RISE
REFUGEE & IMMIGRANT SELF-EMPOWERMENT

2018
Annual
Report
Dear Friends,

Thank you for making 2018 yet another remarkable year for Refugee & Immigrant Self-Empowerment! As you read through this Annual Report, we hope you are as humbled as we are by the astounding growth this organization has made within the past year. Our dedicated staff has done an incredible job of expanding our outreach, while strengthening our programs and service delivery.

2018 was a year of firsts at RISE, with a sampling of achievements including:

- RISE’s first annual A Night of Nations fundraiser, with more than 200 people in attendance
- The start of RISE’s Saturday Academy program for the Congolese Community at Destiny Christian Church
- The opening of RISE’s satellite office in the Northside of Syracuse, helping to expand RISE’s program delivery to the varied refugee populations in Syracuse
- RISE’s first annual Youth Summit at Onondaga Community College (OCC), with over 100 refugee & immigrant youth in attendance
- A partnership with On Point for College to help increase the number of refugees attending college
- A partnership with the Onondaga County Department of Social Services Economic Security to provide employment services for refugees with limited English skills
- The success of the “Health Starts Here!” Health Fair, with several organizations providing healthcare information to over 300 members of the community
- The number of clients receiving services from RISE doubled from years previous, with the annual budget expanding as well

The highlights above are truly a testament to the commitment and compassion of our great Syracuse community. We are proud of the accomplishments of the organization, and recognize that we could not have delivered our mission without the tireless support of our donors, staff, partners, and our board.

2018 was indeed a year of challenge for the organization, as well as a year of immense opportunity. But more than ever, we’re ready to RISE to new heights & to new challenges in the coming years. Are you with us?

Sincerely,

Haji Adan
Executive Director

Dr. Robert Weisenthal
Board Chair
2018 at RISE: By the Numbers

180 clients placed in jobs
950 clients seen for Bridging Case Management services
75% of clients received a job offer after an interview

Top 8 Countries of Origin
Based on all clients served in 2018

1. Somalia
2. Democratic Republic of Congo
3. Bhutan
4. Syria
5. Iraq
6. Burma
7. Burundi
8. Sudan

14 STAFF MEMBERS fluent in 19 languages
11 INTERNS from 5 local colleges and universities
65 VOLUNTEERS

380 ENL/Citizenship Classes

2018 Annual Report
Bridging Case Management

Ensuring that all New Americans can lead productive lives, engage in their communities, and continue to pursue successful integration.

RISE Bridging Case Managers assists refugee & immigrants in navigating everyday tasks that may seem overwhelming or complex, but are ultimately necessary for their path to self-sufficiency. Our case managers assist our clients with the paperwork, phone calls, and appointment scheduling that is part of everyday life, and further provide:

- Housing assistance
- Assistance with documentation for social services programs, healthcare, school enrollment, and more.
- Family crisis intervention
- Mediation services
- Interpretation/translation
- Community resource referrals

Bridging Case Management services help to lower refugee & immigrants dependence on public assistance, increases their overall contribution to the local economy, and provides them a social support system in a new environment.

Adult Education: English as a New Language (ENL) & Citizenship Class

RISE offers English as a New Language (ENL) Classes, which serve as an educational opportunity for refugee and immigrant adults who need to improve their English language skills whether for their personal fulfillment, job advancement, or to take the United States Citizenship Test.

Our ENL classes are divided into Beginner and Intermediate, with the Beginner class offered Monday-Friday from 9:30AM-11:30AM, and the Intermediate offered Monday-Thursday from 12:30PM-2:30PM.

We offer individualized learning programs for our students to gain the skills necessary to be independent. In our ENL classes, we focus on real-life situations, providing students with the practical help they need to succeed in the U.S. Our goal in the ENL classes is to foster deeper understanding and communication so that our students will be able to comprehend what they hear, speak and write. Ultimately, we want every student to be able to express themselves adequately.

RISE client Hawa Aden after successfully having passed the US citizenship test with the help of RISE’s ENL/Citizenship Class
Employment Services

Assists refugees & immigrants in gaining and maintaining stable employment that contributes to the local economy and their self-sufficiency.

RISE believes that gaining and maintaining steady employment plays a critical role in becoming empowered and self-sufficient. Partnering with many local companies, RISE has expanded its employment network and provides a growing number of refugees & immigrants with long-term employment. The Employment Services offered at RISE include:

- Assistance with Job Applications
- Mock Job Interviews
- Resume Creation & Revision
- Transportation to Job Fairs/Interviews
- Job Referrals & References
- Networking & Skills Workshop

RISE Client Spotlight: Halimo Abdi

2004: Halimo arrives in the U.S. a refugee from Somalia, initially resettling in Nebraska.

April 2018: A single mother with 7 children, Halimo moves to Syracuse to be closer to family. Needing help with furnishing her place with the basics and finding a job, Halimo is connected to RISE.

December 2018: After strengthening her English with ENL classes and working 1-on-1 with RISE’s employment coordinator, Halimo is hired at her current job at Bio Link Inc. She looks forward to building upon her job skills with the help of RISE to continue thriving & providing for her family.

180 clients placed in jobs

131 clients taken for a job interview

75% of clients received a job offer after an interview

90-120 clients receive employment services every month
Youth Education Programs

After School Program

RISE hosts an After School Program for students in 1st Grade through high school that provides a safe space for refugee & immigrant students to ask for targeted homework help, explore their creativity through engaging activities, and simply play and remain active with one another.

The program looks not only to offer 1-on-1 assistance that reinforce math and literacy skills, but we also seek to incorporate fun activities that boost self-confidence, instill a sense of civic-engagement, and re-invoke a love for learning with their peers.

In 2018, the RISE After School Program had a steady participation rate of 38 students ranging from 1st Grade to 12th Grade. Activities centered around academic success, health & wellness, mindfulness & deescalation strategies, and fostering a creative imagination.

Field trips during the year included fishing at Green Lakes State Park, sculpting with the Everson Museum of Art, attending an SU basketball game, and visiting the Our Farm pumpkin patch.

Saturday Academy

RISE’s Saturday Academy meets every Saturday from 12PM-2PM at the Destiny Christian Center and seeks to provide students with a safe space to play and be creative. The program also acts as an education resource for those who need assisted homework help and Regents test preparation. By providing refugee & immigrant students with engaging field trips, educational activities that let them channel their creativity, and one-on-one advisement, we hope that these students are encouraged and ultimately motivated to attain all their educational and personal goals in the future!

In 2018, the Saturday Academy had 35 participants from the Congolese community. Participants enjoyed field trips to Green Lakes State Park, the Everson Art Museum, and ice skating at Clinton Square Ice Rink.
Women’s Empowerment Initiative

Aims to bring female refugees & immigrants together in solidarity, to evoke confidence in themselves and their abilities, and to empower through leadership and education.

The Women’s Empowerment Initiative empowers school-age refugee girls who may have been previously deprived of a social and political voice as they come from cultures where women inhabit more traditional gender roles. Women’s empowerment activities build peer bonding through leadership & team building activities, field trips, and practicing mindfulness. Most importantly, the initiative aims to encourage, preserve, and respect their cultural identity and heritage. In 2018, participation in the program doubled to 20 girls.

RISE’s Women’s Empowerment Initiative seeks to:

• Inform refugee & immigrant women about the opportunities available to them in their new communities.
• Evoke in refugee & immigrant women the importance of education, civic engagement, self-discipline, and life experiences.
• Teach refugee & immigrant women how to lead and gain respect of their communities while remaining true to themselves.
• Empower refugee & immigrant women by helping them to instill confidence to be their own person.

Youth Professionalization Program

Pathways to Professionalization: Youth Education, Employability, and Empowerment is RISE’s newest initiative in partnership with On Point for College. Through interactive workshops, one-on-one advisement, homework help, and resume building, this initiative seeks to provide refugees and immigrants between ages 14 to 25 the skills and confidence that they need to excel in school, the workplace, and in life. Whether a New American youth is interested in pursuing higher education or obtaining a job after finishing high school, RISE wants to ensure the success by developing their skills and confidence!

Within the first year, 15 refugee & immigrant youth consistently received services that strengthened their career and college readiness. Students were also taken on a tour of Onondaga Community College (OCC) to explore post-secondary opportunities.
Individual Development Account Program

Provide financial literacy education that assists in upward economic mobility for refugees & immigrants through savings and asset building.

The Individual Development Account (IDA) program at RISE is an opportunity for any qualifying refugee or immigrant who have been in the U.S less than five years and are employed at least part-time to receive assistance in building their financial future. The IDA program assists participants in opening a savings account at one of our partner institutions where they will make monthly deposits which are matched dollar for dollar by a three-year federal grant from the Office of Refugee Resettlement. RISE then provides clients with financial literacy training and further assists clients in using their savings to make a qualifying asset purchase that will help to promote their financial independence and stability. Qualifying assets purchases include a vehicle, a house, educational expenses, or business start up costs.

After seeing such success in establishing a financial literacy course for IDA clients, RISE opened the opportunity for any client, enrolled in IDA or otherwise, to participate in these classes. Financial literacy classes cover topics such as the U.S banking system, basic household budgeting, savings habits and strategies, and credit.
SyRAPP is a training program for refugees who are interested in starting their own farming business or acquiring farmland. Farmers go through three years of ESOL, agriculture, gardening, marketing, and business training before they lease or buy land on their own. As part of their training, they are required to attend classes taught in partnership with Cornell Cooperative Extension and Brady Farm during years 1-3 of the program and farm individual 1/8 or 1/4 acre plots.

Increasing self sustainability, decreasing food insecurity

- 4,720 pounds of food grown over the year
- $880 sales earned by the farmers in 2018
- 20 families provided with fresh, organic vegetables
- $500 of savings per family on grocery bills
- 2 community gardens & a farmers market were started on the Northside
Supporters

Community
Brady Farm
Cornell Cooperative Extension
Food Bank of Central New York
Greater Syracuse Land Bank
Le Moyne College
Matthew 25 Farm
New American Farm
New York Immigration Coalition
Onondaga Community College
On Point for College
Refugee Alliance
Salt City Harvest Farm
Syracuse Community Connections
Syracuse University

Foundation
Central New York Community Foundation
Jim and Juli Boeheim Foundation
John Ben Snow Foundation and Memorial Trust
The Allyn Family Foundation
The Gifford Foundation
The Dorothy and Marshall M. Reisman Foundation

Corporate
Acadia Insurance
Cooperative Federal Credit Union
Dollar General
Dunk & Bright
Empower Federal Credit Union
Home Headquarters Inc.
Lush
Molina Healthcare
National Grid
OCC Small Business Development Center
Price Rite
St. Joseph’s Hospital
Target
United Healthcare
Upstate Medical University
Walmart
Wegmans

Government
County of Onondaga
New York State Department of Labor
Office of Refugee Resettlement

RISE Staff
Haji Adan, Executive Director
Isabelle Kallman, Associate Executive Director
Shah Mansoor, Director of Organizational Development
Brandy Colebrook, SyRAPP Director
Erica Kokoszka, Education Program Director
Ali Adan, Education Program Coordinator
Shelley Skellington, Care Management Supervisor
Serge Illambo, Employment Coordinator
Omar Ahmed, Bridging Case Manager
Dadhi Dahal, Bridging Case Manager
Olivier Sekarore, Bridging Case Manager
Noor Adan, Bridging Case Manager & IDA Coordinator
Hassan Iftin, Bridging Case Manager
Meghan Greenfield, Operations Coordinator
Nataly Karimi, AmeriCorps VISTA

Board of Directors
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Nan Fechtner, Treasurer
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Salat Ali
Nancy Smith
Thomas Nimineh
Get Involved!

RISE would not be able to do the work it does to help refugees & immigrants without support from the greater Syracuse Community. Here are some ways you can get involved:

Donate.
RISE relies on monetary and in-kind donations to bolster our capacity to continue our work. Make your tax-deductible donation at www.syracuserise.org/donate.

Volunteer.
Volunteers help to sustain the foundation of our programs success. If you are interested in exploring volunteer opportunities, email volunteer@syracuserise.org.

Hire a Refugee & Immigrant.
Each year, RISE helps over 175 refugees & immigrants get hired. If your company is interested in partnering, email sergeillambo@syracuserise.org.

Attend an Event.
RISE hosts their annual A Night of Nations fundraiser, Youth Summit, as well as other community events throughout the year. If you are interested in helping out, email info@syracuserise.org.

Get Your Company/Organization Involved.
There are many ways your workplace or organization can partner with RISE for donation or group volunteer opportunities. If you are interested in exploring such opportunities, email volunteer@syracuserise.org.

Financial Report