



Affiliated with  
Episcopal Migration  
Ministries & Church  
World Service

December 2005

Dear Friend:

In 2005, our state's hospitality was put to the test when more than a thousand foreign refugees and hurricane evacuees arrived here. The response was wonderful. Communities, businesses, and individuals all over Connecticut joined groups like **Interfaith Refugee Ministry (IRM)** to welcome our new neighbors with open arms.

As we enter the New Year, IRM will continue to meet the challenge of helping new Americans and displaced citizens. But we need your support. Although our government invites refugees to the U.S. and covers some initial costs, it's not nearly enough. **That's why your help is essential.**

**Your support makes a world of difference to a family of new Americans** arriving in Connecticut. Your donations cover housing costs and healthcare while they learn English and look for jobs. Your contributions allow us to offer our clients affordable immigration legal services, and ensure that refugee children in public schools learn English and join their classmates on field trips.

Refugees have already suffered unspeakable hardships. Escaping persecution, civil war, imprisonment, torture, and genocide, they often spend years in refugee camps waiting for permission to come to the U.S. In addition to housing and jobs, refugees need friends and connections to the community. That's why IRM arranges for volunteers and community groups to assist refugee families.

- Abu-Bakarr fled from Liberia to Sierra Leone, where he survived a civil war and hunger. Soon after he arrived in New Haven with his family, he started working in a nearby factory. Volunteers have helped the family adjust. They took them on tours of the city, gave clothing and bicycles to the children, showed them where to shop, and visited on weekends.
- When three families of Meshketian Turks first arrived in Windsor, their lingering memories of police harassment in Russia made them fearful of walking down the street. But two local churches have worked to help them feel at home, find apartments, and enroll their children in school.
- When Hurricane Katrina hit Mississippi, Whitney brought her family to Connecticut, but they had nowhere to live; until a church in Madison took them into its parish house. Whitney is working and her kids are in school.

Please help IRM continue its essential work of welcoming and resettling new Americans and citizens displaced by disasters. Help us connect new Americans to their new Connecticut communities. Help us provide children with tutors and after school activities. Help us give special attention to urgent health needs. Help us run classes in English language, cultural orientation, job readiness, and computer literacy. Help us help our newcomers become truly self-sufficient and productive members of Connecticut's communities.

Over the years, Connecticut has earned several nicknames: Nutmeg State, Constitution State, and "land of steady habits." But to the thousands of refugees and evacuees who have made this their new home, Connecticut stands for hope, freedom, and hospitality.

Thank you for your support.

Chris George

**P.S. Please contribute today to this wonderful program. \$50 buys a month's worth of food for five families from the Connecticut Food Bank. \$100 pays the moving costs for a family with toddlers to live in a lead safe apartment. \$250 pays for two weeks of after school activities for 30 refugee children. \$500 covers two week's rent on a three-bedroom apartment. We are also interested in your comments and ideas. Email us, check our website: [www.interfaithrefugee.org](http://www.interfaithrefugee.org), or visit our office.**

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