

VOLUNTEER TRAINING GUIDE

**Mariposa (butterfly) is a symbol
of freedom for refugee families
seeking asylum**

Source: refugeearthblog.com



Migrants are people who leave their usual place of residence ...

- Within their country or across an international border
- Temporarily or permanently
- For a variety of reasons



In the Bible we see Abraham & Sarah, Moses, Joseph's Brothers, Naomi & Ruth, Mary & Joseph and Baby Jesus, all who were migrants at one point in their lives

**And in both the Old & New
Testament are God's words:**

“WELCOME THE STRANGER”

It is a mandate *and* an opportunity!

Hebrews 13:2: “Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing, some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it.” *to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without*

In the fall of 2020, ELCA AMMPARO invited congregations to consider sponsoring an asylum seeker family from the southern border.

- The family would probably come from a detention center or a border shelter;
- And originate from Asia, Africa, Central America or South America;
- The congregation would need the capacity to raise funds to pay for housing, transportation, food, clothing, legal services, medical care & other costs

Messiah's Church Council in 11/2020 approved to explore this concept:

- The Asylum Team participated in a virtual training led by AMMPARO, Lutheran Social Services of Rocky Mountains & Episcopal Migration Ministry
- Members of Messiah and other houses of faith participated in a 4-part video documentary "Civil Rights: A History" and a discussion led by the creator of the series, Dr. Jessie Heines
- Members of the Asylum Team participated in a virtual presentation led by two asylum seekers sharing about their experiences being in the United States



AMMPARO: Accompanying Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Representation & Opportunities



At a congregational meeting on October 3, 2021, Messiah voted with a strong majority to approve this Asylum Seeker Project and host the asylum seekers in Messiah House

Other support has come from:

- The Milford Congregational Church
- Church of Our Savior, an Episcopal Church in Milford
- Nashua Unitarian Universalist
- Nashua Host Home Network
- The New England Synod, ELCA
- The Milford Rotary Club
- And people like you with your skills, your help, and your offerings

**And what does this mean for us,
as people about to work with our family?**



We can expect that our Asylum Seeker Family might be...

from a different culture. We will learn about their foods, their customs, their traditions. Their life might be totally different from ours. We will learn about them, just as they learn about us. We will begin to see the world through THEIR eyes!



We can show understanding and appreciation for our Asylum Family

- They, too, are children of God, loved and forgiven by a gracious God, just as we are!
- We “accompany them” or “walk with them” on their journey in a new land. They have made lots of decisions to get to where they are in life. They have shown they are capable of decision-making.
- We are not giving them unsolicited advice. We are not criticizing them. We are not judging them. The mom & dad are parenting the children; we are not. We are standing right beside them and caring for our asylum seeker family, as children of God.





Empathy is...

seeing with the eyes of another,
listening with the ears of another,
and feeling with the heart of another.



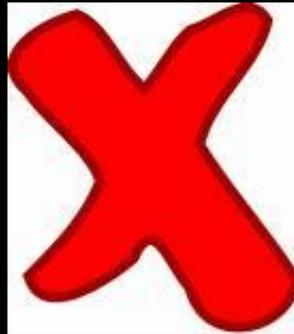
a
place
for
mom

Photos, Social Media, Interactions

- Please don't take photos of the family members unless they want you to take them. Please do NOT put anything about them – their pictures or their names - on Social Media because of their asylum seeker status and privacy/confidentiality
- We interact with them as they and we all are, children of God. We respect our asylum seekers as we accompany or walk with them. They, like some of our friends & relatives, might be quiet or loud, verbalizing “thank you’s” or not. We accept them just as they are.



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**We show
dignity,
not charity**

What are Asylum Seekers?



- **Asylum seekers** are seeking refugee or protected status and protection due to **persecution** or a **well-founded fear of persecution** for reasons of
 - **race,**
 - **religion,**
 - **nationality,**
 - **political opinion** or
 - **membership in a particular social group**

By International and US Law

How Refugees & Asylum Seekers Differ

Refugees

- Experienced persecution or well-founded fear of persecution
- Flee to another country where they register as UN refugees; often are in a refugee camp or are urban refugees; are vetted by the UN and the country that will resettle them;
- After they enter the US, they get their Social Security cards & work authorization within a few weeks

Asylum Seekers

- Experienced persecution or well-founded fear of persecution
- Apply for asylum within one year of being in the US
- Find a lawyer who will submit their case
- 365 days after filing the case, the lawyer can file for work authorization for the asylum seeker

While in the process of seeking their asylee status,

- Asylum Seekers do not get benefits as do refugees and Afghans under humanitarian parole, e.g. Cash Assistance, SNAP, and, in some states, medical insurance
- Most Asylum Seekers do not get the help of resettlement agencies
- These factors play an important role in why *our* help is so very important!
- Accompanying our asylum family by working together in this ministry with people from different faith traditions & from our communities can be fun and inspiring. You will be helped in the ministry you do in this process.



Thank you for watching this power point!

- If you have questions or want to discuss anything further, please contact doreen.rinas@gmail.com.

Please email Kim Kasmar at kzkasmar@gmail.com to tell us that you've seen this power point training guide! Thank you!

