

*This is* WHO WE ARE *This is* WHAT WE DO

✦ ICSJ PARISH REFUGEE MINISTRY ✦

# Respect Life Sunday:

## Cherish. Defend. Protect.

This weekend begins Respect Life Month in the Catholic Church, with today being Respect Life Sunday. As Catholics, we are called to cherish, defend, and protect those who are most vulnerable, and one way we do that at ICSJ is through our refugee ministry.

ICSJ's refugee ministry is now six years strong. It's a ministry that began with a nudge from parishioner Betty Woodward as a reminder—to those of us who are so comfortable here in our parish, our city, our country—of what it might feel like to have to leave our homes with only what we can carry.

In 2016 the pilot group began meetings to brainstorm how a refugee ministry could be successful at our parish. In January of 2017, they learned of the first family they would be sponsoring, a family of six from Afghanistan, where the father had been an interpreter for our US Military. With that news, the group began seeking funds to help this family upon their arrival—they would need to raise \$8,000. They

calculated that if every family in the parish donated a minimum of \$25, that goal would be reached. Well, every ask was met with a resounding "YES!", and they were blown away with overwhelming generosity, receiving nearly \$20,500!



In March of 2017, after months of training and preparation, our first family was greeted at O'Hare by Father Larry and three of our refugee volunteers, representing all of ICSJ's parishioners. There was palpable gratitude and excitement as this family was welcomed into our family of families.

Due to the outpouring support from the first refugee collection, ICSJ was asked to adopt a second family just months later in June. From that time on, the ball has not

stopped rolling and we have adopted 10 families in six years! That totals over \$73,000 dollars raised for refugee resettlement and assistance.

ICSJ has welcomed families from Afghanistan, Myanmar, Rohingya, Ethiopia, Burundi, Sudan, Syria and most recently this past June, from Yemen. Alongside Catholic Charities and Exodus World Service, ICSJ's refugee volunteers have welcomed and stuck with

these families—they have been stalwarts in helping, advising, and providing them with what they need. There have been baby showers, English lessons, countless playdates, birthdays celebrated, driving lessons, shared meals, gained citizenship,

city outings, and even babies named after volunteer children! Some of our families have been able to move away to establish themselves in other locations, and are thriving, and it is awesome to see how these families have become such wonderful





assets to our country. Thanks to each of you who have made dreams come to life for these families through your generosity.

Being a refugee volunteer is not easy, rather it requires



## How you can help Chicago's migrant community

### Sunday, October 15th: ICSJ Makes Meals for Migrants

Help in a hands-on way by making a meal for the migrants who are staying at the 18th District police station at Division and Larrabee. Join us at Immaculate Conception at 10:30am as we assemble sandwiches and sides for a lunch time delivery. Sign up to bring food and help out at [www.mealtrain.com/potlucks/lkqzrd](http://www.mealtrain.com/potlucks/lkqzrd)

### Migrant Ministry Leaders

We're looking for a few individuals who might be interested in leading a Migrant Ministry here at ICSJ Parish. If that's you, please contact Allie at [aklazura@icsjparish.org](mailto:aklazura@icsjparish.org).

Visit [www.icsjparish.org/migrants](http://www.icsjparish.org/migrants) for more ways to help

the ability of the volunteer to be creative in ways to serve the unique needs of the family. We want to take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank our parishioners who have served



in our refugee ministry over the years: Betty Woodward, Mary Prendergast, Louise Nora, Marilyn Snider, Kathy Morrissey, Mary Reynolds, Doug Snodgrass, Allison Roche, Lisa Dellagiarino Feriend, Barbara Leutz, Ellie Wydeven, Kitty Freidheim, Lee Freidheim, Prima

Wilson, Brian Padden, Shan Abraham, John Crawford, Carolyn Ries, Delaney Paul, Mallory Paul, Anna Moylan, and Emily Doyle.

As we all know, there is a migrant crisis in our city. While it seems city-wide plans are constantly in flux, we have discovered ways we are able to help and we are constantly updating our migrant assistance web page ([www.icsjparish.org/migrants](http://www.icsjparish.org/migrants)) with new information to share these opportunities. On Sunday, October 15th, we will be helping in a hands-on way by making a meal for the migrants who are staying at the 18th

district police station. Please join us at Immaculate Conception at 10:30 a.m. while we assemble sandwiches and sides for a lunch time delivery. Sign up to bring food and help out at [www.mealtrain.com/potlucks/lkqzrd](http://www.mealtrain.com/potlucks/lkqzrd). We are also looking for a few individuals who might be interested in leading a migrant ministry here at ICSJ. If that's you, please contact Allie at [aklazura@icsjparish.org](mailto:aklazura@icsjparish.org).

While we move through Respect Life Month together, let us all find ways we can consider more deeply why every human life is valuable and how we can build a culture that protects life from conception to natural death. St. Joseph, defender of life, pray for us!



For more information about volunteering and supporting the Refugee Ministry, visit [www.icsjparish.org/refugee-effort](http://www.icsjparish.org/refugee-effort)