Our Mission

To carry out God’s command to welcome and bring lifelong transformation to refugees and immigrants in Minnesota.
Providing a Valued Support Network

Thank you so much for standing with refugees. In the midst of uncertainty about the level of refugee resettlement in our country this fall and beyond, Arrive Ministries is expanding outreach and impact amongst new refugees and those who are already our neighbors.

Through our partnership with dozens of local churches, refugees and asylum seekers are gaining a valued support network. These relationships often last long after their initial connection with a friendship partner or ESL tutor.

Praise God with us for:

• A new volunteer-led ESL outreach started in August with Afghan women.
• A leadership team for a new Somali Adult Literacy Training (SALT) outreach in

“Arrive Ministries is expanding outreach and impact amongst new refugees and those who are already our neighbors.”

Rochester.

• 51 Church team and New Neighbor volunteers were connected to refugee and asylum seekers by our Refugee Life Ministries staff in the past 12 months.
• 78 new SALT volunteers in the Twin Cities, St Cloud and Willmar since January.
• 900 clients helped with Green Card, Citizenship and family-reunification applications.
• Three new staff who joined our Immigration Legal Services, Somali outreach, and volunteer teams.

Thank you for helping to make all these things possible through your love and support. God bless you,

Bob Oehrig,
Exec. Dir., Arrive Ministries

Arrive Ministries Serves By:

Reunifying refugee families and providing the practical support people need to thrive.

• Refugee Reception and Placement
• Immigration Legal Services

Being God’s agents of love, hope and care to our new neighbors.

• Refugee Life Ministries
• Somali Adult Literacy Training (SALT)
• Church Refugee Gardens

Empowering refugees to achieve their highest potential, as they bolster Minnesota’s cultural vitality and economy.

• Refugee Employment
• Refugee Social Services
A Better Future Through Education

“When I came to the U.S., my priority was education.”

At 10-years-old, Nadia embarked on the most dangerous journey of her life, through the mountainous jungles of Burma, attempting to cross the border to safety in Thailand with her mother.

“I got sick with a bad fever at one point up in the mountains, and couldn’t walk,” said Nadia.

That night Nadia started praying.

“I remember in my dream, three angels were floating. And the next morning I was healthy, and could continue on through the mountains,” recalls Nadia.

With wild animals lurking through the jungle, and Burmese soldiers on the prowl for Karen people fleeing their homeland, Nadia and her mother took many precautions.

“We could only cook at night so the Burmese soldiers couldn’t see where we were hiding,” said Nadia.

Nadia and her mother made it safely to Mei Lei refugee camp in Thailand, which became their home for the next 15 years. Her brother and father joined them one year later.

Nadia lived her teen years through her early 20s in the camp spending most of her time in school.

“The only books I read were Perry Mason and Sherlock Holmes,” said Nadia.

After Nadia finished school, she got pregnant and had a son.

In 2004, Nadia, her parents, and her 6-year-old son were given permission to move to the U.S. Her mother was diagnosed with breast cancer and had to have a mastectomy within their first two months in Minnesota. It was a very difficult time for Nadia and her family.

“We stayed in my aunt’s basement for 2 months. The basement had no windows; it felt like I was suffocating. When it rained outside, the water would rise in the basement, and our mattresses would float,” she said.

Nadia knew that getting an education would be her ticket out of poverty.

“When I came to the U.S., my priority was education,” said Nadia.

Nadia signed her son up for school, and then she signed herself up for ESL classes, and later nursing classes at St. Paul College.

While going to school full-time, Nadia worked three part-time jobs, all while raising her son as a single mom.

Amazingly, just three years after arriving in Minnesota, Nadia bought a house in Maplewood.

She currently works as a nurse and case manager for HealthEast.

Nadia likes to travel to the North Shore and camp in the Boundary Waters. She says it reminds her of the mountains and natural landscape of her homeland of Burma.

Someday Nadia plans to write a book about her life.

Listen

On September 24, Arrive Ministries held a story-telling panel of those forced to flee their homeland at Calvary Church, Roseville. Three panelists shared their stories of courage and resilience to hundreds of audience members.

Nadia (L) is pictured here with the two other panelists: Christelle, Jawed, and panel facilitator, Rebekah (L-R).
A Church’s Generosity

“We get to be a part of God’s generosity.”

To fully understand the story of Jamila and her housing crisis, you must understand the incredible timing of her circumstances.

Jamila is a single mother of 3 young boys who fled Mozambique due to an unsafe situation. After arriving in Minnesota, she was living in transitional housing for almost 2 years. Jamila was not eligible for most social services due to her immigration status as an asylum seeker. Affordable housing was her biggest hurdle.

Through Arrive Ministries, Jamila was partnered with a Refugee Life Ministries (RLM) church team. At a recent RLM training, the team leader shared a prayer request to find Jamila housing. Sitting next to her was another Arrive Ministries volunteer, David McCoy.

“As (the team leader) is sharing her prayer request, this alarm is going off in my head, ‘We have these properties at our church that have been used to house refugees in the past,’” said David McCoy.

David had learned about the properties only a couple of weeks earlier. His pastor had casually mentioned them in passing during a conversation he and David were having about forming an RLM team at First Free Church Minneapolis.

When David went back to tell his pastor about Jamila’s need for housing, he learned one of First Free’s three South Minneapolis houses had just opened up.

“Housing is one of the greatest needs refugees and asylum seekers have,” said Wendy Meyering, RLM Program Director.

That house didn’t work well for Jamila, but that same day, Arrive Ministries’ staff learned of a Congolese family of five who needed a new housing situation within 2 days.

It was a housing match! The next day the Congolese family signed a lease and moved into the open house at First Free Church.

Three months later, another of First Free’s houses opened up next door, and by this time Jamila was able to sign a year lease with First Free. She and her sons could move in immediately. Another housing match!

Where First Free had initially planned to house one family, God had clearly planned for them to house two.

“It could have just been 17 coincidences. But clearly it’s not just a coincidence, the timing was God working his plan for good,” said McCoy.

Jamila now has a full time job, stable housing, transportation, and childcare lined up for the next year.

“This is not a story about First Free’s generosity. God has had a plan this whole time for this woman, and because we were a little willing to participate in obedience, we get to be a part of God’s generosity,” said McCoy.

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**RLM**

Through Refugee Life Ministries, Church Teams and New Neighbors are walking alongside newly-arriving refugees, families who have been here for several years, and asylum seekers. More than 1,400 refugees have been welcomed by the church through RLM. Through this process life transformation is possible for refugees and the church.

Learn more or get involved at arriveministries.org/rlm
Afghan Women ESL Program Launches

“The happiness of others transfers to my own heart.”

Sipping tea while sitting on the carpet, a few of us from Arrive Ministries heard Nadir share his family’s story.

Nadir and Maryam are among a dozen families from Afghanistan living in Richfield. Nadir came to the U.S. on a Special Immigration Visa (SIV) that he earned after assisting the U.S. Military in Afghanistan.

When Nadir and Maryam had an immigration appointment at our offices; he expressed a desire for his wife to learn English. Maryam has been at home with their 6 children, so she has been unable to attend English classes. This is a common situation for other mothers in their Richfield apartment complex.

Recognizing this need and wanting to be good neighbors, Arrive Ministries decided to create a program, called the Afghan Women’s English Language Learning (AWELL), to connect Arrive Ministries women volunteers with Afghan women to teach conversational English.

Amazingly, we didn’t even need to put out an appeal for volunteers! Word spread fast, and soon over a dozen women expressed a desire to participate in this burgeoning new program.

The AWELL program draws its name from women meeting at the well in Biblical times.

Classes include reading children’s books, playing “spot the difference” games, and working on vocabulary.

One of our volunteers told me how privileged she feels to be God’s hands and feet in loving these new neighbors.

“God commands His people to help widows, orphans and aliens. I get to follow the Lord by doing that! Their smiles and appreciation make me happy. The happiness of others transfers to my own heart,” she said.

The author, Mike Bergman is the Deputy Director at Arrive Ministries.

The AWELL program draws its name from women meeting at the well in Biblical times.

Prayer and Miraculous Healing

As I was praying, God kept placing on my heart the name of a woman I had not visited in a year.

I texted her and she said she was sick. I felt that I needed to go and pray for healing for her.

So I went, and at the end of the night we were sitting around a table as her daughter read to me from the Quran, trying to convert me to Islam.

“That little child is so much like you, Amy. You may have met your match with her!” said her mother.

And we laughed.

I asked if I could pray over her before I left. I prayed for healing, I praised God for our friendship, and the way he sovereignly crossed our paths.

The next day I texted her:

“How are you?”

She replied: “I’m better thanks to God!”

Our Jesus healed her! So, I told her who Jesus the healer is.
Friends That Are More Like Family in Willmar

“They have become like family to us... I am grateful the soccer camp brought us together.”

“Whoa!” Ziham learns the command to slow down the horse she’s riding.

Ziham and her siblings are taking their first spin on horseback, while their mom, Madina proudly films each of their rides, all the while laughing and cheering her kids on.

Madina has been able to expose her kids to a new life in Willmar ever since meeting the Scheele family at their summer youth sports camp. The sports camp is run by Melissa and Nathan Scheele, the Arrive Ministries’ SALT coordinators in Willmar.

The sports camp was held this summer near an apartment complex in Willmar where many Somalis live.

Every evening around 50 Somali kids meet in the open field between the apartments to play team sports and do arts and crafts.

“In addition to making relationships with Somali kids through our week-long summer camp, we are making relationships with the Somali moms and Somali elders who come to the camp to supervise,” said Nathan Scheele.

“My kids love to play with other kids, they love basketball, soccer and playing with play-doh. It is very convenient for me to attend, and my kids enjoy it,” said Madina, a Somali mother of four.

But the greatest joy came to Madina in the form of her friendship with Melissa, whom she met the first year her kids attended the camp.

“I am a single mother, I don’t have family here. Melissa is my second family, she is more than a best friend. I don’t know what I’d do without Melissa,” said Madina.

“It has been such a blessing to do life with Madina and her children. My family loves them! We spend a lot of time cooking, laughing, eating, doing homework, reading, talking, and celebrating our life events together,” said Melissa.

Madina says she relies on Melissa to talk to her kids’ teachers about their grades, and to help her learn to read and write English through the Somali Adult Literacy Training program.

“They have become like family to us. Madina talks about moving and I tell her she’s not allowed to ever move away! I am grateful the soccer camp brought us together,” said Melissa.

“Relationships with Somali families are forming as a result of this camp. You get connected, and stay connected and do life stuff together. If there are needs, we can love and serve them practically,” said Nathan.

And sometimes, doing the “life stuff” together, means getting to ride a horse for the first time.
Harvesting the Seeds of Friendship

“We celebrate weddings and birthday parties together, as well as hospital visits and funerals.”

Boe Boe and Jeff’s friendship initially revolved around the seasons of the church garden. Boe started gardening on land at Mosaic Christian Community in East St. Paul, when Mosaic joined Arrive Ministries’ Church Refugee Gardens program five years ago.

“Before we started the gardens at Mosaic, people thought our building was closed. When we launched our church at Mosaic and the gardens, it was a way to tell the community ‘Hey, we are open and we want to be a part of the neighborhood and community,’” said Pastor Jeff.

“I love to garden. It is a part of my Karen culture, but I hadn’t gardened since being in a refugee camp (in Thailand),” said Boe.

The friendships between Mosaic church members and the local Karen community have flourished beyond harvest season, into everyday life.

“We celebrate weddings and birthday parties together, as well as hospital visits and funerals,” said Pastor Jeff.

Mosaic also partners with two families through our Refugee Life Ministries (RLM) program. Through RLM and their garden, Pastor Jeff believes Mosaic is living out their church’s mission of equipping the community of Christ into a lifestyle of hospitality.

“Everything we do at Mosaic is about engaging and inviting strangers to be our guests, and equipping them to be hosts. Our refugee friends are so hospitable to us, inviting us to do life together,” said Pastor Jeff.

“Our refugee friends are so hospitable to us, inviting us to do life together.”

Divine Provision Through Sunglasses

When recently donated dolls were delivered to three Congolese girls who arrived in Minnesota earlier this summer, laughter erupted when they saw the accessories that the dolls were wearing.

“The girls were delighted when they saw that the dolls were wearing neon pink and bright white sunglasses that perfectly matched the sunglasses they owned!” said Yvonne, our Reception and Placement Coordinator, who witnessed the moment.

“It is clear that God’s provision was being shown in the small details, down to the specific colors of the sunglasses,” said Rebekah, our RLM Church Team Coordinator.

The dolls’ culturally-appropriate outfits were hand-sewn by Gail Harvey and her team of volunteers with the non-profit Don’t Cry... I’m Here.
We Welcome Refugees

Resettling refugees celebrates the importance of family.

- 95% of refugees coming to Minnesota are rejoining their family members.
- Families flourish when they are no longer separated and vulnerable.
- 70% of the refugees who are resettled in the U.S. are women and children.

Refugees have immeasurable worth in the eyes of God.

- “For the Lord your God... loves the foreigner residing among you, giving them food and clothing. And you are to love those who are foreigners, for you yourselves were foreigners in Egypt.” Deuteronomy 10:18-19
- Serving refugees is a vital part of God’s call to love our neighbor and to serve the vulnerable.

Minnesota thrives when we harness the skills, energy, and innovation of refugees.

- More than 3/4 of refugees are of working-age.
- Refugees are employed at a rate 20% higher than the national average.
- Refugees bring an entrepreneurial spirit that builds Minnesota’s economy and creates jobs for all.

Learn How You Can Get Involved

arriveministries.org/volunteer