



Ideas For Helping Refugees In Your Area

www.JustServe.org

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Individuals or Groups – Short Term or One Time

Ideas for helping refugees in your community

*These are ideas put together by volunteers. It is not a complete list and may not pertain to all areas. Please choose projects that fit the participation level of your group and that are appropriate for the refugees in your area. Many ideas can be combined for larger groups/activities. Email HelpingRefugeesPDX@gmail.com for additional details, resources, or for help implementing projects.

◆ Cards/Signs

Make cards or signs to go into welcome kits, be placed in the apartment, used at the Airport, etc.

◆ Rag Rugs

Use old t-shirts or sheets to make rag rugs. Bleach material first to make sure they are as clean as possible. There are many different patterns and ideas can be found online. Here is a link to some we found: <https://www.pinterest.com/explore/rag-rugs/>

◆ Butterfly Boxes

Offers welcome bags, made by volunteers and delivered to the refugees as they are welcomed at the Portland Airport. These bags are filled with necessities as well as comfort items. Butterfly Boxes also organizes a monthly community potluck dinner as a chance for refugees and volunteers to get to know each other a little better over a shared meal. You can find out more at: <http://www.butterflyboxespdx.org/>

◆ Room Kits

Furnishing an entire apartment may seem a bit overwhelming. You can still contribute by collecting items for a specific room. These items are best organized in tubs and labeled to keep items clean and ready for use by someone setting up a refugee apartment. A complete list can be found at: <https://refugeecarecollective.org/restart-kits/>

◆ Specific Kits for Refugee children

Additional items are often needed for children to help them feel successful and to bridge the gap while their parent finds work and learns how to become self-sufficient. These kits can include items like school supplies, educational/developmental items, socks, underwear, personal hygiene items, and more. Kits can often be coordinated with the refugee programs at various school districts.

◆ **Bikes**

Many refugee children came from areas where riding a bike may not have been possible. Bikes can also be a valuable form of transportation for a refugee needing to get to and from work or school. Collecting bikes in great working order as well as new helmets is a great start, but you can go one step further. When you deliver the bikes, take the time to teach them to ride!

◆ **Learn about countries where refugees are coming from.**

This can be a great activity for any age. Learn a traditional dance, how to make an authentic food, learn about a holiday unique to their country, etc. This activity can be paired with a service project.

◆ **Invite a Refugee or representative to speak to your group.**

Hear about their story and how volunteers made a difference in their life.

◆ **Fundraiser**

Hold a fundraiser to purchase new items needed by refugees or to donate to a humanitarian project.

◆ **Quilts**

Make new quilts to give to refugees. These are great to welcome them as well as provide warmth on a chilly night. You can ask volunteers to donate quilt tops for your group to finish or make the entire quilt.

◆ **Educate others**

Take the time to educate your group or others about refugees. Learning the facts about refugees and the programs that assist them helps combat prejudice and mistreatment that unfortunately happens.

◆ **Picture book drive**

Picture books are a great source for helping to learn English and can be used by refugees of all ages.

◆ **Recipes/How-To cooking**

Create step-by-step instructions for making simple dishes with low-cost foods. Email for a list of foods many refugees receive when first arriving.

◆ **Resource Fair**

Invite representatives from area organizations to help educate people about ways to serve in their communities.

◆ **Learn a Language**

Learn a language that is used by refugees settling in your area. Invite a guest in to teach you or find an online tool.

◆ **Crochet Hats/Scarfs**

Many refugees are from areas of much warmer climate. Crochet some items to help keep them warm on those cold winter days.

◆ **ABC Cards**

Make alphabet flashcards or other flashcards to help both children and adults learn English.

◆ **Cooking**

Invite a refugee to teach you to cook an authentic meal from their native country or learn to cook one from an online resource.

◆ **Tell your Children**

Tell your children some stories of refugees that are appropriate for their age. Let them ask questions. Find the answers together if you are unsure.

◆ **Fill a Purse**

Gather new or like-new purses and fill them with items like lotion, chapstick, coin purse, tissues, etc.

◆ **Baby Shower**

Hold a baby shower for an expectant refugee mother new to the country or one that has just had a baby. Show them how to use baby items that might be common in the US, but not in other countries. Teach them about baby proofing and baby safety.

◆ **Make Busy Books**

Make busy books (Quiet Books) for children. This helps them learn, plus keeps them busy during those long appointments that their parents have.

◆ **Car Seat Drive**

Collect new car seats for refugees. Even though they won't likely have a car, they are often given rides by others. It is very helpful if they have a car seat that properly fits their child.

◆ **Record a Children's Book**

Have youth record reading children's books on CDs. They can be given along with the book to help refugees learn to read.

◆ **How-To/Uses Flashcards**

Create flashcards to pair with common house hold items and cleaning supplies. Coupled with pictures, this teaches proper use and safety precautions.

◆ **So much more!**

Check with your local refugee agencies and school districts for more ideas.