

Ithaca Welcomes Refugees partners with newly arrived refugees and at-risk immigrants as they rebuild their lives in Tompkins County. IWR formed in 2015 in response to the global refugee crisis and the plight of millions who have been driven from their homes. We provide services like cultural and community orientations, financial assistance and emergency support, and education and outreach in the community.

As refugee crises around the globe continue to increase, IWR faces a growing need to help people who have been displaced. IWR has supported those who come to our region from Angola, Afghanistan, Cuba, Ukraine, and other countries to find much-needed security and community through our programs. We are currently supporting:

- ❖ 76 people total:
  - 14 families
  - 20 individuals

To help new arrivals rebuild their lives in Ithaca we have three main programs: the Welcome Home Program, Response Projects, and Global Roots Play School.

The Welcome Home Program is focused on new arrivals; our team locates appropriate housing, provides apartment set-up, basic needs support, emergency assistance, and early orientation to the area. Finding affordable housing is IWR's biggest hurdle to resettling refugees.

Response Projects are focused on long-term support and are tailored to each family's specific needs. We provide a range of services like interpretation, transportation, and accompaniment to appointments. IWR also operates with an intentional flexibility so that when needs seem to be common among

various families, we can respond with new initiatives, such as funds to cover educational expenses and driving lessons. As one IWR volunteer writes:

*"The needs we assist with are the most basic you can imagine, from making sure that infants have a regular supply of diapers, to helping find a doctor within walking distance or on a bus route because the family has no transportation and to assisting with interpretation for language barriers in every aspect of their lives. It takes a team for each family and the cash costs for assistance are many."*



Global Roots Play School takes on obstacles to education faced by parents eager to learn English with nearby programs at Tompkins Learning Partners and Open Doors English but who have to overcome the high cost of childcare downtown, the cost and limitations of transportation, limited English and other difficulties.

We provide affordable, accessible childcare in close proximity to ESL classes, using culturally-sensitive, play-based methods so children feel safe and nurtured while experiencing socialization. We also provide school and community support for families to reduce stress on both parents and children. Over 60 children have enrolled in Global Roots since its founding.