



This annual report was funded by a grant from the United States Department of State. The opinions, findings and conclusions stated herein are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of the U.S. Department of State.

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Support EMM:



# 2023 Annual Report

## About EMM

Episcopal Migration Ministries is a ministry of The Episcopal Church and is one of ten national agencies responsible for resettling refugees in the United States in partnership with the government. Episcopal Migration Ministries currently has 13 affiliate offices in 10 states. In addition to its long-standing work in refugee resettlement ministry, Episcopal Migration Ministries is The Episcopal Church's convening place for collaboration, education, and information-sharing on migration.

## Mission Statement

Episcopal Migration Ministries welcomes refugees, educates communities, and mobilizes congregations to advocate for the protection and rights of all migrants.

## Dear Friends and Colleagues,

As I write this letter I am reminded of the ever-growing number of forcibly displaced people, many of whom are children, in search of safety and stability. The world is experiencing record levels of displacement with the UNHCR's latest data showing over 110 million people forced from their homes. It can be easy to lose hope and feel helpless in the face of such an overwhelming crisis, but The Episcopal Church is committed to advocating for the rights and protection of all forced migrants. We at EMM take comfort in the knowledge that there are many organizations, partners, congregations, and supporters that help sustain this holy ministry.

EMM experienced tremendous growth in FY23, welcoming nearly 3,600 individuals from 37 countries resettling to 24 communities around the U.S. In addition, we launched our Remote Partner Community Placement (RPCP) program and have already successfully recruited 12 community partners to offer welcoming services beyond the range of our established affiliate organizations. This growth in clients served across all programs represents an increase of 119% from FY22.

Our work of education and engagement continued in FY23 through The Rainbow Initiative, a program launched in response to General Convention's charge to highlight and respond to the specific challenges LGBTQ+ refugees and asylum seekers face. EMM is proud to have partnered with 21 congregations committed to educating and advocating for protections needed for LGBTQ+ refugees and asylum seekers.

While this year brought changes to our network, including the loss of our Austin, TX partner, we expanded specific programs to three sites in FY23 and are excited to welcome two new affiliate partners in FY24. EMM's growth is a direct response to the increased number of arrivals through the US Refugee Admissions Program, as well as the dedication and commitment of local communities to welcome our newest neighbors. We could not do this work without the partnerships and support of all those who remain committed to a world where every person has a safe place to call home.

Faithfully,



Sarah Shipman

Director of Episcopal Migration Ministries

# Mission & IMPACT

According to the UNHCR, there are currently:

More than **110 million** people forcibly displaced

More than **36.4 million** refugees

More than **62.5 million** internally displaced people

More than **6.1 million** asylum seekers

More than **5.3 million** other people in need of international protection

In Fiscal Year 2023, EMM provided reception and placement services to **3,597 individuals** from **37 countries:**

**3,026** refugees

**571** with Special Immigrant Visas (SIV) – **558** from Afghanistan,

**7** from Vietnam, **6** from Iraq

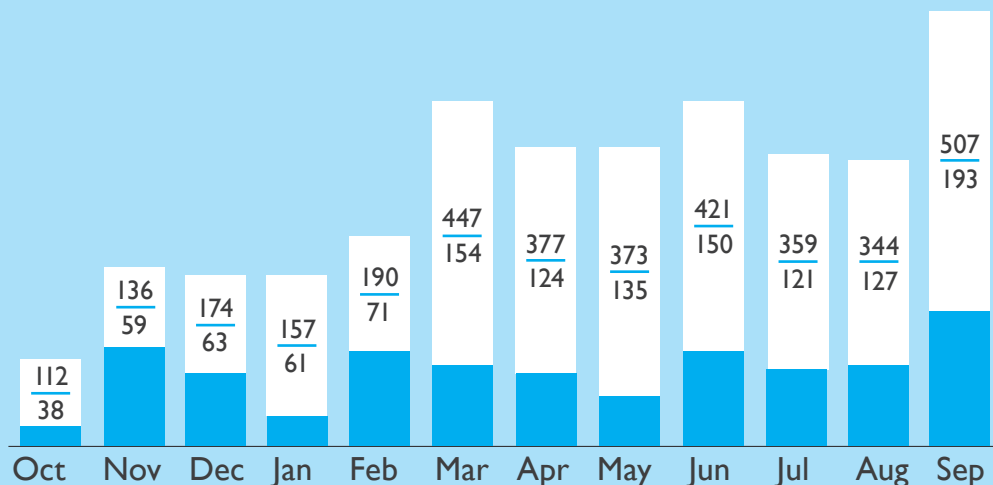
**1,573** are children, **2,024** are adults



## Arrivals by Month

■ FY 2023  
■ FY 2022

Individuals Grand Total = 3597  
 Cases Grand Total = 1306

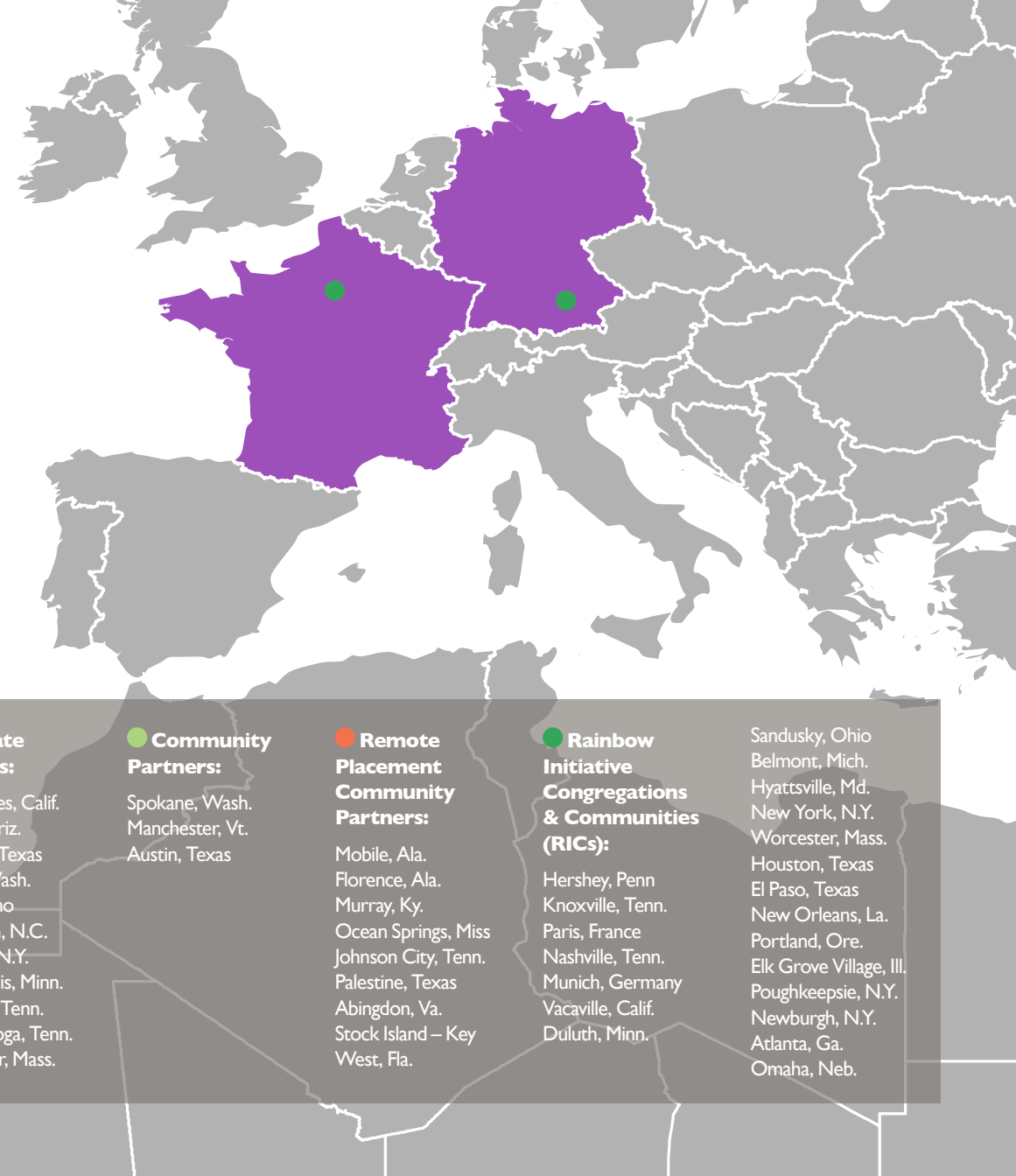
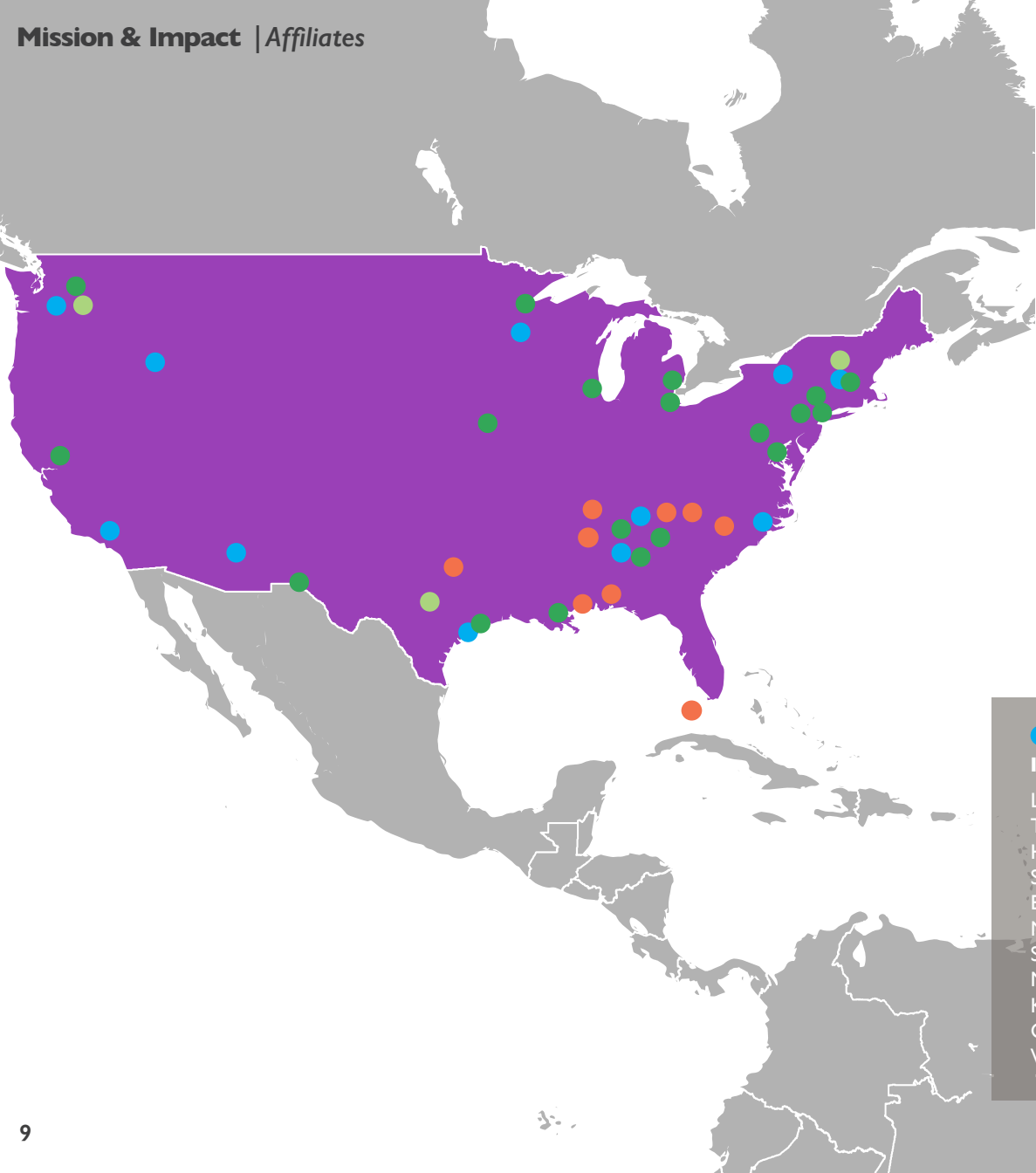


## Top 10 Nationalities

Out of 37 Arrived FY 2023

- #1 Afghanistan 26%**
- #2 Dem. Rep. Congo 18%**
- #3 Syria 16%**
- #4 Burma 6%**
- #5 Iran 3%**
- #6 Venezuela 3%**
- #7 Somalia 3%**
- #8 Colombia 3%**
- #9 Guatemala 3%**
- #10 El Salvador 2%**





**● Affiliate locations:**

- Los Angeles, Calif.
- Tucson, Ariz.
- Houston, Texas
- Seattle, Wash.
- Boise, Idaho
- New Bern, N.C.
- Syracuse, N.Y.
- Minneapolis, Minn.
- Knoxville, Tenn.
- Chattanooga, Tenn.
- Worcester, Mass.

**● Community Partners:**

- Spokane, Wash.
- Manchester, Vt.
- Austin, Texas

**● Remote Placement Community Partners:**

- Mobile, Ala.
- Florence, Ala.
- Murray, Ky.
- Ocean Springs, Miss
- Johnson City, Tenn.
- Palestine, Texas
- Abingdon, Va.
- Stock Island – Key West, Fla.

**● Rainbow Initiative Congregations & Communities (RICs):**

- Hershey, Penn
- Knoxville, Tenn.
- Paris, France
- Nashville, Tenn.
- Munich, Germany
- Vacaville, Calif.
- Duluth, Minn.

- Sandusky, Ohio
- Belmont, Mich.
- Hyattsville, Md.
- New York, N.Y.
- Worcester, Mass.
- Houston, Texas
- El Paso, Texas
- New Orleans, La.
- Portland, Ore.
- Elk Grove Village, Ill.
- Poughkeepsie, N.Y.
- Newburgh, N.Y.
- Atlanta, Ga.
- Omaha, Neb.

## Family Reunification

EMM affiliates submitted 220 new family reunification applications during FY23. These include applications for the following programs: P3, P2 Lautenberg FSU (Former Soviet Union), P2 Lautenberg RIF (Iranian Religious Minorities), and Central American Minors (CAM).

In addition to network CAM submissions, the organization Kids in Need of Defense referred 27

newly submitted CAMs to the EMM network as part of its technical assistance initiative.

In FY23 EMM welcomed 236 individuals, representing 19 nationalities, who arrived through family reunification programs. This is roughly double the number of family reunification arrivals EMM received in FY22.

## Matching Grant

EMM's Matching Grant program is a public-private partnership and an employment-focused comprehensive case management program which aims to help enrollees attain economic self-sufficiency. EMM's network served 1,601 Matching Grant enrollees through 11 partners. In FY23, EMM met monthly with Welcome. US' Hiring and Training Working Group to discuss employment efforts for hiring and training refugee populations, as well as Rainbow Railroad to discuss best practices in employment services for LGBTQ+ refugee populations.

In 2023, EMM's Matching Grant program served:

**1,203 Refugees**

3 Asylees

51 Cuban/Haitian Immigrants

1 Secondary Entrant

158 Special Immigrant Visa holders

185 Ukrainian Parolees

## Employer Partnerships

Unifi

Star Protection

O Now

Micron

Lab Alley

Institute of Scrap Recycling Industries

## Nonprofit Partnerships

Zomia Center

Upwardly Global



## Preferred Communities

Preferred Communities is a program funded by the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) to provide additional support to particularly vulnerable clients. In 2023, EMM served 248 newly enrolled and 176 previously enrolled clients through the Preferred Communities program Intensive Case Management (PC ICM).

EMM served 2,820 clients through gap-service provision activities funded by ORR. The intensive case management services aimed at helping clients achieve self-sufficiency were provided to minor individuals (under 18 years old); single-parent households; elderly people; individuals with social/psychological conditions or risk of suicide; ill or disabled individuals; secondary migrants; and survivors of torture or sexual gender-based violence.

## PC Capacity Building

This year, the EMM Preferred Communities (PC) program added three new partners: Center for Survivors of Torture in Austin, Texas, serving Afghans; Thrive International in Spokane, Wash., serving Ukrainians; and Organization for Refugee and Immigrant Success in Worcester, Mass., administering select case management gap services.



*HQ PC staff researched*  
**55** Ethnic Community-Based Organizations across all affiliate locations and facilitated introduction and coordination between these organizations and EMM affiliates.



Over **4,000** volunteer hours donated by **659** volunteers



**418** new partnerships



Active engagement from all affiliates in three HQ events: a roundtable, a peer-to-peer learning opportunity, and consultant-led training.



PC HQ staff developed the PC Affiliate Data Collection Matrix to help affiliates and HQ capture capacity-building activities.



## Bridge Refugee Services *Chattanooga, Tennessee*

Bridge Refugee Services, with offices in both Chattanooga and Knoxville, Tenn., is known for its proactive approach to employment support. Marina Peshterianu, Bridge's associate director, and Jennifer Croxall, Matching Grant coordinator, cultivate relationships with local employers, year-round. In this way, when a new client begins their search for a job, Bridge staff have the knowledge and connections needed to help them find a position that meets the client's skills and needs.

“Wherever we are, we make a point of getting managers' names and contact info, and we follow up with them,” says Peshterianu. To understand the work that specific companies or sites do, and their expectations of employees, Bridge staff try to visit every potential workplace in person. This enables them to observe relevant aspects of the work environment for prospective employees, such as ease of transportation, workplace conditions, and culture.

Bridge staff are particularly alert to employment opportunities that teach or build skills that can lead to better positions over time. Peshterianu notes, for example, that if an employer is willing to grant employees the flexibility to take English as a second language classes during the day or put them in a position where they interact with native English speakers, that is a good sign.

Once a company has begun to employ any of their clients, Bridge staff continue to invest in that relationship by stopping by workplaces for short visits, inviting employers to attend quarterly community consultations and to participate in special events, such as World Refugee Day.

In these ways, employers also learn more about the lives of newcomers and the larger process of their integration into the community.

While Bridge staff work to cultivate these relationships with local employers, the skills and commitment that their clients bring to the workplace are also decisive. For they will ultimately decide which job to take, they will work to learn new skills, and build their own relationships in the workplace. And perhaps they will be the ones to greet customers or visitors, to train or hire new colleagues, the next time around.



*Bridge Refugee Services Ukrainian clients had the opportunity to participate at the Norwood Makers Mart. Clients were able to share their products and meet new members of their community.*

Photos by Irina Popova Photography, @irinapopovaphotography







## Agency for New Americans *Boise, Idaho*

Agency for New Americans held its 20th annual gala at Boise State University, featuring speakers who had arrived in the United States as refugees and are now

students or alumni of Boise State University. Marhaba Aziz and Fowzia Adan presented their life experiences in connection to the event theme of "Different Pasts, Shared Futures." They shared how they came to the United States and found the support they needed to succeed in a new country through the Agency for New Americans.

## Here is the story shared by Aziz:

My family's story begins in Afghanistan. My father was kidnapped by the Taliban due to his being a successful businessman. My mom had to sell everything we had, and with that money, we were able to get my father back. We knew Afghanistan wasn't safe for us anymore, so we began our journey to freedom and opportunity. We migrated to Pakistan, where I was born, and nine months after that we were on the move again to Russia. I lived in Russia for about seven years, where I learned to speak the language and really get the sense of life there, but it wasn't long until we had to pack everything up again and physically cross borders to Ukraine, where life for us was promised to be easier. During our migration to Ukraine, we were captured by the border police, where we told our story about how home, back in Afghanistan, wasn't safe for us due to the war and Taliban taking over. We then were placed in a refugee camp with other families full of their own unique stories. We all didn't speak one another's languages, but we all had one thing in common and that was a better life for families and our future generations. Fast

forward, we were blessed with coming to Boise in 2010, and for the first time ever my family and I felt safe and secure. I knew this country would give me the life and opportunity that I dreamed of.

I went on to college where I studied human resources with a minor in marketing at Boise State University. I graduated in 2021 with the COBE Outstanding Graduate Award (the highest student award given by the College of Business and Economics). My parents were super supportive throughout this process. Although they had no idea what we were doing and how the process was done they had full trust in us to build the life and career that we wished for.

I am now a talent acquisition specialist at Franklin Building Supply. I'm in charge of my own division where I train our hiring managers in everything about job postings, recruiting, interviewing, and onboarding. I also oversee our mentorship program, which I am highly passionate about. Additionally, I get to educate people on what employee-owned companies are and what being a co-owner means. I've been practicing to really put myself in front of opportunities; I've met many successful entrepreneurs who I've learned many great things from. Creating great networks helps me understand what road I want to take with my career and where I can be. My dream is hopefully to create a business about something I am passionate about and that creates an impact in my community.

Looking back at my story, it feels unreal to me. I was once a little girl who dreamed of being where I am today, and it seemed so far out of reach for me. Now I get to live my life to the fullest, where I get to pursue opportunities that I am passionate about, and really drive with no limits. I can't wait to see what the future holds for me.







## Lutheran Social Services of the South West (LSS-SW)

*Tucson, Arizona*

Lutheran Social Services of the Southwest, EMM's affiliate in Tucson, Arizona, runs an innovative program for refugee-status youth, ages 15 to 24. The Refugee Youth Mentorship Program (RYMP) helps them develop the skills needed to successfully integrate into their new communities. It does this by fostering self-discovery and a strong sense of community through a cohort of refugee youth, and by matching each young person with an adult mentor.

Youth first meet with a caseworker to discern their individual goals for schooling, work/vocation, and participation in the wider community. This in-take interview then guides decisions about matching individual youth with a mentor. Mentors are trained to ensure they understand the process of refugee resettlement and effective mentorship.

The RYMP offers three four-month cycles each year. Each cycle begins with a kickoff event where a new cohort of youth participants meet with their assigned mentors to discuss their individual goals and agree on the best ways and times to meet. In addition to one-on-one meetings, participants take part in workshops on resume building, job readiness, financial literacy, and post-secondary and vocational education in the U.S. The program offers tours of colleges and trade schools, opportunities to engage in community events, and recreational activities.

At the end of the four-month cycle, RYMP staff organize a graduation and an overnight trip to Arizona landmarks, to honor the work and commitment of both youth and mentors. In August 2023, RYMP case manager Melissa Benvegno-Bryant and RYMP coordinator Precious Weah organized a trip to the Grand Canyon for 10 participants.

As Benvegno-Bryant notes, "We really enjoy watching these young people grow during their first few months and years in the U.S. and giving them the opportunity to experience firsthand some of the areas that they learn about in school. The graduation trips are a great way to deepen relationships and to celebrate their hard work and dedication to meeting their goals."





## Interfaith Refugee Ministry *New Bern, North Carolina*

Interfaith Refugee Ministry (IRM) has been resettling refugees in eastern North Carolina for over 30 years. Its main office is in New Bern, a small coastal community on the Neuse River, which flows into the Atlantic Ocean. With only about 30,000 residents, New Bern is the smallest host community of EMM's affiliate organizations. The affiliate is known for its deep relationships with local faith communities, many of whom serve as co-sponsors or support teams for refugee newcomers.



One of IRM's long-standing co-sponsors, First Presbyterian Church of New Bern, has made a point of introducing new neighbors to one of the unique pleasures of the region: kayaking on the Neuse River. Youth as well as adults have delighted in discovering new ways to enjoy the outdoors while getting to know their neighbors. Having fun together on the water makes it easier for everyone to tackle the other tasks: practicing English, completing forms, and looking for work. For local co-sponsor groups, getting to know a specific family, their history and experience, while helping them feel at home in unfamiliar surroundings, is also much more meaningful than other more "transactional" approaches to outreach. EMM and its affiliates are grateful to all who embrace the work of welcome in communities across the country.





# Building BRIDGES

“  
*When you donate canned goods or write a check for a charity, you don't see the beneficiaries. But in this case, we see the children playing in the yard, with balls and toys that some of our members thought to give them. People are getting to exercise their abilities in ways they didn't expect, and there is renewed energy in our congregation. We are watching this family create a new life here—in a place that we love. That's powerful.*

*— Pastor Brittany Sutherland, team leader of Murray Ecumenical Partners*

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## Neighbor to Neighbor

Neighbor to Neighbor (NtN) is EMM's community sponsorship program which directly trains and provides ongoing support to faith communities who serve as community sponsors. In 2023, Neighbor to Neighbor trained and supported teams who welcomed Afghan arrivals and asylum seekers from Venezuela and Burkina Faso. Neighbor to Neighbor teams welcome their new neighbors by offering friendship, fostering community connections, and providing practical support such as housing, assistance in accessing services and navigating the community, enrolling children in school, supporting adults in learning English and securing employment, and more.

**EMM's NtN program provided technical assistance and ongoing guidance to:**

**5 Sponsor Circles** supporting **13** Afghan parolees

**3 NtN Community Sponsor teams** who supported seven asylum seekers from Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, and Venezuela

## Remote Placement Community Partners

EMM also welcomes refugees through Remote Placement Community Partners (RPCP). These community partners are groups of at least five people and are in areas at least 100 miles from typical resettlement affiliates. Remote placement provides groups an opportunity to build bridges within their communities by welcoming newcomers and providing necessary direct services. All RPCPs receive federal funds, virtual training, and virtual coaching.

In FY23, EMM trained and supported eight RPCP teams. By the end of FY23, these groups had already welcomed and ensured direct services for 11 refugees and three holders of Special Immigrant Visas from Afghanistan, Colombia, and Venezuela, with more new arrivals expected in FY24.

The experience of welcoming a family of refugees and ensuring that they have the core services required is often eye-opening for the teams and communities who receive them. Many Americans want to help newcomers but have never had the opportunity or do not know where to start.

By welcoming a specific refugee household and helping them through the first 90 days of resettlement, RPCP team members learn to step outside their comfort zone and become more aware of all that goes into making a life for oneself and family in an entirely unfamiliar setting. These quotes from RPCP team leaders in Murray, Kentucky, and Ocean Springs, Mississippi, suggest just how much is learned in the process.

“

*Our faith calls for us to love others. How do we do that? We can only do what we can here in our community, and trust that it will have a ripple effect. It is not hopeless, and we are not powerless.*

*– Cynthia Ramseur, team leader of RPCP in Ocean Springs, Mississippi*

”





## Congregations supporting humanitarian parolees

Many congregations take part in welcoming newcomers to their communities, including people who enter the U.S. as refugees, Special Immigrant Visa holders, humanitarian parolees, and asylum seekers. In 2023, St. Michael & All Angels of Portland, Oregon, stepped up to support a family from Nicaragua who entered the U.S. as humanitarian parolees, a legal status that provides temporary refuge but no real financial support.

In February 2023, 222 Nicaraguan men and women, who had been imprisoned for their opposition to the government, were released to U.S. authorities and flown to Washington, D.C. Stripped of citizenship by their homeland, the 222 Nicaraguans were granted the status of “humanitarian parolee” by the U.S. State Department. This gave them the right to enter and reside in the U.S. legally for two years. However, to seek asylum, they would have to submit further applications. While waiting for work authorization and a determination on asylum claims, they were not eligible for any support from the federal government.

One of the Nicaraguans, a man named Freddy, ended up in Portland, Oregon, and connected with St. Michael & All Angels, which has a Spanish-language service and an immigrant welcoming ministry. After learning of Freddy’s situation and his concern for his family in Nicaragua, lay leaders reached out to Episcopal Migration Ministries. It became clear that the best hope for Freddy’s wife and children, who faced escalating threats to their home and



safety, was to request humanitarian parolee status for them. To enter the U.S. in this way, each family member would require an economic sponsor. The lay leaders developed a proposal detailing what the parish could do, and the vestry promptly approved it.

Thus began a remarkable partnership between a parish and a family of newcomers. Clergy and laypeople helped prepare the applications for humanitarian parole for Freddy’s wife and children. Once this was granted and they arrived, the vestry allowed them to live temporarily in St. Michael’s house, as they begin the process of looking for jobs, finding a new place to live, and acclimating to a new environment. Volunteers have stepped up to help the newcomers obtain driver’s licenses, register for school, and meet their basic needs, while they wait for work authorization. It will take more time for the fate of this family to be determined, but in the meantime, they have found a home and supportive community among the people of St. Michael & All Angels.





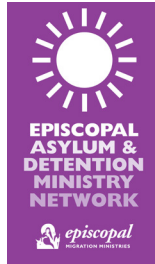
Navigating  
**CHALLENGES**  
Inspiring  
*Change*





## The Rainbow Initiative

The Rainbow Initiative was created in 2023 in response to a decision of The Episcopal Church in the summer of 2022 (General Convention Resolution D045) to focus attention on people who have been forced to leave their countries of origin because of persecution based on sexual orientation or gender identity. The initiative is working with congregations and communities throughout the United States and Europe to draw attention to LGBTQ+ forced migrants. The initiative focused primarily on working with Episcopal congregations and other organizations throughout the United States and Europe at the grassroots level. The objectives include building a national network of relevant groups to focus on LGBTQ+ forced migrants; developing and providing educational and worship resources to those groups and their members; raising awareness of LGBTQ+ forced migration within The Episcopal Church more broadly; and encouraging activity centered on June 2023, including Pride Month and World Refugee Day (June 20th) events; and reflecting and planning for 2024 and beyond.



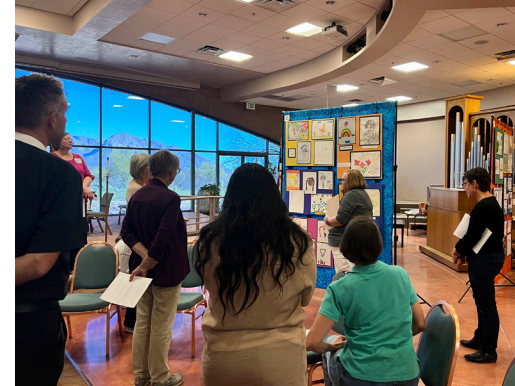
## Episcopal Asylum & Detention Ministry Network (EADM)

The Episcopal Asylum & Detention Ministry Network meets virtually for collaboration, resource-sharing, and fellowship. Monthly meetings include prayer and reflection, ministry updates, and time for dialogue.

Episcopal Asylum & Detention Ministry members had the honor of sharing the work of Episcopal Migration Ministries with the Rt. Rev. Anthony Poggo, secretary general of the Anglican Communion, as well as Martha Jarvis, the Anglican Communion's permanent representative to the United Nations.

### Leaving Home: *Immigration Through the Eyes of Children*

Gale Hall and Michelina Nicotera-Taxiera, two members of the Episcopal Asylum & Detention Ministry, created a three-day immersive experience in the Arizona desert focused on the impact of migration on children and families and the ways in which we are called to welcome and engage community action.



“

*Our intent for the retreat is that attendees experience ‘walking in the shoes’ of migrant families; so that they gain empathy and understanding and advocate for these children and their parents. - Michelina Nicotera-Taxiera, co-creator of the retreat*

”



Inviting all to join in  
**OPPORTUNITIES**  
for Engagement  
& *Support*





## Learn

- Visit [episcopalmigrationministries.org](http://episcopalmigrationministries.org) for resources, curricula, book discussion guides, prayers, and stories.
- Subscribe to our weekly news update at [bit.ly/emmnewsletter](http://bit.ly/emmnewsletter).
- Follow our posts on Facebook, LinkedIn, and Instagram – [@emmrefugees](https://www.instagram.com/emmrefugees).
- Listen to the “Hometown” podcast, available on Spotify, iTunes, and SoundCloud.
- Watch videos and recorded webinars on EMM’s Vimeo channel – [@EMMRefugees](https://www.vimeo.com/@EMMRefugees).



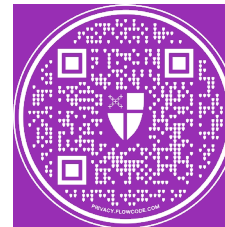
## Volunteer

- Locate the closest EMM affiliate – [bit.ly/emmaffiliates](http://bit.ly/emmaffiliates).
- Help welcome a newly arrived refugee – [bit.ly/emmwelcome](http://bit.ly/emmwelcome).
- Sponsor a newly arrived family - [bit.ly/emmwelcome](http://bit.ly/emmwelcome).



## Give

- Give online: [www.episcopalmigrationministries.org/give](http://www.episcopalmigrationministries.org/give)
- To donate by mail, send checks to:  
**DFMS-Protestant Episcopal Church U.S.**  
**P.O. Box 958983**  
**St. Louis, MO 63195-8983**  
**(Include Episcopal Migration Ministries in the memo line.)**
- For questions about your gift or other ways to give, including stocks or to remember EMM in your will, contact Julia Alling at [jalling@episcopalchurch.org](mailto:jalling@episcopalchurch.org).



## Advocate

- Episcopal Migration Ministries, through the work of the Episcopal Public Policy Network in the Office of Government Relations of The Episcopal Church, speaks out in support of refugee protection and resettlement. The Episcopal Public Policy Network offers advocacy and action opportunities to help you voice your support for refugees.





## GRATEFUL HEARTS

# Recognizing Donors & *Supporters*

## United Thank Offering

\$1,729.96

EMM and the United Thank Offering partnered for a fundraising initiative called the Great EpisGOpal Race. This virtual event offered multiple fun ways—run, bike, swim, hike, paddle board, and more—for individuals to participate and raise funds to support refugee resettlement.

Episcopal Migration Ministries is deeply grateful for all those who give generously to ensure welcome and opportunity for refugees, asylum seekers, and migrants. The commitment and dedication of individuals, congregations, dioceses, foundations, and corporations allow EMM to extend welcome to every beloved child of God. Your financial gifts are critical to the mission and ministry of EMM.

Total funds raised for FY2023

**\$224,269.52**

## *Thank You to Our Generous Donors*

The Rev. Wilifred Allen-Faiella  
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