

LEGACY FOR OUR MISSION:

For Our Children and the Future

REFUGEES ARE GOD'S PEOPLE WHO NEED OUR HELP

IF YOU HAD TO FLEE THE UNITED STATES TODAY OR FACE HARSH CONSEQUENCES—even political imprisonment or death—who would you turn to for help? Could you speak the language? And how would you provide immediate food, shelter and other necessities for yourself and your family?

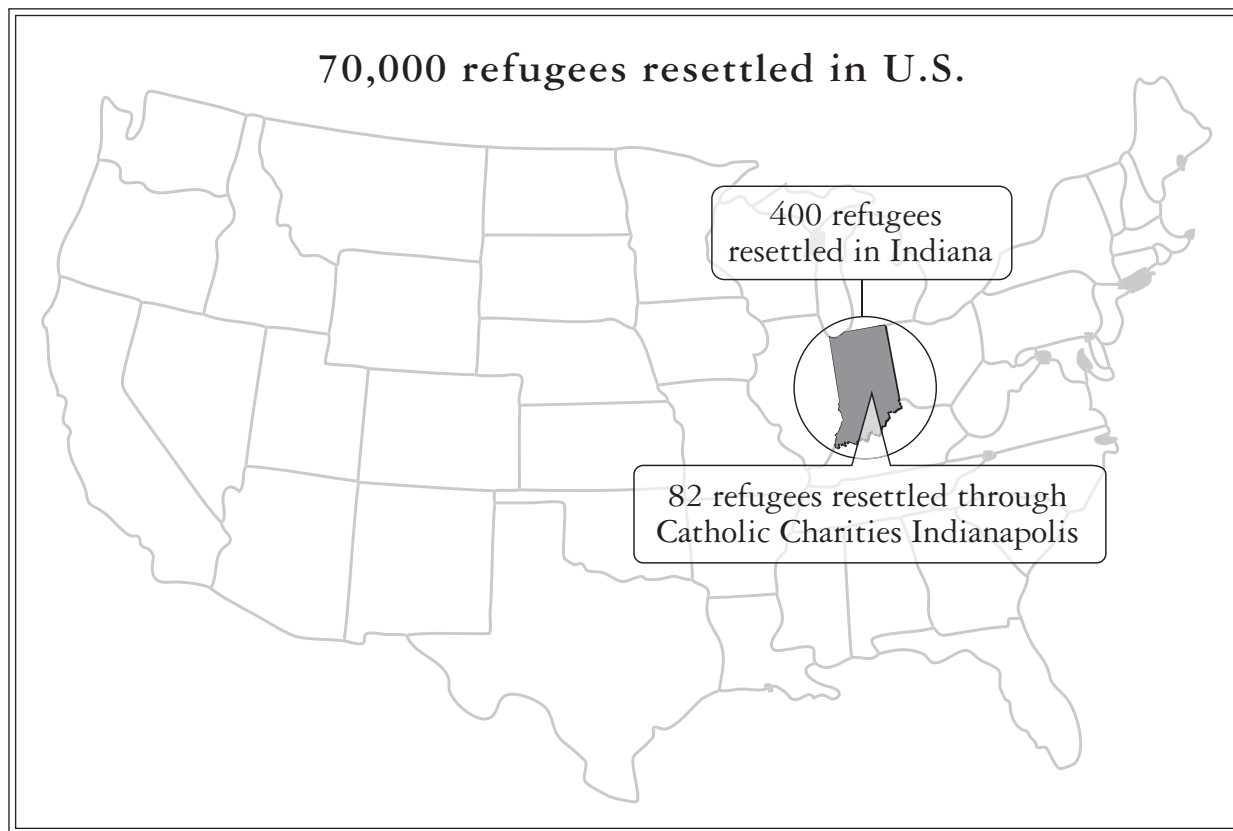
The Refugee Resettlement Program, an affiliate of United States Conference of Catholic Bishops/Migration and Refugee Services (USCCB/MRS), helps people from all over the world escape persecution and resettle in Indianapolis.

“It is amazing to see the progress of a person who arrives in this country with nothing or very little,” said Joyce Overton, director of the Refugee Resettlement Program at Catholic Charities Indianapolis. “And then to see them thriving one, three, five, 10, or even 20 years later. It feels good to know you had a small part in helping them.”

Overton said people may have become desensitized to the term “refugee,” but believes that we should think of refugees first as God’s people; people who need refuge from ethnic, religious, national, social or political persecution. The Refugee Act of 1980 established U.S. policies for aiding those in need. It was recently amended to include people who have fled due to war, other conflicts and natural disasters.

The Refugee Resettlement Program is part of Catholic Charities Indianapolis and funds from Legacy for Our Mission are allocated to the program. “In addition to monetary aid, the program is in need of volunteers and a large storage area for household items, such as furniture,” said Overton. Services offered to refugees to help them adapt to Hoosier life and culture include airport pickup, initial housing that is safe and sanitary, food, clothing, assistance for social security cards, registering children into the school system, job placement and help with health services.

The majority of people assisted by the Refugee Resettlement Program are families from African nations, such as Ethiopia and Somalia. Prior to arriving in the United States, most of these families



survived the substandard conditions of refugee camps for months or years—as many as 15 years in extreme cases. Many refugees come from cultures where the only jobs are agricultural. They may have never before seen running water or other modern conveniences.

Among the 70,000 refugees that Congress permitted to resettle in the United States last year, 400 came to Indiana and the Refugee Resettlement Program assisted 82 people on a path to rebuilding their lives in Indianapolis. Overton expects an increase to more than 100 refugees needing assistance from the program throughout 2006.

“There are always success stories,” Overton said. And to us at the Refugee Resettlement Program, any refugee who feels welcome to the United States is a success story.”

Legacy for Our Mission, the archdiocese's upcoming capital campaign, is guided by the principles of Christian stewardship and addresses the needs of archdiocesan ministries such as Catholic Charities. By contributing to Legacy for Our Mission through your local parish, a portion of your gift will be allocated to Catholic charities programs and distributed to organizations such as the Refugee Resettlement Program.