Welcoming City Refugee Work Group

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WELCOMING CITY REFUGEE WORK GROUP

• Welcoming City Ordinance passed by City Council on December 12, 2016

• Approximately 100 legal refugee students in Evanston schools
  o Not all households have school-age children
  o Not all refugees have legal refugee status; therefore, not counted in number above

• Sampling of countries represented: Syria, Iraq, Congo, Rwanda, Chad, Sudan, and Nepal
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Work group to address the rise in refugees:

- Evanston Refugee Work Group includes:
  - Resettlement agencies: Catholic Charities, Heartland Alliance, RefugeeOne, and World Relief
  - School Districts 65 and 202
  - City departments: CD, EPD, HHS, and PRCS
  - Other area groups: Howard Area Community Center, Evanston Interfaith Refugee Roundtable
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Needs Identified:

- **Consumables**: Cleaning supplies, diapers, toiletries, etc.
- **Durable goods**: Bikes (with helmets & locks), strollers, rugs, etc.
- **Clothing**: Particularly winter coats and boots for high school students
- **Services**: Medical & social services, transportation, job training and employment services, English tutoring for adults and children, child care
- **Housing**: Affordable housing, larger units for larger families
- **Other**: Parent engagement/integration in schools, access to social/recreational activities, peer-to-peer mentorships, and family sponsorships
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Resources to address needs:

- **Consumables**: Volunteer Evanston
- **Durable goods**: Volunteer Evanston
- **Clothing**: Volunteer Evanston, Evanston School Children’s Clothing Association (ESCCA)
- **Services**: HHS home-based early intervention, Erie Health Center (medical), Northwestern University (social work students), Y.O.U. after-school programs, Howard Area Community Center, Family Focus, Illinois workNet, Youth Job Center
- **Housing**: Connections for the Homeless – ESG Rapid Re-Housing, YMCA, EPD
- **Other**: School PTAs, Evanston Interfaith Refugee Roundtable, Rotary and Kiwanis Clubs of Evanston
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Next Steps:

- City will convene meetings and act as liaison between the resettlement agencies, school districts, and community. Next meeting scheduled for Tuesday, February 28th
- Welcoming City resource page on COE website
- Set up and promote Volunteer Evanston refugee opportunities to community residents
- Outreach to neighboring communities (e.g. Village of Skokie, Niles Parent Center)
- Welcoming signs
- Staff cultural and sensitivity trainings