



Dear LSS/NCA Family,

As I prepare for the Thanksgiving holiday, I am heartened by the compassion of so many. In the wake of the brutal attacks on Paris, Beirut, and Mali, the world has been left frightened, despairing and asking “Why?” While some American politicians have been advocating closing our communities to Syrian refugees, my office has been inundated with calls and emails from those very neighborhoods pledging support and a desire to help the Syrian victims of ISIS who have been waiting in the refugee pipeline for years to come to America.

Terror is meant to incite fear, anger, and hatred. **We must not add to these tragedies** by letting the terror squelch our love for others. We must continue to welcome the women and children languishing in refugee camps in the Middle East and help to alleviate their suffering. Families have been separated and thousands have already died trying to escape brutality. These families have suffered enough at the hands of terrorists, and **we cannot, we must not, give in to the violence by withdrawing their safe haven.** Instead, we should offer love and hope, kindness and rebirth.

As Christians, **we are often called to love our neighbors as ourselves.** Whether this neighbor is an abused or neglected child next door, a disaster victim in another state, or a refugee from around the world. **We are also called to welcome the stranger.** Isolation and mistrust can breed violence, so instead of shutting out people who have already been persecuted, let's warmly welcome refugees and help them rebuild their lives as we have done for decades.

LSS/NCA has been resettling refugees fleeing war and persecution for more than 40 years, since the end of the Vietnam War brought tens of thousands of Southeast Asian refugees to our country. The number of Syrian refugees that will come to the US is small—fewer than 6,000; our agency has been assigned to resettle only as many as 100 of those. The US has the highest level of vetting for refugees entering a country. Syrians have waited more than two years and are going through several rounds of background checks and security clearances.

Doing God's work is not always easy; in fact, it can be challenging and even scary. But when we rise to the challenge, we learn the strength of our faith and can stare down our fears and

Here's what you can do:

1. **Learn** about refugee resettlement & the issues Syrians face [through this Facts Not Fear Sheet](#)
2. **Participate** in our #FactsNotFear conversation and share your support for refugees in our community through [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#)
3. **Advocate for refugees** with our national partner LIRS
4. **Donate** to LSS/NCA's Refugee & Immigrant Services (RIS) program to support refugees arriving now and throughout the year. Your [financial contribution](#) or [in-kind gift from our wish list](#) makes a direct and lasting impression on life of a refugee in our community.

In Peace and Service,

Melissa K. Graves

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