



IMPACT REPORT

2021

WE BELIEVE ALL FAMILIES DESERVE SAFETY & DIGNITY

For more than 30 years, CWS Lancaster has welcomed refugees, immigrants, and asylum-seekers from around the world to our beautiful county. Through partnerships with individuals, faith groups, & community organizations, we empower our newest neighbors to build new lives in peace and security through up to five years of service and support.



CWS
Lancaster



ISLAMIC COMMUNITY CENTER OF LANCASTER

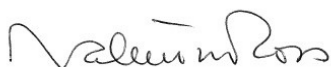
Message from Valentina Ross

2021 saw a return to friendlier refugee resettlement policies after three years of limited refugee arrivals slowed down by historically low admission ceilings, financial disinvestment, and a global pandemic. After much advocacy, the refugee admission ceiling was increased to 125,000. At the end of summer, over 70,000 Afghan nationals were brought to safety in the United States after the evacuation of US troops from Afghanistan.

CWS Lancaster responded quickly to these urgent resettlement needs by revisiting our internal structure to expand our service capacity and geographic radius. In just a few months, CWS Lancaster's program offerings and staff grew by an astounding 80%! And at the beginning of 2022, we opened the CWS Harrisburg sub-office, welcoming 17 new Afghan neighbors even before we had keys to the new building.

Most importantly, in 2021 the Lancaster community again stepped up with tremendous solidarity and support. You opened your homes and hearts to new neighbors and partnered with CWS staff in welcome. Your generous support was also evident during the Extraordinary Give when together we raised over \$160,000 for refugees, immigrants & asylum-seekers during a wonderful day of sharing, art, culture, music, and fun.

At the end of this eventful year, we are looking in disbelief at another humanitarian crisis unfolding before our eyes in Ukraine. Your sustained support is necessary for CWS Lancaster to maintain our infrastructure and respond promptly to ever-evolving crises. We know that we are not alone in this continued journey of welcome and are grateful for the steady patronage of a community that opens its arms to embrace new neighbors, growing stronger and more vibrant in return.



Valentina Ross

Director SouthCentral Pennsylvania

Refugee Services

**Resettlement
Services**

**Employment
Services**

**Extended
Services**

Legal Services

**Legal
Counseling**

**Immigrant
Children's
Program**

**Community
Engagement**

Refugee Services

RESETTLEMENT SERVICES

EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

EXTENDED SERVICES

CWS Lancaster's Refugee Services programs provide up to 5 years of support for new neighbors. From initial reception & placement services like housing and school enrollment to employment orientation and extended case management for families and vulnerable individuals, refugee services programs empower individuals and families to build fulfilling lives. We believe all families deserve respect and the ability to make choices to shape their own future.



271 new neighbors welcomed

Through our Reception & Placement program, the CWS resettlement team provides initial welcome and core services to new neighbors within the first 90 days after arrival, empowering them towards financial self-sufficiency.



52 houses became homes

CWS Lancaster begins identifying appropriate housing for new neighbors once travel dates are confirmed. With your support, houses are stocked with new beds, donated items, initial groceries, and a welcome meal before new neighbors arrive.



110 clients placed in jobs

CWS Employment Specialists work closely with new neighbors to understand educational and employment history along with career goals, providing job orientations and workforce readiness programs.



\$15.67 average starting wage

New neighbors are regularly employed in manufacturing, hospitality, and warehouse industries, bringing unique skills and experiences to Lancaster employers.



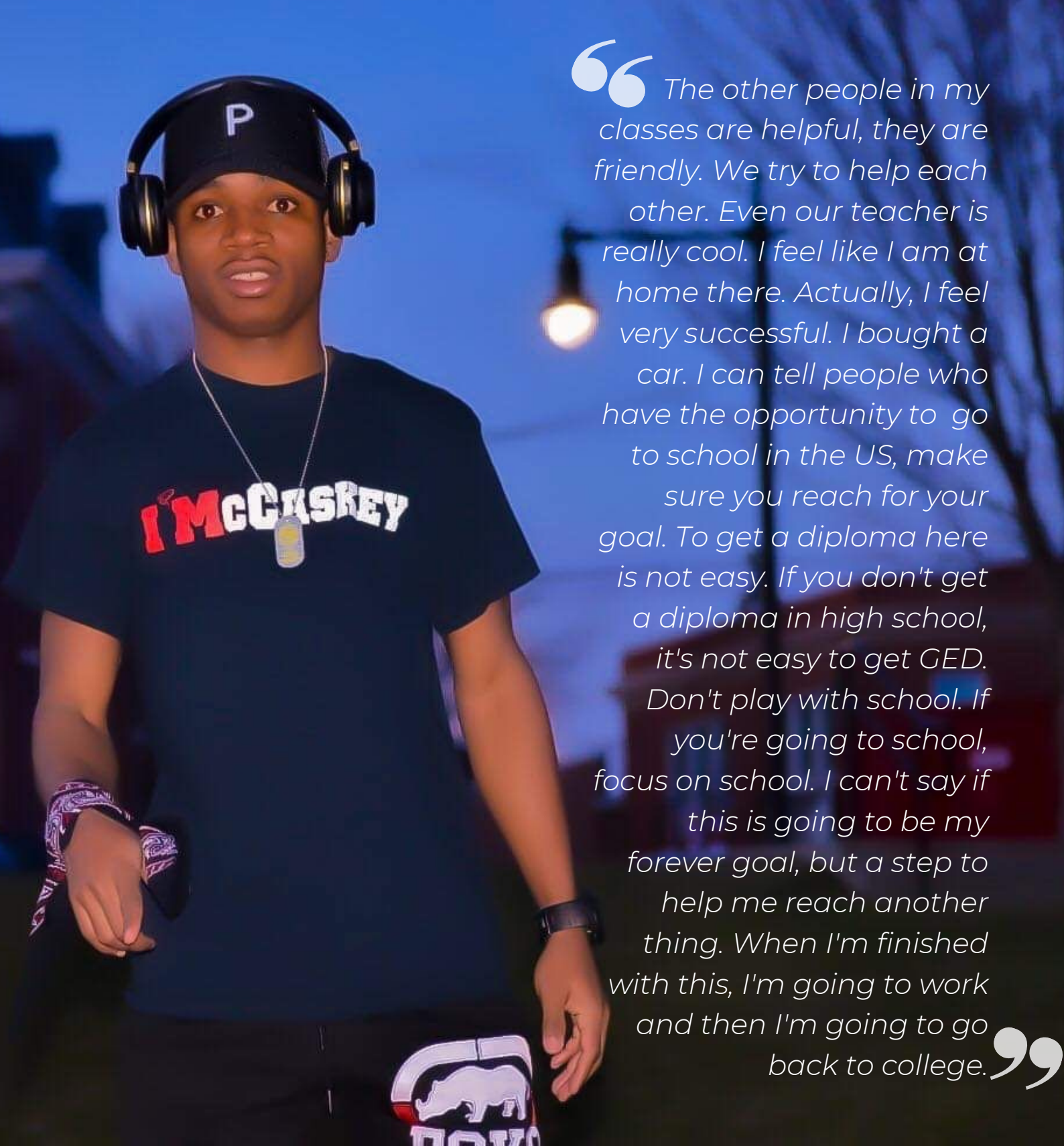
2 COVID-19 Vaccination Clinics

Through close partnerships with Penn Medicine Lancaster General Health and Union Community Care, CWS Lancaster hosted 2 COVID-19 vaccination clinics and countless in-home vaccinations, ensuring new neighbors stay healthy and safe.



95 individuals enrolled in extended services

Extended services assist clients through their integration journeys beyond the initial resettlement period. Programs include intensive case management for vulnerable clients, holistic support to families, health navigation, and coding classes for girls.



“The other people in my classes are helpful, they are friendly. We try to help each other. Even our teacher is really cool. I feel like I am at home there. Actually, I feel very successful. I bought a car. I can tell people who have the opportunity to go to school in the US, make sure you reach for your goal. To get a diploma here is not easy. If you don't get a diploma in high school, it's not easy to get GED. Don't play with school. If you're going to school, focus on school. I can't say if this is going to be my forever goal, but a step to help me reach another thing. When I'm finished with this, I'm going to work and then I'm going to go back to college.”

Grevis and his family arrived in Lancaster in 2019 and enrolled in the Good Job, Happy Family program in August 2021. Already 19 when he arrived, Grevis enrolled at McCaskey High School but quickly realized that it would be challenging to complete his schooling before he turned 21. Grevis worked hard to complete his studies early, even navigating virtual schooling due to COVID-19, with teachers, counselors, and CWS volunteers recognizing his talents and determination. Together with Judy Bentz, a long-time CWS volunteer and retired school counselor, Grevis outlined his goals and desire to pursue postsecondary education; this January, Grevis received a full-scholarship to study plumbing at Tec Centro through the Spanish American Civic Association (SACA) and Thaddeus Stevens.



"We are grateful for our jobs. We can pay for our house. We are looking to buy our own house in the future and to buy a car in the coming months to drive ourselves to work. Our lives changed, period. We are different people with different opportunities. We want to be sure we can achieve as much as we can. We are very thankful for this country and the job opportunities"

Sisters Violette and Regine arrived in Lancaster already wondering what their first jobs would entail. "We knew our living standard depended on us having a job. The first thing was to work so that we can survive, so we can live," said Violette. Thanks to connections and support from the refugee community here in Lancaster, Violette and Regine began working at the Urbn warehouse in Gap, staggering their work shifts to ensure both sisters could spend time with their children.

Immigration Legal Services

IMMIGRATION LEGAL COUNSELING

IMMIGRANT CHILDREN'S PROGRAM

Immigrants and refugees have many complicated and expensive legal hurdles on the path to protection, citizenship, and reuniting with their families. CWS Lancaster's Immigration Legal Counseling staff provide low-cost legal advice and representation to refugees, asylum-seekers, and other immigrants in central PA. With funding from the VERA Institute of Justice, our Immigrant Children's Program provides legal screenings and support for unaccompanied minors residing in Office of Refugee Resettlement shelters.



717 legal consultations

The Immigration Legal Counseling Program provides low-cost and pro-bono legal advice and representation to refugees, asylum-seekers, and other immigrants in central PA.



9 affirmative asylum cases represented

CWS staff members are accredited to practice Immigration law before the Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Services (USCIS) and the Immigration Courts.



60 Temporary Protected Status applications filed

A country may be designated for Temporary Protected Status due to conditions that temporarily prevent the country's nationals from returning safely. CWS Lancaster legal services staff ensure those eligible for TPS can remain safely in the U.S.



254 legal screenings for detained children

After enduring harrowing journeys, children who arrive in the U.S. alone are detained in facilities and placed in deportation proceedings without the benefit of an appointed attorney to assist with their defense. Immigrant Children's Program staff complete legal screenings with unaccompanied minors to determine their eligibility for relief.



236 Know Your Rights screenings provided

CWS Lancaster's Immigrant Children's Program staff ensure that unaccompanied children understand their rights as they work to reunite with family and friends already in the U.S.



25 children directly represented

CWS accredited legal representatives also support unaccompanied children by helping them apply for asylum, visas or other immigration benefits as well as representing them in immigration court.

Update on Afghan Placement & Assistance Program

In August, the world watched the largest humanitarian evacuation in United States history unfold live on our televisions. CWS Lancaster responded swiftly and compassionately by deploying staff to serve on the frontlines of welcome at safe havens across the U.S. and building our capacity to serve new Afghan neighbors arriving to Lancaster. Since then, we have mobilized hundreds of volunteers to host new neighbors in their homes, pick them up at local airports, and provide welcome meals, groceries, and the chance to start a new life.



169 new Afghan neighbors

CWS Lancaster began welcoming new Afghan neighbors in October 2021 through February 2022. New neighbors speak Dari, Pashto and English and come from a wide variety of regions in Afghanistan.



15 host homes

15 local families opened their homes to host over 50 new neighbors from Afghanistan, providing initial welcome and safety after arrival from U.S. military installations.



211 welcome team members

Welcome Team members continue to walk alongside new neighbors and CWS Lancaster staff as new Afghan neighbors move from the initial reception and placement period to long-term integration.



1 Community "Legal Next Steps" workshop

New Afghan neighbors arrived with Humanitarian Parole, a temporary legal status that will require an asylum application within one year of arrival. Legal Services staff met with community members to outline opportunities for continued advocacy & support.

Afghan evacuees currently residing on U.S. military bases overseas have now begun arriving to the United States, with an additional 3,500 to 5,000 Afghan nationals expected to arrive to Safe Havens in the U.S. over the next three to four months. CWS Lancaster anticipates welcoming an additional 60 new Afghan neighbors during this second phase, with arrivals anticipated to begin in the coming weeks.

CWS Lancaster's Legal Counseling staff continue to meet with new Afghan neighbors to identify legal options and advise on next steps. Because Humanitarian Parole is a temporary immigration status, it does not have a path to permanent residency. Legal Counseling staff are providing initial consultations to discuss immigration legal options for Afghan neighbors and are currently building a network of pro-bono attorneys to support asylum applications.

Starting a new life in the U.S.

Hasan Qurbani

My name is Hasan and I'm from Afghanistan. I'm one of the CWS clients. As an immigrant and someone who came to the United States from a third world country, it is natural that everything is different. These differences include language, culture, infrastructure and even climate. From the moment I arrived in Lancaster, I became acquainted with kind people who have been willing to help. I made friends, some who it seems like we have known each other for years.



Most of these people were people who volunteered. I would like to thank each of them, along with the CWS staff. I want to thank Bill for allowing us to live in his house for more than two months. I would like to sincerely thank Mark, Tohid, Barbara, Rosalyn, Doctor Charles, Andery, Kim, Laura, Ginjr, Danita and my case workers Chloe and Genevieve and many others who have helped in my transition. To be honest, if it were not for them, our problems would be more challenging, because we come from a different environment with a different culture and language. Despite being in this city for more than 4 months, we still have needs and ask these friends for help to visit the doctor or to buy food, and they continue to accommodate our requests.

The recent events that happened in Afghanistan hurt the heart of everyone and some Americans have understood this pain with the depth of their being. There may be people who do not like immigrants, and if you have needs, they simply ignore you. But they do not represent the majority of the American people. Also, some immigrants who come here from another country and society do unwise things, but do not represent the majority immigrants. The misdeeds of one person is personal and we should not generalize it to everyone.

Special thanks from US government and USCIS who brought me here. Personally, I strive for great success here in America, because this country provides tremendous opportunities. By succeeding in the USA, it brings pride for my country, my people, as well as contributing to America.

With the experiences I have gained here and what I am trying to accomplish, America provides you with opportunity, as long as you work hard and are honest. It takes a long time to build trust, but breaking trust takes only a moment. We must try to successfully respond to those who have trusted us. In my opinion, my success and willingness to adapt to the new challenges, it is the best reward for all those who help us.

Community Engagement



200+
volunteers



\$42,141.98
in-kind donations



1 cricket pitch

8 StoryCorps recordings

Launched in 2020, NPR's StoryCorps "American Pathways" is an initiative to record, preserve, and share the stories and experiences of refugees, asylees, immigrants, and Muslims living in the United States. CWS Lancaster partnered with StoryCorps and Lancaster History to record 8 conversations with local refugees, immigrants, and allies, highlighting friendships and relationships forged across communities.

Click the images below to listen to a clip from each recording.



Ole & Sue



Ruhama & Chief Anders



Amita & Michelle



Amer & Brandy



Omar & Valentina



Fairy & Nancy



Dan & Adriana



Sheila & Miguel

Stay tuned for a Lancaster History digital archive of these stories and the art they inspired!

THANK YOU FOR BEING PART OF OUR WELCOMING COMMUNITY

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