



CATHOLIC SOCIAL SERVICES OF SOUTHERN NEBRASKA

Hope in the Good Life

January 2025

St. Benedict of Nursia | Refugee Resettlement

Welcoming the Stranger Home

St. Benedict of Nursia, born in Italy in 480, was one of the most influential Catholic monks and reformers. With ideas so transformative that some even attempted to poison him out of jealousy, St. Benedict laid the foundation for living a balanced life of prayer and work. He wrote *The Rule of Life*, a guide for cultivating virtues and living them out. One of the highest values in his rule is hospitality. St. Benedict writes,

“All guests who present themselves are to be welcomed as Christ, for he himself will say: I was a stranger and you welcomed me (Matt 25:35).”

Our “guest” may be a family member, friend, neighbor, or coworker—but St. Benedict emphasizes that the guest may also be a stranger. Living a balanced life calls us to embrace this virtue and “Welcome the Stranger.”

This is the guiding principle of our **CSS Refugee Resettlement program**. Through a federal partnership with the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), CSS helps families fleeing hardship in other countries rebuild their lives in Lincoln.

Some families arrive with many bags of belongings and keepsakes, while others bring only a small carry-on item. Recently, a single mother with six children arrived with just one small bag of necessities for all seven of them.

One recent family, “Mariam and Kamal,” and their four children, arrived as refugees from Sudan. After a warm airport reception, CSS case managers brought them to an agency-owned temporary house where they stayed until their permanent home was ready. They stayed in a basement unit that



CSS staff & volunteers who helped “Mariam and Kamal” move in

sleeps six and includes two bathrooms, a full kitchen, and a washer and dryer. The upstairs unit housed another refugee family who had arrived earlier in the week. CSS Housing Coordinator, Caroline Nebel, had already chosen a home for “Mariam and Kamal’s” family. It was a duplex near North 27th Street, an area with many African and Middle Eastern markets, a bus route, and a welcoming refugee community. Caroline met with the family to explain and sign the lease and then got to work turning the house into a home. Workers from the CSS Furniture Warehouse delivered beds, tables, chairs, one

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CSS HISTORY OF Welcoming the Stranger

1940s: Assisted WWII refugees fleeing Europe.

1980s: Partnered with the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops to formalize resettlement.

1999: Became accredited to provide Immigration Legal Services in the U.S.

2024 IMPACT SNAPSHOT


227

Total Refugee Arrivals


123

Clients Attended Cultural Orientation or Job Readiness Courses


178

Job Applications Submitted for Refugee Clients



PO Box 30425
Lincoln NE 68503-0425




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Welcoming the Stranger Home (cont.)

couch, a washer, and a dryer. Volunteers brought carloads of supplies—some donated, some purchased—and spent hours making beds, washing dishes, and placing small toys at the end of each child’s bed. When refugee families move into their permanent homes, their reactions vary. Children often explore excitedly, discovering their toys. Some clients cry tears of happiness. “Mariam and Kamal’s” family was full of smiles when they moved into their new house. They are safe in America, they have a warm house, and they have a team of case workers who will work diligently for 3 months to set them up for success. Providing them with a home, a place to belong, is so important as they adjust to the blessings and struggles of a new life. As they begin to face the new challenges of learning English, adjusting to the culture, and making a living, CSS will be here as a resource for them. Caroline states, “We love to share in our client’s joy when they move to their new home, but beyond the warm fuzzy feeling, we do this work because Jesus told us to ‘welcome the stranger’. How beautiful it is that we can welcome the stranger right here in Lincoln, Nebraska!”

Refugee resettlement requires housing, furniture, supplies, and more. If you feel called to support this vital work, you can contribute monetarily at csshope.org or donate items directly at our Lincoln O Street office. We also ask you to join us in prayer as we continue living out Benedictine hospitality. *St. Benedict, pray for us!*


BREAKING NEWS!
SUPPORT OUR MISSION
AND SAVE ON TAXES



**PREGNANCY
HELP ACT
TAX CREDIT**


Beginning Jan 1, 2025, donors can receive a nonrefundable tax credit for cash contributions to CSS, now an approved charitable organization under the Nebraska Pregnancy Help Act.

Interested? Simply go online to our short form: csshope.org/taxcredit After you fill out the form, then we'll contact you and submit the necessary forms.




Act fast! Only \$500,000 available for year 2025-2026.

Stay tuned for the next *Hope in the Good Life* podcast featuring John Crotty and Marion Miner as they share how they're making a difference by leveraging this tax credit. Don't miss it!



**TRUMPET
FEST**

Experience an afternoon of extraordinary music!
Featuring Performances by:
Dr. Darryl White, Kevin Murray, Dr. Julietta Rabens (harp), The Darryl White Trio (Hans Sturm on bass and Jeff Jenkins on piano)



Sun, Feb 16th, 2pm-4pm
St. Joseph Church, Lincoln

**Free-will offering to benefit CSS

View our Facebook invite and share with friends!