

# LCS Northwest will Welcome Syrian Refugees in 2016

Steve Haviland

By David Duea, President and CEO of Lutheran Community Services Northwest

"As part of a larger community of Lutherans, we feel it is essential to provide opportunities to each refugee in need."

- David Duea  
President and CEO of  
Lutheran Community Services Northwest



With great sadness, we continue to read the news of the horrific terrorist attacks in Paris last Friday. We mourn for those who were killed and injured. We also pray for the millions of refugees who are fleeing Syria as they seek safety from these terrorists. With heavy hearts, we watch how terrorists have changed the world. Many people's compassion for refugees turned to fear in a few short days. It feels like moments ago that we were weeping over the photo of 3 year-old Aylan Kurdi, who drowned in his family's attempt to flee Syria. The plight of Syrian refugees brings great sadness for our planet.

One horrible and devastating Paris night later, many governors here are saying Syrian refugees are not welcome in their states. We recognize welcoming refugees is a complex issue. It's one we take seriously. It isn't just a political issue, it's about people, and how we want to treat them.

At LCSNW, we still plan to welcome and resettle Syrian refugees in the Pacific Northwest next year. We will continue to welcome Christian, Muslim and refugees of all faiths. We are all God's children. In the near future, a few of us will be going to Detroit to attend a Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS) conference on resettling Syrian refugees. LIRS is our partner in refugee resettlement.

With safety in mind, here are a few facts from LIRS and LCSNW about refugees:

- The United States handpicks refugees who resettle here. Refugees go through multiple layers of security checks, making them the most thoroughly vetted group of people who come here. Security screenings are rigorous, and involve the Department of Homeland Security, the FBI, the Department of Defense and multiple intelligence agencies.

- LIRS and its affiliates have already successfully resettled Syrian refugees in the U.S. They are making strides to be fully integrated into their local communities.
- LCSNW has resettled more than 35,000 refugees in the Pacific Northwest over the past 40 years. We expect to resettle more refugees than a usual year in 2016.

As part of a larger community of Lutherans, we feel it is essential to provide opportunities to each refugee in need. If the shoe was on the other foot, if we were facing these uncertain circumstances, we would hope for the same grace and the same belief in humanity that we offer at LCSNW and LIRS. We stand with refugees, as equals, and will help them as our own.

To support our *refugee efforts*, go to:

<https://lcsnw.ejoinme.org/SupportRefugeesintheNorthwest>