

2020/2021

Refugee Family Reunification Trust **Newsletter**



Refugee Family Reunification Trust

OUR SUCCESSES
together
SINCE 2001

Global disruptions and travel restrictions caused by COVID-19 have had a serious impact on refugee family reunification. Due to the closure of New Zealand's border, and Immigration New Zealand not processing cases, the Trust has been unable to proceed with applications for assistance with airfares since the end of March 2020, apart from dependent children cases. The refugee families affected are waiting until international travel resumes.

While we were fortunate to be able to reunite a Syrian family, and a Somali family, just before lockdown, the future for refugees is more uncertain than ever.

Prior to the impact of COVID-19, we had one of our most successful years in terms of providing financial assistance – with a record quarter of a million dollars (\$255,000) made available to refugees.

We continue to assist refugees with the costs of application fees and medicals required by Immigration New Zealand, the cost of appeals, and other necessary expenses relating to the immigration process, such as translations and police certificates. We have also been able to help with the initial rental costs for housing family members on arrival in New Zealand, thanks to a specific donation for this purpose from the Sisters of Saint Joseph.

We will continue to provide this help to refugees as we wait for international travel to resume - when it does, the cost of flights will likely be more expensive.

We also continue to advocate for improvements in refugee family reunification policy and practices.

Families we have helped come from:

Somalia, Ethiopia,
Eritrea, Sierra Leone,
Liberia, Algeria,
Sudan, Rwanda,
Uganda, Zimbabwe,
Afghanistan, Iraq,
Iran, Syria, Oman,
United Arab Emirates,
Cambodia, Myanmar,
Colombia, Sri Lanka
and Banda Ache.



OVER \$2.26M
raised for
REFUGEES

NEARLY 300
refugee families
REUNITED



OVER 800
applications for
HELP APPROVED

OVER 815
airfares to
NEW ZEALAND



Thanks to YOU!

thank you

FOR YOUR HELP

We remain extremely grateful to all our donors, without whom we would not have had such a record financial year. The ongoing support of generous individuals and charities is critical to everything that we have been able to achieve during the past year.

To each and every one of our donors, thank you. We hope that you are able to continue your support, as each donation – whether a regular donation or a one-off – is a vital contribution towards eventually getting a family back together again.

Significant donors over the past year include: Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand; Archdiocesan Tindall Allocations Committee; Tai Shan Foundation; Hon Robert Smellie; Yvonne and Peter Cottier, and The Grace Memorial Trust (see story opposite). Very generous donations have also been made by a number of individuals and private trusts, who prefer to remain anonymous. Your support is greatly appreciated.

Many volunteers have kindly given their time, skills and enthusiasm to help run the Trust, to organise fundraising or to help new families with their resettlement. Special thanks to our honorary accountant, Alison Dyer, and to the Trust's auditor, Kendons. Multicultural Learning and Support Services let us share their mailbox. We would also like to thank Phil Dyer for taking the photographs we use. Special thanks to Hannah and Thomas Schickedanz at Schickedanz Design Studio for designing and building our beautiful website pro bono, and again generously donating time to format this newsletter. Thanks also to Michael Till and Jane Duncan for their willingness to help our families. Lesley Hooper kindly helps to manage the database. Simpson Grierson provides pro bono legal support. Your assistance is invaluable.

We hope that New Zealand Red Cross will continue its great programme providing volunteer support to family reunion refugees on their arrival in Wellington, once travel resumes. This is very practical and important work assisting with basic resettlement tasks and challenges.

The Grace Memorial Trust

The Grace Memorial Trust was established in 1992 by Diana Unwin (1923-2014), in memory of her mother. Diana was one of New Zealand's more private philanthropists, and a long-time advocate for peace and justice. Diana was involved with CORSO, UNICEF, Save the Children, the United Nations Association, the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament and the international peace movement, including participating in the Women's Peace Camp at Greenham Common in 1984.

This international involvement was in addition to extensive local participation in, and support for, the development of New Zealand's voluntary sector, including women's refuge, and refugee and migrant services, addressing homelessness and poverty, and an early commitment to the development of restorative justice.

The Grace Memorial Trust continued to support projects that aligned with Diana's ideals, gifting more than \$4 million over the past two decades. Peace, dispute resolution, prison reform and restorative justice have been a major focus of the trust, culminating in 2013 with support for the inaugural Chair in Restorative Justice at Victoria University of Wellington. Appropriately, on her death, the Chair in Restorative Justice was named after Diana.

In March 2020, The Grace Memorial Trust donated a further \$25,000 to our Trust to support our work, after having previously given us nearly \$90,000. We feel privileged to be able to acknowledge and recognise Diana's significant contribution, and that of her trustees – such generosity and kindness have enabled us to reunite many refugee families who otherwise may have never been together again.

Words of thanks

"New Zealand gives us all a lot of opportunities like employment, health, and education. Everything is so fantastic for us in New Zealand. We are thankful to New Zealand, and so happy to have the opportunity to be together with our family. After reuniting with my brother after a long time, I feel better and have less worry and anxiety. This means that my children don't need to worry about me now, and can focus on their study and work."

Special thanks and appreciation to Immigration New Zealand, Refugee Family Reunification Trust, and our immigration adviser, Julie Rayner, and all those who helped and supported us in this process. We will keep you all in our hearts and appreciate you with every single breath. We will never forget New Zealand giving us a chance to live in safety".

"We are so thankful to everyone who supported us. Thank you so much for helping my family. They are so happy to be with us again and to live a normal life."

ABOUT *us*

The Refugee Family Reunification Trust financially assists refugees, primarily in the Wellington region, to bring immediate family members to join them here. Reuniting these families greatly improves the lives of those refugees already living in New Zealand, and is critical to their successful resettlement and integration.

All money raised is used exclusively to help refugees pay for the expenses directly related to bringing family members from refugee situations. This includes application fees charged by, and medical reports required by, INZ, and the cost of airfares to bring approved family members to New Zealand.

The Trust is a registered charity and donations of \$5 or more are tax deductible.

HOW *you* CAN HELP

Financial donations: You can donate money to us regularly, or as a one-off donation via post, bank transfer or a regular automatic payment. See details in the footer.

Other help: Call or email us if you are organising a fundraiser which might make a contribution to the Trust: acalder@xtra.co.nz or 04 475 7994

Please advise if your contact details are incorrect or if you do not wish to receive our newsletter.

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