



RIM Reporter

“Building Community With Uprooted People To Serve The Common Good”

February 2010

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RIM Volunteers Work To Respond to Expanded Client Needs

“This is the most enriching thing I have ever done,” comments a RIM volunteer working with a family with children who received their asylum in 2009.

The year 2009 was a time of growth. The five RIM Clusters resettled 32 refugees, 3 SIV cases and 94 asylees. The five RIM Clusters serve an additional 26 clients, too (see ‘Who Are Our Clients’).

This trend is expected to continue in 2010. Currently, 14 people are on the wait list for Cluster placement; 44 refugees are scheduled to arrive soon.

RIM’s target for 2010 is to resettle 65 refugees, most from Iraq. A few other refugees come from Somalia and from Eritrea.

Clusters

To serve more clients, the RIM Clusters worked, successfully, to expand each Cluster and to enhance our collaboration. For example, RIM Clusters share a truck that picks up furniture at multiple locations and delivers it to families in multiple Clusters the same day. Clients move among Clusters.

Clusters assist each other in fund raising.

RIM Clusters working, collaboratively, to assist clients are: **North Shore Cluster**, which includes congregations from Beverly, Amesbury, Topsfield, Hamilton, Georgetown, Danvers and Newburyport; **Metro-North Cluster**, which includes volunteers from Wakefield, Malden, Melrose and Medford; and **Chelmsford/Billerica Cluster**; **Cambridge/Brookline Cluster**; **Arlington/Belmont Cluster**.

Volunteers

Individuals who work with Clusters report that they cannot possibly be giving as much as they

receive from the clients who enrich their lives.

Volunteers assist clients in the RIM office as English as a Second Language (ESL) tutors, or with computer skills.

Some volunteers are preparing to visit immigrant detainees in the Suffolk County Jail. (See “Spiritual Care Givers (SCG) Training.”)

How Can I Get Involved?

First, fill out a RIM volunteer application (on the RIM web-site www.r-i-m.net). Then, interview with Jennifer Guterman, RIM’s Volunteer Coordinator.

Jennifer helps volunteers match the skills that they want to acquire, or use the skills they possess, with RIM client programs.

A.C. Ratchesky Foundation Grant

RIM is pleased to announce that we received a grant of \$6000.00 from the A.C. Ratchesky Foundation in January. We are grateful for the continued support of the A.C. Ratchesky Foundation.

RIM: A U.S. Census 2010 Questionnaire Assistance Center

Safe! Easy! Important!

Be counted in the U.S. 2010 Census.

RIM Office will host a U.S. Census Questionnaire Assistance Center from March 19–April 19, 2010. Language assistance in 59 languages is available. Call 781-322-1011 for the hours.

Look for your U.S. Census 2010 form in the mail after mid-March.

“This is the most enriching thing I have ever done!”



RIM Reporter Spotlight.....

Client Story: North Shore Cluster

Khalid Al-Jarrahi arrived in Beverly, MA with his mother Asmaa Albakri and 12-year-old sister Hind in June 2008.

Volunteers from RIM's North Shore Cluster had already set up a household for the family in an apartment on Cabot Street. Folks pitched in to move furniture, gather donations and ensure that the Iraqi refugees would have everything they would need to start their lives in the United States.

RIM's unique approach to settling asylum seekers and refugees made the difference for this family. And, over time, Cluster volunteers would make sure that the Al-Jarrahi family had something less tangible, but perhaps most important, with which to start again—friendship. Volunteers who came to their apartment to teach Hind English, or to take Asmaa grocery shopping soon became friends.

“We felt so welcome because so many people were checking on us, helping us figure things out. We were invited to dinners and even shared Thanksgiving dinner with our new friends,” Khalid said. “It made a big difference for us.”

Currently, Khalid, a physician, works as an international patient representative at Children's Hospital in Boston while studying to take the necessary exams to practice medicine in the U.S. Asmaa continues her English studies at the New American Center in Lynn. Hind attends Briscoe Middle School. She has been on the honor roll every quarter since her arrival. She even got a part in the school play this Spring!

Khalid's brother Mussab arrived in October 2008. He had worked for CBS News, covering the war that was devastating his country. While he looked for a job, he volunteered at RIM, helping to arrange the first International Concert in April 2009. He teaches Arabic now in Augusta, GA.

In a speech at the annual RIM dinner in 2008, Mussab said that it was not finding a safe haven or being in the land of America that made the most difference. It was the love, friendship and the endless dedication to help by the American people and, in particular, RIM activists, who made everything seem possible and within reach.

Testimonial from Patricia Normand

What a joy and privilege to elaborate on my experience with Refugee Immigration Ministry (RIM).

I became acquainted with RIM while trying to find assistance for an Iraqi family with whom I had become involved. We met when we were both staying at a home (Devon Nicoles), where families stay while their children receive treatment. The family was in the U.S. with their young son who was receiving medical help for injuries resulting from a war-related accident.

When I met the family, the father would not even look me in the eye. I was an American and, in some indirect way, a part of the affliction that tore his family apart. Because he knew little English, it was apparent to me that the father was somewhat lost. Everything here was so different, and things to which they were accustomed were not available.

My heart went out to them. I tried to help them by assisting with meals, on the computer and by offering the kind of support that one can express without words. Sometimes, you can just look into the soul of someone and reassure her or him that things will be OK. That is what we did for each other. We shared pictures of our families, meals; and our children played together.

I am American, support our troops. They are good men and women. My nephew was in Iraq; I am very proud of him for serving our country. But I also saw the effects of war on a four-year old boy who was burned over most of his body and had lost some fingers, too. I saw this boy have flashbacks of his mother being killed. I saw the effects of his injuries, physically and emotionally.

War engages more than individuals, it engages the world. We all need to recognize war's lasting effect, take responsibility and know we can each make a difference, if we so choose.

RIM is one of those organizations taking responsibility, stepping up and reaching out.

The family and I have a different outlook on life because RIM's involvement gave us the time to get to know each other. To me, this family has become another brother and more nephews.

“It was the endless dedication to help by the American people and RIM activists, in particular,”

In my heart, I dream that someday a home will exist in every community that helps such families. Not all families can stay or want to stay. But, for those that do, it would be nice to have a home where they could heal inside and out; where the community is invited to visit, share meals and learn of each other's culture; where children can play and get to know each other. and where families erase stereotypes and form their own views and beliefs as, we did.

So grateful to RIM for all their help.

Who Are Our Clients?

RIM's clients comprise:

Refugees: Refugees are persons outside their country of origin due to a well-founded fear of persecution in their homeland based on religious, political or ethnic identity as members in a particular group. Refugees leave their country because they are no longer safe there. They travel to a second country where they come under the protection of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). After approval by UNHCR, they are assigned to a country for resettlement.

Those coming to the United States (U.S.) are under the authority of the Department of State which assigns them to a voluntary agency (VOLAG) for resettlement. The VOLAG places them with a local affiliate such as RIM. The affiliate is then responsible for basic initial services. Refugees are eligible for benefits. Refugees may receive permanent residency after one year of residency.

The work of the local affiliate is monitored by the national offices of the Episcopal Migration Ministry and the Department of State.

Asylum Seekers: Arrive in the U.S. and declare a "well-founded fear of persecution" if they were to return home. They must obtain legal assistance. They cannot work and have no benefits until they receive asylum. If they are refused asylum, they may be returned to their country of origin.

Asylees: Are individuals who have received asylum. Asylees receive the same benefits as refugees. Asylees wait several years for permanent residency.

RIM provides case management under the Massachusetts Office for Refugees and Immigrants.

Special Immigrant Visa (SIV): SIVs are granted to persons who are in jeopardy in their homeland due to their relationship with the United States. Currently, Iraqis who assisted U.S. forces are given this special status. From the beginning, SIVs have all benefits and permanent residency.

RIM Spiritual Care Givers (SCG) Training

RIM's Spiritual Care Givers (SCG) training for interfaith chaplaincy with immigration detainees will be held over an intensive weekend, Thursday February 18th from 6-9 p.m., Friday the 19th from 6-9 p.m., Saturday the 20th from 10 a.m.-6 p.m. and Sunday the 21st from 2-5 p.m.

SCG Training covers topics such as trauma, self care, listening skills, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, prison culture, and spiritual resources for healing.

Trainees may have the option to assist clients in the RIM office.

Potential applicants must fill out an SCG application. (available at www.r-i-m.net), provide references, interview, and be available for a monthly debriefing group.

RIM asks a \$25 donation per trainee to cover costs.

Save the Dates!

RIM's Spiritual Care (SCG) Training Weekend February 18, 6-9 p.m., February 19, 6-9 p.m., February 20, 10a.m.-6:00 p.m., February 21, 2-5 p.m.

North Shore Dinner Silent Auction and Delicious Food, March 30, 2010, Topsfield Congregational Church, On the Common in Topsfield

RIM's Annual International Concert
"Celebrating the Gifts of Diversity," May 5, 2010, Old South Church, Copley Square, Boston, MA, 7 p.m.-9 p.m.



Refugee Immigration Ministry

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*“Building Community With
Uprooted People for the Common Good”*

Help Celebrate 24 Years of Service!

From Exile to Community

RIM needs your help! Your contribution makes services to our valuable clients possible.

You may use the enclosed envelope for your donation. For more information, see us on the RIM web site www.r-i-m.net.

Yes! I Will Support RIM’s Community-Based Program for Uprooted People!

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