



Welcoming the Stranger

Minnesota Council of Churches Refugee Services

JULY 2011

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- EverSafe Computer Donation
- Community garden photos
- A cut-out garage sale list
- Karen Noodle Dish Recipe

HOW TO GET INVOLVED:

- Befriend a refugee
- Set up apartments
- Donate household goods
- Read our book: "This Much I Can Tell You"

Giving an Abundant Welcome

MCC Refugee Services is able to extend an abundant welcome to newly arrived refugees due in large part to the generous donations of so many Minnesota community members. We receive furniture and other items to furnish apartments, computers, garden supplies, and plenty of volunteer friendship and labor. THANK YOU to all who have contributed! This issue of Welcoming the Stranger will give you a glimpse of the many ways the donations help extend welcome to new refugees.

Design for a Purpose Competition

The Design for a Purpose Competition is an opportunity to create a home for the homeless, welcome new arrivals from all over the world, and participate in a fun, high impact project with your friends, coworkers, or congregation.

Refugees have escaped incredible circumstances to create a new life in Minnesota. Often, they've lived in a refugee camp for years, or even decades. When they step off the plane in Minnesota, not only are they exhausted from a long trip, they're entering a completely foreign environment. MCC Refugee Services has seen first-hand the impact a fully furnished apartment can make on easing that first night in the country.

After seeing how much love and care co-sponsorship groups put into turning an apartment or house into a true



Photos of each apartment set-up will be posted on the website for voting.

home, MCC Refugee Services starting looking for a solution to make sure all arrivals can experience the extra care volunteer groups put into an apartment set-up. And thus, the idea of *Design for a Purpose* was born. This small group competition offers the opportunity to not only flex your creative muscles, but most importantly, change the lives of refugee families.

Each participating group will be charged with furnishing

an apartment for a soon-to-arrive refugee family. Pictures of the finished apartment set-up will be displayed on MCC's website where viewers can vote for their favorite design each quarter of the year. Staff will award extra titles such as "Most Creative Use of a Limited Budget," "Homiest Touches," and "Above and Beyond." Winners will be awarded a trophy, electronic tag

for display on their website (if applicable), a write up in one of MCC's newsletters, *News for the Common Good* or *Welcoming the Stranger*, and of course, ultimate bragging rights! Want more info? Contact Green at green.bouzard@mnchurches.org or 612-230-3249 or check out our website at <http://www.mnchurches.org/refugeeservices/>

The Computer Advantage



Photo credit:
Morguefile.com

A computer is appealing to many of the refugees that MCC works with, especially those enrolled in Employment Services. Not only are computers immensely useful and practical—they help clients with the job search, learning English, and essential communication—but for many they also symbolize their integration into American culture. While refugees do have the option to use computers at the public library or the Refugee Services computer lab, the convenience of having one in their home for the family to use at any time is always the preferred option.

In light of this, the Employment Team at MCC was thrilled when they made contact with an electronics recycling company called EverSafe Recycling that's willing to donate computers to our refugee families!

Frank Grazzini is the President of EverSafe Recycling, a company that helps individuals and businesses in the Twin Cities area dispose of their unwanted electronic equipment. They put a special emphasis making sure that all information and data is removed from discarded computers and that the remaining components are recycled in an environmentally conscious way. Frank receives many outdated but fully-functional computers and was looking for an organization that

could put the machines back into productive use instead of being deconstructed and discarded. He was excited to hear about Refugee Employment Services at a networking event that an AmeriCorps VISTA member attended, and the two of them started brainstorming about a way to develop this idea into a reality.

MCC will now receive one computer per month to be given to a family enrolled in our Match Grant employment program. EverSafe provides everything from the computer and monitor to the keyboard, mouse and electrical cords. The Employment Team refurbishes them and equips the computer with an

operating system. Then the families must attend a two day orientation which details how to turn on/off the computer, how to navigate the Ubuntu operating system, how to budget for and connect to the internet, and how to utilize email. MCC will also help transport the computer to the recipient's house or apartment and help them set it up.

Saw Wah and his family will be the first to receive a computer. While he's only been in Minnesota for 4 months, he already has a job, feels comfortable taking the bus, and is excited to get started using a computer.

Thanks EverSafe
for donating
computers to
refugees!



Refugees in our employment services program are invited to use the three computers at our office computer lab or encouraged to use computers at a public library, but having a personal computer at home is a huge advantage.



The Refugee Community Gardens are in full swing—thanks to generous donors who provided gardening supplies, seeds, a shed, and physical energy to get these gardens off to the right start. The Neighbor Garden and the D2 Community Garden were started this spring in partnership with the District 2 Community Council and Halverson Blaiser Group. Both gardens are in East St. Paul and serve a variety of neighbors and current and past

refugees resettled by the Minnesota Council of Churches – Refugee Services. Between the two gardens, 18 families from 8 different countries are now able to grow their own food this summer in their neighborhood.

The gardens have been funded fully through donations made by: Pizza Luce, World Relief MN, Lutheran Men in Mission, Sandy Christe, Redeemer Lutheran

Church – White Bear, The Horticultural Society and many other individual donors and volunteers.

Find out more about the garden project at our blog: <http://www.mnchurches.org/refugeeservices/blog>

Enjoy these photos of this year's community gardens to see how the generous donations were put to use.

Rummaging Around



Photo credit: Morguefile.com

Enjoy hunting for treasure among junk? Consider bringing this list with you as you peruse garage sales this summer! Newly arrived refugees benefit greatly from household items that are donated to MCC Refugee Services. Here is a list for you to cut out and take with you on your rummaging adventures. Please keep in mind that we cannot accept items that are not on this list—we only have space for the most needed items. Thanks for your cooperation—and happy garage saleing!

- Silverware
- Stovetop pots and pans
- Bakeware
- Mixing, serving bowls
- Chef's knives
- Spatulas, ladles, large spoons
- Can Openers
- Tupperware
- Comforters/blankets
- Waste baskets
- Brooms, mops, or vacuum cleaners
- Towels
- Shower Curtains
- Kids' Backpacks





Minnesota Council of Churches Refugee Services

122 Franklin Avenue W., Suite 100
Minneapolis, MN 55404
Phone: (612) 870-3600
Fax: (612) 870-3622
E-mail: kristin.zoellner@mnchurches.org

If you no longer wish to receive this newsletter, please email kristin.zoellner@mnchurches.org

Visit our Website! www.mnchurches.org/refugeeservices
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Minnesota Council of Churches

manifests the unity of the body of Christ and builds the common good in the world in partnership with 24 member Protestant, Historic Black, and Orthodox judicatories representing more than 2000 congregations and their one million members.

Refugee Services

Our Mission Statement:

Refugee Services is an ecumenical ministry welcoming persecuted people from around the world into new lives of freedom, hope, and opportunity in Minnesota.

Our Vision:

Refugees are abundantly supported as they move from addressing basic needs to achieving their dreams. *And* faith communities are transformed by partnering in this ministry of hospitality.

Karen Noodle Dish

Ingredients:

16 oz chinese noodles (Lo Mein or other wheat noodle)
1 lb ground or chopped pork
1 lb pork tenderloin or pork shoulder
1 head cabbage
¾ lb green beans
1 white onion
2 chayote squash
4-8 chilies
Kwong Hung Seng Sauce – Sweet Sauce
Kwong Hung Seng Sauce – Thin Soy Sauce
Vegetable oil



Enjoy this Karen noodle dish any season!

1. Bring two large pots of water to a boil (do not salt).
2. Trim pork tenderloin or shoulder to remove excess fat.
3. When the first pot of water reaches a boil, add noodles and cook until al dente, about 4-5 minutes. Drain and rinse in cold water and set aside to dry.
4. When the second pot of water reaches a boil, add the pork tenderloin, uncut, to the boiling water and cook until done, about 7-12 minutes depending on the thickness of the meat. Remove from water and set aside to cool. Once cool, cut into ¼ inch thick slices.
5. Prepare vegetables:

- a. Remove thick outer leaves from cabbage, cut in half and wash. Slice each half down the middle to create quarters and then thinly slice to shred
- b. Remove ends from green beans and snap in half
- c. Remove skin from onion, cut in half, and thinly slice lengthwise
- d. Cut Chayote squash in half, scrape ¼ inch of center to core, and slice into 1/8 inch thick slices
- e. Dice chilies, if prefer less heat, remove seeds before dicing
- f. Place cooked and cooled noodles in a large pot and add the Sweet Sauce and Thin Soy Sauce alternately to taste. (Approximately 3 Tbsp Soy and 2 Tbsp Sweet Sauce)
- g. Heat 2 Tbsp oil in wok over high heat. Add ground pork and cook until browned. Add sliced and boiled pork to pan and stir, cooking for 30 seconds. Add onion and more Sweet and Soy Sauce. Cook for 2-3 minutes. Add chayote squash and more of each sauce. Cook for an additional 2-3 minutes. Add green beans and more of each sauce. Continue to cook stirring frequently and checking vegetables for doneness. Green beans should be fully cooked, but still crisp. Continue seasoning with each sauce to taste, adding a greater proportion of Soy Sauce than Sweet Sauce. When vegetable are done, transfer to a large bowl. Add 1 Tbsp more oil to wok and sauté cabbage and chilies for 2-3 minutes until done.
- h. Return all vegetables and the noodles to the wok. Fry until heated through. Add more seasoning sauces to taste. If noodles are too dry, add 2-3 teaspoons of oil to coat noodles. Serve.