

## Refugee Assistance

# RAMP

## Morris Partners

*A Bridge to Assist People to  
Cross From One Life to Another*

For Immediate Release  
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Contact: Gerard Gannon, RAMP Convener  
PO Box 1544 Moristown, NJ 07960  
[INFO@RAMPNJ.org](mailto:INFO@RAMPNJ.org)  
973-377-4697

### Refugee Assistance Morris Partners ready to sponsor one or more refugee families

The small boy in the red shirt washed ashore on the beach at Turkey. The stunned child in Aleppo in the orange chair, feet dangling, covered in soot and blood. Countless images of desperate families trudging across Eastern Europe with their worldly possessions or packed into lifeboats crossing dangerous seas to escape continued oppression in their homeland.

Because of the disturbing images we see daily, a coalition of Morris area faith-based organizations is taking action. Refugee Assistance Morris Partners (RAMP), which was organized last spring, has been hard at work together with Church World Service, the relief arm of the National Council of Churches of Christ, to bring one or more Middle Eastern families to the Morris County Area.

For Gerard Gannon, convener of RAMP, and for other members of the group, a deep commitment to immigrants and refugees is essential to who we are as Americans.

“We want all to live out the American dream that is etched at the base of the Statue of Liberty,” he says.

RAMP and Church World Service will co-sponsor the families for approximately six months. After that the families are expected to become self-sufficient.

“The most difficult challenge we face is locating an appropriate two-bedroom apartment in Morris County,” Gannon said. “The apartment has to be near public transportation, and, more importantly, affordable for families on a limited income.”

Gannon is hopeful that there may be someone with available housing willing to help. “Since the rents in Morris County are generally higher than other areas, we are attempting to contact local homeowners who

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may have an apartment available in their homes and willing to help in the resettlement of a 'tempest tossed' family," he said.

The refugee families that have been resettled are part of the commitment by the federal government to resettle 85,000 refugees in 2015 and 115,00 in 2017, including 10,000 Syrians this year, according to Firas Kayal, senior policy advisor of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the world agency responsible for organizing resettlement around the world.

The United Nations agency, along with the Department of Justice and Homeland Security, as well as other federal agencies, do extensive ongoing vetting of refugee families. All of the people who arrive here have lived in refugee camps, mostly in Jordan and Turkey, for a minimum of three years. The nine-step extensive process ensures that refugees are subject to the highest level of security checks of any category of traveler entering our country.

According to Megan Johnson, program associate at Church World Service in Jersey City, their office has resettled 117 refugees this year in Jersey City, Elizabeth and Paterson.

"While these refugees may come from different countries and different backgrounds, each and every one of them has had to leave everything they know in search of safety and a new life. For these families, resettlement is a chance—an opportunity for hope," she said.

Johnson is pleased that CWS is able to partner with RAMP.

"Community partners like RAMP give families a better chance at success by providing more support and an entire community letting families know that they are welcome, wanted, and safe," Johnson said.

Many of the New Jersey refugees are families with young children. The families to arrive under RAMP sponsorship will be the first to resettle in Morris County.

Rev. Janet Broderick, Clergy Convener and Rector of St. Peter's Episcopal Church, Morristown, one of the faith organizations, said, "We have been preparing with great expectation for our friends to arrive, diligently covering all the bases—but the real thrill will come when we can shake their hands and say, 'Hello, welcome!'"

Voice of the Faithful of New Jersey (VOTFNJ), a lay organization of Roman Catholics, along with members of St. Peter's Episcopal Church, founded RAMP in spring 2016 when they invited Will Haney of Church World Service to speak about the worldwide refugee crisis. Currently, RAMP has members who represent 10 Protestant churches, two Catholic Churches, two synagogues, and two mosques located in the area.

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Church World Service, which has been resettling refugees since World War II, has very extensive lists of requirements for sponsorship of refugee families. In addition to finding affordable housing, RAMP will be responsible for core support services, including welcoming, community orientation, employment opportunities, appropriate social services, educational assistance, transportation, and medical care. Because these sponsored families arrive with legal documentation, they qualify for employment.

In addition to assistance with locating suitable housing, RAMP welcomes new members who are willing to serve on one of its 10 sub-committees that range from welcoming, to employment assistance, to furniture and clothing. Translators who speak Arabic are also needed.

RAMP operates as a Special Project Fund of the Community Foundation of New Jersey and is now accepting donations.

According to Leo Rogers, treasurer, "As a very young organization, RAMP is fortunate to be affiliated with The Community Foundation of New Jersey, a highly-respected local foundation that has a long history of assisting non-profit organizations such as RAMP that are working for the benefit of others."

**Financial donations should be sent to Treasurer, RAMP, P.O. Box 1544, Morristown, NJ 07960.** Checks should be made to the Community Foundation of New Jersey with RAMP indicated in the memo line. All donations are tax deductible. RAMP also accepts in-kind donations, especially of house furnishings and clothing.

Those interested in volunteering for RAMP should contact the organization at [info@rampnj.org](mailto:info@rampnj.org) and visit the website at <http://www.rampnj.org>, where you will also find a link to our Speakers Bureau for information on scheduling a speaker. Our team is excited to share our knowledge and experiences with your organization.

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