Refuge welcomes newcomers  
who seek safety, support, and a share  
in the American dream.

410 983 4000

# Thank you so much for your support!

To help Global Refuge continue our work of welcome,  
please make a gift at [globalrefuge.org/give23](https://globalrefuge.org/give23).