

2023/2024

# Refugee Family Reunification Trust Newsletter



Refugee Family Reunification Trust

The Trust has been helping refugees for more than 22 years, and this year we have achieved some significant milestones. We have now approved more than 1,000 applications for assistance from refugees needing help with the costs of bringing their families to join them here. More than 340 families have been reunited, including by paying the airfares to New Zealand for nearly 920 family members – many of whom were children and young people.

Put simply, without our help many of these families could never have overcome the financial challenges inherent in the immigration process. It is very rewarding to see so many families back together again after such long separations, and to know that the Trust has played a critical role in successful, and life-changing, outcomes.

Since the Trust was established in 2001, with your support and generosity we have raised more than \$2,750,000 to help refugees bring their loved ones to New Zealand. We are particularly proud of this achievement, as not a single dollar of donations has been used to generate this income. The Trust is a pure charity – donors are assured that every dollar they give will go directly to help refugees. We do not pay for advertising, fundraisers, salaries or rent – so that 100% of donations can be given to refugees. No remuneration is paid to the Trustees. Separate funding is obtained specifically for unavoidable administration costs (such as audit costs, postage, envelopes, and printing our annual newsletter), and we are able to keep these to a bare minimum due to our reliance on unpaid volunteers. The Trust does not receive any government funding.

Significant changes to the Refugee Family Support Category (RFSC), which came into effect last year, have impacted on our work in a positive way, as we no longer need to provide assistance for many of the costs we previously funded, such as airfares for families approved under the RFSC.

However, we continue to assist refugees with many other costs, such as those related to applications for dependent and adopted children, spouses, and asylum seekers, and for Ministerial approvals as exceptions to policy. These costs include application fees and medicals required by Immigration New Zealand (INZ), and airfares. We also provide assistance with the cost of appeals, and other necessary expenses relating to the immigration process, such as translations.

We continue to advocate for improvements in refugee family reunification policies and practices, as fundamental problems remain with the processing of RFSC applications - in particular, indefensible delays of many, many years.

OUR SUCCESSES  
*together*  
SINCE 2001

**22** years  
HELPING  
REFUGEES



OVER \$2.75M  
*raised for*  
REFUGEES

MORE THAN 340  
*refugee families*  
REUNITED



MORE THAN 1000  
*applications for*  
HELP APPROVED

NEARLY 920  
*airfares to*  
NEW ZEALAND



*Thanks to YOU!*

# thank you

## FOR YOUR HELP

We remain extremely grateful to all our donors – without you we could not have reunited so many deserving families. To each and every one of our donors, thank you. The ongoing support of generous individuals and charities is critical to everything that we have been able to achieve over the past 22 years.

A number of individuals and private trusts, who prefer to remain anonymous, have made very generous donations to our Trust. Other significant donors over the past year include: Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand; Tai Shan Foundation; Hon Robert Smellie KC; and Yvonne and Peter Cottier. 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 CA, and to the Trust's auditor, P J Major CA. KiwiClass lets us share its mailbox. We would also like to thank Phil Dyer for taking the beautiful photographs we use. Special thanks to Hannah and Thomas Schickedanz at Schickedanz Design Studio for designing and building our website pro bono, and again generously donating time to format this newsletter. Lesley Hooper kindly helps to manage the database. Simpson Grierson provides pro bono legal support. Your assistance is invaluable.



### Families we helped came from:

Somalia, Ethiopia, Eritrea,  
Sierra Leone, Liberia,  
Sudan, South Sudan,  
Rwanda, Uganda, Algeria,  
Zimbabwe, Palestine, Iraq,  
Iran, Oman, United Arab  
Emirates, Saudi Arabia,  
Syria, Ukraine, Afghanistan,  
Pakistan, Cambodia, Sri  
Lanka, Myanmar, Brazil and  
Colombia.



# Housing For Refugees

Our work assisting with accommodation requirements continues to be very important, as housing affordability and availability are major issues facing refugees who have family members joining them here. One of our critical projects is helping with initial rental costs for newly arrived refugee families. This helps those families overcome the accommodation hurdle imposed by INZ – thereby assisting them to get approval to come to New Zealand. This is a direct and practical way to help refugee families.

This accommodation project started in 2019 with a significant \$100,000 donation from the Sisters of St Joseph, and since then we have received several very generous donations specifically to support the initial rental costs for housing newly arrived refugee families.

To date, our funding of this project (\$182,000) has helped over 40 refugee families. Unfortunately, lengthy delays by INZ in processing RFSC cases means that much of this funding remains held by us on trust while waiting for these cases to be approved.

We also work closely with partner agencies to identify suitable housing options for refugees. In this regard, we are extremely grateful to the Sisters of Compassion who have kindly helped a number of refugee families with accommodation. St Joseph's Parish in Mt Victoria has also recognised this housing need, and provided housing to refugee families in a parish property at low rent since 2014.

Landlords willing to rent a property to a refugee family at a reasonable rate are desperately needed.



## 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](mailto: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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