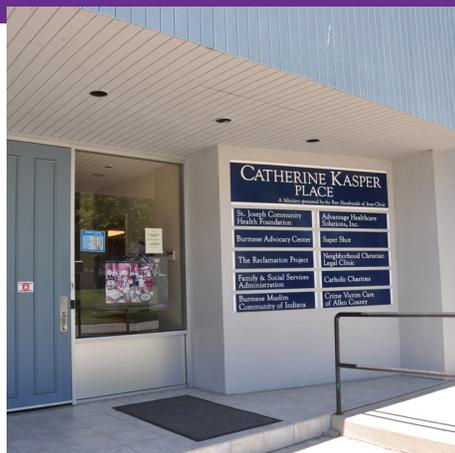


COMMUNITY IMPACT:

Community Resource Center for Refugees

dba: Catherine Kasper Place



Dates of Program

2008- 2012

Field of Work

A centralized location was established to provide easy access to multiple refugee resettlement services and agencies in a linguistic and culturally-appropriate manner for refugees.

Problem Synopsis

Beginning in 2007, an unprecedented large number of several thousand Burmese refugees arrived in northeast Indiana who had multiple social service needs and did not always have transportation, interpreters, or knowledge of how to access services.

Synopsis of Work

The Foundation leased an 11,000-square-foot building from the AWS Foundation for \$1 at 2826 South Calhoun Street. Together, with community partners, they opened the Community Resource Center for Refugees (later re-named Catherine Kasper Place). The facility provided a central location on a major bus route where Burmese refugees and other foreign-born, new arrivals to the greater Fort Wayne area could access educational, health, social and employment services designed to help individuals become self-sufficient and successfully integrate into their new community. The front desk receptionist was tri-lingual in English, Burmese and Karen. All eleven agencies and programs operating at the Center either employed or had access to Burmese speakers to provide linguistically and culturally appropriate services. The facilities included a warehouse, computer lab, sewing lab, community garden, multiple classrooms, and private office meeting rooms. The partners in the Refugee Center agreed in 2012 to relocate back into their sponsoring organizations main locations and/or in other locations convenient to the refugee community, as the majority of the refugee population was becoming more self reliant and able to navigate by themselves throughout the community.

Primary Partners

- St. Joseph Community Health Foundation (Administrative Oversight, Funding and some Program Operations)
- U.S. Dept of Health, Human Services- Office of Refugee Settlement (Grant Funding to Operate Programs)
- AWS Foundation (Donation of Building)
- Community Partners (Catholic Charities, Indiana Department of Family & Social Services, Burmese Advocacy Center, Burmese Muslim Community, Crime Victim Care, Advantage Health Solutions, The Reclamation Project, Neighborhood Christian Legal Clinic, Allen County Lead & Healthy Homes, Super Shot and the Adams Township Trustee.)

Key Results

- More than 27,000 items of clothing, furniture, and food were distributed to needy refugee families.
- 58,000+ individual visits were made to the Center to access linguistically and culturally appropriate services.
- Refugees were able to obtain services from 12 different providers at one location.
- A separate non-profit ministry, Catherine Kasper Place, was spun off to continue to help refugees, immigrants, and political asylees integrate into the life of the community through social, spiritual and economic independence and strategic networking when the Center closed in 2012.

Mission

The Poor Handmaids of Jesus Christ's were called to expand their ministry into North America, specifically northeast Indiana, in 1868 to serve poor German immigrants who had settled there. In 2008, 140 years later, this Poor Handmaid ministry responded in a similar way to the needs of the Burmese refugees by opening the Community Resource Center for Refugees.

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Community Resource Center for Refugees

