



# Coalition of Refugee Service Agencies 2013 Annual Report



## A Message from Our Members and Partners

### Our Mission

The Coalition of Refugee Service Agencies brings together local refugee and community programs to engage the public.

Our purpose is to ensure the highest quality of services, educate local communities about the benefits refugees bring to our state, and advocate on behalf of the families that we serve.

The Coalition of Refugee Service Agencies is a dynamic and growing coalition of organizations committed to ensuring Georgia's success in welcoming refugee newcomers and to equipping them to be successful, contributing members of our communities. Member organizations serve thousands of people every year to ensure that the skills and talents of newcomers are cultivated and that people who have overcome war and hardship can fulfill their highest potential and, like so many before us, pursue their American dreams. We have so much to be proud of in Georgia, where our capital Atlanta is now officially designated as a "Welcoming City," and where hard-working refugees are positive contributors to our state's economy, driving the creation of new small businesses and increases in homeownership. We hope you enjoy this report, which provides both the facts and some remarkable personal journeys that we know will inspire you. Thank you for your interest and support!

Emily Pelton, *Chair, Coalition of Refugee Service Agencies*  
*Executive Director, Refugee Family Services*

# Refugee Resettlement



**We resettled  
2,726 refugees  
in 2013**

## Sae Der's Story

Sae Der, his wife Bway Paw, and their four daughters are Karen refugees from Burma. They arrived to Georgia in June 2013, after spending more than 15 years in a refugee camp in Thailand. They immediately went to Jubilee Partners, a Christian service community in Comer, GA, where they spent two months studying intensive ESL and undergoing hands-on, comprehensive cultural orientation. After completing their stay at Jubilee, the family moved to the Atlanta area. Sae Der and Bway Paw quickly secured employment in an area poultry processing plant, and their oldest daughter is working in a bakery while she studies English classes to work toward her GED. The family is now self-sufficient and is excited to continue their integration into their new home.

**“What is amazing about refugees is not the background story, but what happens when we get here.”** Awet Woldegebriel, Eritrean Refugee

The United States Refugee Resettlement Program is a celebrated program that provides a legal avenue for individuals fleeing persecution to resettle in the United States. CRSA resettlement partners welcome new arrivals to Georgia and help ensure a smooth transition to their new home. The weeks and months following a refugee's arrival are filled with **essential assistance** from resettlement staff as they help families gain access to health and social services, register for school and English classes, and receive cultural orientations, among many other services.

## Refugee Countries of Origin



## Resettlement in Georgia

Refugees became new neighbors in the communities of **Clarkston, Decatur, Savannah, Tucker, Roswell, Cumming, Moultrie, Norman Park, Avondale Estates, Atlanta, Duluth, Roswell, Lawrenceville, Sandy Springs, Winder, and Norcross** in 2013.



**81%** of refugee clients were employed within 180 days of arrival – the highest rate in the nation

## Resettlement & Employment Services

The **Matching Grant** Program assists clients with achieving economic self-sufficiency through employment within six month of arrival. Its services include case management, job preparation and placement, housing and utility assistance, and a cash allowance.

- **865** people were enrolled in Matching Grant, with 81% working within 6 months.

**Employment:** Clients not participating in Match Grant receive employment support from CRSA member agencies in conjunction with the Office of Refugee Resettlement and the Georgia Department of Human Services.

- CRSA assisted more than **2,247** refugees in obtaining employment in 2013.

**Extended Case Management** includes social adjustment, which assists clients with everything from emergency medical treatment to home management and skills trainings. These services are available for clients up to five years after their arrival.

## Economic Impact

**“Welcoming refugees is not only good humanitarian practice but makes sound economic sense.”**

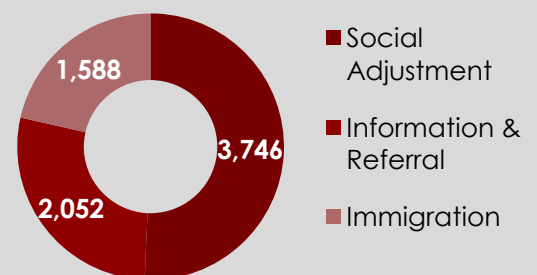
- Clarkston Mayor Ted Terry

Within the first year of arrival, the average refugee family lives above the poverty line. In 2013 refugees placed in jobs in Georgia ...

- Made an average hourly wage of \$8.65, above minimum wage.
- Paid an estimated **\$1,696,970** in sales taxes and **\$337,713** in property taxes.
- Contributed an estimated **\$752,520** to unemployment and **\$6,181,822** to FICA.

## Department of Human Services Programs

Clients Served





# Refugee Youth Programs



CCC, IRC, RFS, and RRISA provided afterschool programs to more than **310** students, with focus on academic enrichment, social development, and homework help.

Summer camps by CCC, RFS, IRC, and CCA served more than **400** refugee students.

RFS, CCC, and CCA provided parent orientation and school-related case management to **432** clients.

RFS hosted a licensed Pre-Kindergarten with 22 students, **100% of which graduated school-ready**. RFS's Parents As Teachers program offered parenting education to nearly **100** families with children under 5 years old.

## Wah Khu's Success Story

When Wah Khu Htoo entered Refugee Family Services' Pre-Kindergarten program, he was completely nonverbal. He did not participate in class, kept to himself, and played alone. Using her social and cognitive development training from the Atlanta Speech School, the RFS instructor did not push him to respond initially; however, as he became more comfortable, she encouraged him to communicate nonverbally. Slowly Wah Khu began to communicate through body language and engage with other students and teachers through facial expressions. As his comfort and confidence grew, he began to respond verbally, first with one-word responses, then later with complete sentences. By the end of the year Wah Khu was following directions and ready to learn. Wah Khu graduated from RFS's Pre-K program ready for Kindergarten!

# Adult & Senior Education

While English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) is the most well-known form of adult education, CRSA member organizations offered extensive education programming including financial literacy, MARTA orientation, computer literacy, vocational training, and family literacy to thousands of clients in 2013.



## Services for Elderly Refugees

**Jewish Family & Career Services** serves **52 refugees** over 60 years of age. The program provides education about health navigation, transportation, lifeskills, and more. **Clarkston Community Center's** Senior Refugee Program also serves **120 senior refugees** through ESL, exercise, and social activities.

# Economic Empowerment

Refugee entrepreneurs are expanding prosperity for all Atlantans by **opening new businesses** that add to the tax base, employ local residents, and bring fresh ideas and products to our community!

**RRISA, RWN, and CCA's** Savings Match programs contributed matching funding to refugees saving to buy homes, enroll in post-secondary education, start businesses, and own motor vehicle. Through this program **25 homes** were purchased, representing a community investment of **\$3,378,000**.

**Refugee Women's Network** provided access to capital through more than **186 microloans** and assisted refugee women in building credit, financial literacy, business, and entrepreneurial skills.

**International Rescue Committee's** economic empowerment program assisted more than **20 women** to become state-approved childcare providers in 2013.

## Aspara and Deepak Grow Their Business

Aspara Ramdam, a Nepali refugee from Bhutan, arrived in Georgia in 2008. Aspara and her husband, Deepak, both dreamed of starting their own business. After working at a local restaurant as a dishwasher and attending school, Deepak used his skills to start a jewelry company, Himalayan Productions. While attending cosmetology school, Aspara is helping her husband run the family business. In order to expand Himalayan Productions, Aspara received a microloan from Refugee Women's Network, where she attended Social Media workshops. Since its founding in 2012, the business has been so successful that Deepak's whole family moved to Clarkston to help. Himalayan Productions now employs 4 people. Aspara and Deepak's dream is to eventually buy a home and start a family.

**"This is a land of opportunity, and if we try, we can make it."**

# Citizenship & Immigration



CRSA member agencies offer refugees and other immigrant clients opportunities to continue their path towards citizenship.

Four CRSA members (IRC, RRISA, WR, and CCA) assisted with applications for citizenship under various grants, including those for Cuban/Haitian entrants, to over **1,588 clients**.

# Community Partners & Programs

## CDF: A Collective Action Initiative

CDF: A Collective Action Initiative recognizes the skills and viewpoints that refugees contribute to the community. CDF works to mobilize residents who drive and direct the development of activities and services that benefit their community. The Village Capital Business Accelerator Program empowered 3 refugee community members with a low-interest \$10,000 loan for business development in 2013.

## Clarkston Community Center

The Clarkston Community Center (CCC) works to provide art, education, recreation, and community building to Clarkston residents, both long-time Americans and newly arriving refugees. CCC's unique programs include health fairs, story-telling festivals, garden days, volunteer days, and arts and cultural events.

## Welcoming America

Welcoming America is a national, grassroots-driven collaborative that works to promote mutual respect and cooperation between foreign-born and US-born Americans. The ultimate goal of Welcoming America is to create a welcoming atmosphere – community by community – in which immigrants are more likely to integrate into the social fabric of their adopted hometowns

## Volunteer Engagement

One example of our volunteer engagement is Project RISE (Refugee and Immigrant Self-sufficiency through Education). The project is a collaboration effort among RRISA, Fugees Family, and RFS. This program engages **21 AmeriCorps members** to assist in the education of children and families and to strengthen the Atlanta community. The International Rescue Committee in Atlanta also hosts **2 AmeriCorps members**.

AmeriCorps members serve as...

- Afterschool Classroom Teachers
- Literacy Program Coordinators
- Communications Specialists
- Case Management Assistants
- Volunteer Coordinators
- Curriculum Developers
- Adult Education Specialists



**CRSA engaged  
5,362 volunteers  
who donated over  
115,875 hours of  
service**



# Community Engagement & Education

## World Refugee Week

World Refugee Day (annually June 20) is dedicated to raising public awareness of millions of refugees worldwide. In 2013, under the auspices of the Georgia Coalition of Refugee Stakeholders, CRSA organizations collaborated with other local organizations and community members to plan a full week of events and activities to celebrate the successes of Georgia's refugee community.

## Horizon Theatre – “Third Country”

Horizon Theatre worked with CRSA and the refugee community to produce the play “Third Country,” a story about a refugee who resettles in Georgia and her relationship with her caseworker, a local ethnic-community leader, and the local government. The play illustrated the journey of a refugee. After the play, representatives of CRSA organizations engaged the audiences through facilitated conversations about refugee resettlement and integration.

## New Americans Celebration

To increase Georgia lawmakers' awareness and understanding of the refugee community's contributions to our state, CRSA presented a New Americans Celebration at the Georgia Capitol during the 2013 legislative session. Community members, refugees, and volunteers joined CRSA for a half-day of education and outreach with state representatives and senators.

## Outreach & Education

CRSA has worked to create and distribute the following refugee-focused educational materials to the community and local government officials.

- Economic Impact Sheet (FAQ)
- “Refugee Resettlement in Georgia Today” brochure
- CRSA Annual Report 2012
- World Refugee Day 2012 Report
- Fact sheets on members and partners



# Connect with CRSA

## Advocate

Join the Coalition of Refugee Service Agencies at our annual events: World Refugee Day on June 20 and the New Americans Celebration at the Georgia State Capitol. We invite you to help us make our communities a more welcoming place for new Americans.

## Join the Conversation



Facebook.com/  
CoalitionOfRefugeeServiceAgencies



@CRSA\_Georgia

## Contact Us

If you would like to learn more about CRSA or any of our partners, please contact Refugee Family Services' Mathew George at [mgeorge@refugeefamilyservices.org](mailto:mgeorge@refugeefamilyservices.org).

## Report Credits

Design and Text: Rebecca Butcher, Daniella Bass

## Photo Credits

Emily Pelton, Jeremiah Ojo, The International Rescue Committee in Atlanta, Rebecca Butcher, Refugee Family Services, Refugee Resettlement and Immigration Services of Atlanta

## Members & Partners

American Red Cross – Metro Atlanta  
Catholic Charities Atlanta  
CDF: A Collective Action Initiative  
Clarkston Community Center  
Friends of Refugees  
The Global Village Project  
The International Rescue Committee  
in Atlanta  
Jewish Family & Career Services  
Lutheran Services of Georgia  
Refugee Family Services  
Refugee Resettlement and  
Immigration Services of Atlanta  
Refugee Women's Network  
Welcoming America  
World Relief Atlanta

