Once upon a time...
The Story of America

"Endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness"
—The Declaration of Independence

...is a never-ending story of people searching for freedom,

"A new nation conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal"
—The Gettysburg Address

...freedom to build the life they dream of, to see their children become successful members of society.

"Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free"
—Inscription on the Statue of Liberty

This story is being retold day after day among the refugees helped by...
Just as each refugee’s journey re-creates The Story of America, each time an organization gets a new leader, it re-creates itself. During my first full year as RefugeeOne Executive Director, I challenged myself to look at the organization in new ways after serving 28 years on staff. I want to thank the Board, staff, volunteers and donors of RefugeeOne for supporting me through this time of change and this year in which we resettled nearly 100 more refugees than last year.

I have set about steering RefugeeOne to strive always to:

**Be responsive to refugee needs.** During the year, RefugeeOne took a strategic look at each of its programs, creating a plan to build on its strengths and enhance services to better meet client needs. We expanded the capacity of the Wellness Program, providing greater assistance to refugees coping with mental health challenges, and we further developed collaborations between RefugeeOne and mainstream service providers to offer mental health services to adolescents.

**Be more effective.** This year saw the introduction of RefugeeOne’s new client database. Developed specifically for the agency, the database now allows us to measure how quickly refugees move toward becoming self-sufficient. The measures for this year will form the baseline for reporting progress to government agencies, foundations, and individual contributors.

**Be an integral member of the community.** We’ve begun taking a bigger role in collaborations between faith communities, local businesses and other social groups to promote the plight of refugees and offer opportunities for the entire community to partner with us. RefugeeOne also maintains a leading role in strengthening refugee communities, helping them build capacity and create their own organizations that provide continuum of service and promote their cultural heritage.

**Be self-reliant as an agency.** With the addition of new fundraising positions, Board members, and the creation of a host committee who increased our annual gala proceeds by 41 percent, RefugeeOne is poised to become less dependent on any one type of funding and in the future be able to weather the ups and downs of the 21st Century economy with fewer funding crises.

As you read the report and see our achievements, and get inspired by the stories of Said, Hodan and Thomas, I hope you will feel encouraged by the role you play in providing a second chance to the many refugees we serve.

I value the partnership each and every one of you brings to RefugeeOne. Without you and your support we simply would not be where we are today. I look forward to our continued work together as we build a better and stronger RefugeeOne in the coming years.

Sincerely,

Melikeh Kano
Executive Director
RefugeeOne creates opportunity for refugees fleeing war, terror and persecution to build new lives of safety, dignity and self-reliance.

RefugeeOne fulfills its mission through diverse programs, including:

**Reception and Placement:** Through its affiliation with Church World Service (CWS), Episcopal Migration Ministries (EMM), and Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS), RefugeeOne provides each new arrival with housing, case management, orientation, and supportive services.

**English Classes:** RefugeeOne offers four levels of language training classes that help refugees gain and improve their English skills. Class curriculums are based on work and survival English. Students with children have access to on-site childcare during class hours.

**Job Placement:** RefugeeOne provides comprehensive job readiness, job placement and post-placement follow-up services. The agency continues to build a network of employers in a wide variety of industries who agree to interview, train and work with refugees in their first American jobs.

**Computer Training:** RefugeeOne’s computer lab offers basic computer skills training. These classes provide refugees the skills they need to compete and advance in today’s technology-driven job market.

**Strengthening Families:** Programs attend to the special needs of youth, seniors and women. Services for youth include a lively after-school program, home-based homework assistance, cultural field trips and help in understanding such American traditions as baseball and Halloween. The Women’s Program helps women engage in the many roles open to them in the United States. They learn ways to supplement the family’s income, how to shop, and best parenting practices. The Seniors Program ensures older refugees get the personal assistance, income supports and social connections they need to live independently.

**Wellness Program:** RefugeeOne helps refugees overcome such psychological problems as post-traumatic stress disorder, depression and isolation. This program addresses some of the largest deterrents to refugees becoming self-sufficient and contributing members of our society.
Who we’ve served

In FY13, RefugeeOne assisted people from fifty-four countries:


RefugeeOne 2013
Refugee Arrivals  451  Assisted with Immigration Benefits  2,063  Obtained Citizenship  115

RefugeeOne English Classes & Job Placement
English Language Training  234  Placed in Jobs  192  Remained Employed for 90+ days  147  Received Medical Benefits Through Employment  111

RefugeeOne Strengthening Families Programs
Case Management Services  870  Women’s Program  136  Seniors’ Program  101  Youth Program  210  Received Mental Health and Wellness
  • Adults  154  • Children & Adolescents  25
Thomas lived what many in Burma/Myanmar would call a life of grace, even though he came from the Karen ethnic minority and practiced a minority religion, Roman Catholicism. His family had farmed the land for generations. He also received a good education, including English and music.

A simple request caused Thomas to become an “enemy” of the Communist junta, be tortured and sent to a prison camp and, finally, flee for fear of his life: that he and other Catholics could have a day of rest on Sunday, instead of Friday (when Buddhists celebrate).

Thomas submitted his request to the Village Chairman. Shortly afterwards, three soldiers attended his church, listening to the priest’s sermon and taking notes. Later, Thomas visited the Chairman to inquire on the status of his petition. Instead of meeting his elected official, he met three members of the military. They forced Thomas to kneel before them in public, interrogated him, and beat him. Then, without a word to his family, they took him away to the Kadihteet Prison Camp.

One night, Thomas saw an opportunity to escape. He took nothing and left, making his way into Malaysia and securing refugee status with the United Nations. During the six years it took to process his application for resettlement to the U.S., he remained an undocumented person, working in restaurants and subjected to regular mistreatment by the militia.

Thomas was finally given a resettlement date and arrived in Chicago this year. RefugeeOne was ready to help. He was greeted by RefugeeOne staff at O’Hare International Airport and taken to an apartment that the organization had rented and furnished for him. He opened the door of his new home and it was filled with the familiar smells of delicious Burmese food. After Thomas ate his first meal in America, his case manager showed him how to operate the apartment’s appliances, locks and faucets, then told him to get some rest and be ready to be picked-up the next day for his first visit to RefugeeOne.

At the office, he was tested for English literacy and was placed in a Level Four English class, the highest level that RefugeeOne offers. The class was advanced enough to take advantage of the language skills he learned as a youth and challenged him to learn words and phrases that would be helpful while interviewing for his first American job.

The restaurant skills Thomas gained in Malaysia came in useful here too. He was sent to one of Chicago’s best restaurants, where he was hired as a pre-cook (chopping vegetables and laying out food for preparation) and as a dishwasher. The two jobs allow him to pick up extra hours in either role. Thomas anticipates advancing to the role of cook in the next two to three years.

Thomas says he dreams every night of his parents,
his wife and his little girls. While things are improving in Burma, Thomas is still fearful of contacting them and causing trouble for them. He continues to worship with his Catholic church, where recently he played the organ at Mass.

Thomas is one of nearly 500 refugees resettled by RefugeeOne each year who are forced to flee their country due to persecution based on their ethnicity, religion, race, nationality, social group or political beliefs.

Thomas would like to thank everyone who works at, volunteers at or supports RefugeeOne. “You saved my life. You saved my life and changed it. My life is better now and I am going to save money so that one day, my family can come to America and live in freedom.”
Said and his wife Hodan are from Somalia, a society made up of hundreds of different clans. They enjoyed relative peace in their country after British and Italian troops withdrew and created the Somali Republic. Then civil war broke out in 1991, splitting the country along clan lines. Both Said and Hodan, who did not yet know each other, were trapped in strongholds of rival clans.

As violence increased and hundreds of thousands of innocent people were killed, Said and Hodan became increasingly fearful for their lives. They knew their families’ lives were at risk based simply on the clan they were born into. Each made their way into the neighboring country of Djibouti, though Hodan was forced to say goodbye to her daughter in Somalia. It was in a Djibouti refugee camp that Said and Hodan met and eventually married.

As a couple, they began a new life in Djibouti, working hard at low-wage jobs, restricted to a small area of the city, and unable to ever become citizens. Later, they started a family. They didn’t want their plight to be their children’s fate, so when they learned refugee children could never enroll in school, they had no choice but to apply to the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees for relocation to a third country. After 17 years in Djibouti, they were selected to be resettled in the U.S.

They arrived in Chicago in November 2012. Although the month was warm by Chicago standards, to the family of six sub-Saharan Africans, it was bitterly cold. Said arrived dressed in a t-shirt. “I froze,” he said.

They vividly remember the-literally-warm welcome.
they received from RefugeeOne. Their case manager was at the airport with winter coats, gloves and hats. He drove them to their apartment which Hodan recalls as being “huge;” her fear was they were going to be crowded into a very small living space. Both parents smiled as they remembered arriving at the apartment and finding a warm meal ready for them after all the hours on the plane and passing through customs.

It was here that they faced their first challenges as refugees. In Djibouti, there are very few multi-level buildings and these were restricted to the wealthiest parts of the city. They needed to learn to work the elevator, the gas oven, the hot and cold running water, and the dishwasher.

Their neighborhood, too, was strange. “It was a totally new mix of people we’d never seen before,” said Hodan. While they were familiar with Americans and Europeans, they had never lived alongside Asians, Hispanics, or “men with long hair, pony tails, and braids.”

As they settled in, they were brought to the RefugeeOne office where they started English classes, enrolled in RefugeeOne’s Employment program, and accessed other in-house services to help the entire family adjust to life in the U.S. Hodan’s language skills, along with her work experience in Djibouti, led to her first job cleaning hotel rooms and brought an important early income for the family. RefugeeOne helped Said find work as a dishwasher soon after. Their children were enrolled in the RefugeeOne Youth Program, participating in the after-school program and receiving home tutoring.

“I want to say ‘thank you’ to the Americans who assisted us and thanks to the American government for bringing us here,” said Said. “I hope to buy our own home and send all my children to university.” Hodan added, “When we become citizens, I also want to ask the United States to help my daughter in Somalia come to Chicago and live with our family.” The biggest dream for the future was voiced by their oldest girl, Muna. “I don’t want to be a doctor or teacher when I grow up. I want to work at RefugeeOne and help new refugee families in Chicago.”
Statement of Activities
Years Ended June 30, 2013 and June 30, 2012
**Final audit numbers

**Source of Funds**
- **73%** | Government Agencies
- **7%** | Individual and Board Contributions
- **11%** | Foundations and Corporations
- **3%** | Congregations/Religious Organizations
- **5%** | Client Fees
- **1%** | Other Income

**Use of Funds**
- **84%** | Program Services
- **10%** | Management and General
- **6%** | Fundraising

**Support and Revenue**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Funds</th>
<th>2013**</th>
<th>2012**</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Government Agencies</td>
<td>$ 2,215,263</td>
<td>$ 2,048,651</td>
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<tr>
<td>Individual and Board Contributions</td>
<td>209,002</td>
<td>219,725</td>
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<tr>
<td>Foundations and Corporations</td>
<td>327,138</td>
<td>277,255</td>
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<tr>
<td>Congregations/Religious Organizations</td>
<td>102,609</td>
<td>76,655</td>
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<tr>
<td>Client Fees</td>
<td>160,000</td>
<td>136,549</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other Income</td>
<td>9,526</td>
<td>13,566</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Support and Revenue</strong></td>
<td><strong>$ 3,023,538</strong></td>
<td><strong>$ 2,772,401</strong></td>
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**Expenses**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Use of Funds</th>
<th>2013**</th>
<th>2012**</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Program Services</td>
<td>$ 2,481,331</td>
<td>$ 2,272,988</td>
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<tr>
<td>Management and General</td>
<td>284,445</td>
<td>264,279</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fundraising</td>
<td>183,550</td>
<td>229,542</td>
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<td><strong>Total Expenses</strong></td>
<td><strong>$ 2,949,326</strong></td>
<td><strong>$ 2,766,809</strong></td>
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**Net Assets**

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2013**</th>
<th>2012**</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Change in Net Assets</td>
<td>$ 74,212</td>
<td>$ 5,592</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prior Period Adjustment</td>
<td>(685)</td>
<td>(9,100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net Assets at Beginning of Year</td>
<td>467,879</td>
<td>471,387</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Net Assets at End of Year</strong></td>
<td><strong>$ 541,406</strong></td>
<td><strong>$ 467,879</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Board Directors**

As of June 2013

Hartwig Zakin
President
Adam Gleich
Vice President
Douglas Meyer
Secretary
Carla Denison-Bickett
Treasurer
Jim Bennett
Gabrielle Buckley
Ken Johnson
Murray Johnson
Ayman Khalil
Maureen Meyer
Jay Michael
Ty Olsen
Ahmed Rehab
Priya Sequeira
Marianne To

**National Partners**

As of June 2013

Church World Service
Episcopal Migration Ministries
Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service

Fiscal year 2013
We thank all our donors who made financial contributions from July 1, 2012 to June 30, 2013. Your gifts are deeply appreciated.

**Individual Donors**

**$10,000 and Above**
David & Rebecca Carlins
Adam J. Gleich & Sarah Poole
Terrance & Virginia Holt
Harry M. Jansen Kraemer, Jr.
Ashley McCall & Avery McCall
Steve & Maureen Meyer
William & Marianne To

**$5,000 - $9,999**
Anonymous (2)
Sean Germaine
Daniel & Juliette Goldstein
Murray & Diana Johnson
Ayman & Nadeya Khalil
Nick & Robbin Schoewe
Joseph Silich
Hartwig & Anne Zakin

**$2,500 - $4,999**
James L. Bennett & Terry Vanden Hoek
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La Donna Taylor
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Kristine Westerberg
Jim & Louise Yao

**$250 to $499**
John Abraham
Barbara Alexander
Kathleen Allan
Thomas & Joyce Allen
Allan Allweiss
Glenn Alvarez
Daniel Amick
Luis Arango
Andre P. Augustin, Sr.
Cristina Baddea-Boffeli
Sibi Bailey
Tom & Diane Barounis
Charles Baubonis
Jonathan Bergstrom
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Johanna Buritica
John & Mary Burlingame
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Molly Carl
Scott & Norene Chesebro
Emily Corbett
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Brenda Didier
Jerry W. Digilio
David & Katya Donovan
Andrea Drake
Tim & Joyce Dugan
Mr. and Mrs. Don Dunbar
Joan Ecker
David Ellsworth

**$100 - $249**
John Abraham
Barbara Alexander
Kathleen Allan
Thomas & Joyce Allen
Allan Allweiss
Glenn Alvarez
Daniel Amick
Luis Arango
Andre P. Augustin, Sr.
Cristina Baddea-Boffeli
Sibi Bailey
Tom & Diane Barounis
Charles Baubonis
Jonathan Bergstrom
Jim & Margaret Bickett
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Jerry W. Digilio
David & Katya Donovan
Andrea Drake
Tim & Joyce Dugan
Mr. and Mrs. Don Dunbar
Joan Ecker
David Ellsworth

**$100 - $249**
Paul Estrich & Dana Desjardins
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Maribeth McNamus
Richard Means & Anne Rooney
Mr. and Mrs. John Merz
Bishop and Mrs. Wayne Miller
Andrew Mitchell

---Continued---
RefugeeOne thanks the following organizations who made financial contributions from July 1, 2012 to June 30, 2013.

**Communities of Faith**
- Acacia Park Lutheran Church, Norridge*
- Ascension Lutheran Church, Riverside
- Bethlehem Evangelical Lutheran Church, Chicago*
- Christ the Lord Lutheran Church, Elgin
- The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
- Concordia Evangelical Lutheran Church, Chicago*
- Edison Park Lutheran Church, Chicago
- First Congregational Church of Western Springs
- Fourth Presbyterian Church, Chicago
- Glenview Community Church
- Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Oak Park
- Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Chicago*
- Grace Episcopal Church, Chicago
- Grace Lutheran Church, River Forest
- Grace Lutheran Church, Libertyville
- Grace Lutheran Church of LaGrange
- Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Chicago
- Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Glenview*
- Illinois Conference of the United Church of Christ
- Immanuel Evangelical Lutheran Church, Chicago
- Kenilworth Union Church
- Lutheran Church of Martha and Mary, Mount Prospect*
- Lutheran Church of the Ascension, Northfield
- Lutheran Church of the Holy Spirit, Lincolnshire
- Martin Luther Lutheran Church, Chicago*
- Mayfair Lutheran Church, Chicago
- Missio Dei Chicago - Logan Square, Chicago*
- Northern IL Conference - United Methodist Church
- Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, Schaumburg
- Resurrection Lutheran Church, Chicago*
- St. John's Episcopal Church, Mount Prospect
- St. Luke Presbyterian Church, Downers Grove
- St. Luke's Lutheran Church, Park Ridge
- St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Evanston*
- St. Paul's United Church of Christ, Chicago
- St. Stephen Lutheran Church, Antioch*
- Trinity United Church of Christ, Deerfield
- St. Stephen Lutheran Church, Evanston*
- St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Evanston*
- St. Paul's United Church of Christ, Chicago
- St. Stephen Lutheran Church, Antioch*
- Trinity United Church of Christ, Deerfield

**Foundations Corporations & Organizations**
- American Endowment Foundation
- American Immigration Lawyers Association
- Anchor Advisors Ltd.*
- Andres Cerritos Law Office LTD
- Anonymous
- Baskin Family Foundation
- Bridgeview Bank Group
- Business Partners - The Chamber for Uptown
- Cagan Management Group, Inc.
- Cedar Street Companies
- Chicago Association of Realtors
- Community Foundation of Greater Chattanooga
- CTC Trading Group
- Devon Business Group
- Devon Western Currency Exchange
- DK Sleper Associates, Inc.
- Doostan Restaurant
- Eli's Cheesecake Company
- Fetzer Institute
- The Field Foundation of Illinois, Inc
- Full Circle Family Foundation, C/O Red Barn Investments
- Girl Scouts of Greater Chicago, Troupe 40640
- Global Giving Foundation
- Griffin McCarthy Rice LLP
- Just Give
- Kirkland & Ellis Foundation
- Landon Bone Baker Architects
- Mata Traders
- Mayu
- McCall Family Foundation
- McCormick Foundation
- McGraw-Hill Companies
- McKay Landscape Architects
- Michele and Larry Rivkin Philanthropic Fund
- Mid-America Graphics
- Morgan Stanley
- Morton Group
- North Cook County Chicago Chapter of Thrivent Financial
- Patrick Engineering
- Polk Bros. Foundation
- Pricewaterhouse Coopers
- R.W. Troxell Co.
- Ravenswood Health Care Foundation
- Renaissance Charitable Foundation
- Rivers Casino
- Root Strategy, LLC
- Schakowsky for Congress
- Schwab Charitable Fund
- Symbiocon Group, L.L.C.
- The Chicago Community Foundation
- U.S. Charitable Gift Trust
- U.S. Trust Bank of America
- Private Wealth Management
- University of Chicago Laboratory Schools
- Vedder Price P.C.*
- West Cook County Chicago Chapter of Thrivent Financial
- Wines for Humanity

**Government and National Partners**
- Church World Service
- City of Chicago, Department of Family and Support Services
- Corporation for National and Community Service (AmeriCorps VISTA)
- Episcopal Migration Ministries
- Illinois Coalition for Immigrant & Refugee Rights
- Illinois Department of Human Services
- Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity
- Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago
- Lutheran Immigration & Refugee Service
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
- Office of Refugee Resettlement
- U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration

*In-kind donations.

Any omissions or errors are regretted in advance. If you notice an error, please contact Sara Spoonheim, Director of Development at sspoonheim@refugeeone.org.
As President of the Board of Directors, I’d like to extend the Board’s gratitude to the many people, congregations and organizations that helped RefugeeOne achieve its mission this year. As you look through this report, I hope you will agree the staff and Board of RefugeeOne continue to be good stewards of your generous contributions and that, like us, you are proud to support an organization that is continually striving to live its mission of creating opportunities for refugees fleeing war, terror and persecution to build new lives of safety, dignity and self-reliance. Thank you for supporting RefugeeOne.

Hartwig Zakin
Board President

RefugeeOne’s 8th Annual Gala raised over $162,000 in April 2013. This is an amazing increase of 41% over 2012. We would like to thank the Gala Committee members, chaired by Maureen Meyer, for their creativity and dedication.

Thanks to the many congregations, schools, organizations, and individual donors who participated in our DO ONE THING campaigns throughout the year. Through this initiative, we were able to collect cash and household items for 15 families.

Our Backpack and School Supplies Drive equipped 200 children for the academic year. More than 600 refugees received coats for the Chicago winter, thanks to our Annual Coat Drive.