

News Release – For Immediate Distribution
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New Refugee Placement Program

Millions of families worldwide are living as refugees, uprooted by war, persecution or natural disaster. A few of these families may find a new home in Lane County, thanks to a new refugee placement program, spearheaded by a local community task force and coordinated by Catholic Community Services of Lane County.

The program in Lane County is limited to 35 or fewer refugees (individual family members) per year. There are currently three refugee families (10 total family members) waiting to come to the Eugene/ Springfield area, because a relative or friend already lives here. Two of the families are originally from Syria, and one is from Burma, also known as Myanmar.

Before being cleared to come to the United States, each family member has to go through an extensive screening and vetting process with the U.S. Department of State. This includes several levels of security checks, interviews with U.S. officials, and a medical screening. The process takes an average of 18–24 months to complete. The three families coming to Lane County have completed the screening process and are waiting for a confirmed travel date. It is anticipated that they will arrive here within the next 2–3 months.

Catholic Community Services of Lane County was asked to take on the refugee program by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops/Migration and Refugee Service, the largest refugee resettlement agency in the nation. “We are a Catholic Charities agency, and Catholic Charities agencies throughout the United States are involved in refugee placement programs” said Tom Mulhern, Executive Director of the local agency.

Catholic Community Services has found strong community support from several local service organizations, faith-based groups, and concerned community members. For more information about getting involved or making a donation to support this effort, email refugee@ccslc.org.

“Many of us have had our hearts touched by the desperate plight of refugees, forced to flee their homes and their countries because of devastation and chaos” said Mulhern. “Surely we can welcome a few of these families and help them start new lives in our community.”