

Refugee Resettlement Task Team 9.15.18

As of 8/22/18 there have been 97 refugee arrivals. This number does not include secondary arrivals that Catholic Social Services of the Miami Valley also support. They anticipate more arrivals before the end of the year. The number to date and the total for the year is down from last year due to policy changes at the federal government level. We have been collecting twin and full size comforters for the CSSMV as was their request when we asked what they needed for the refugees. To date we have collected: 34 twin size and 20 full/queen size comforters. Quilts and blankets donated to date: 6 twin and 13 full sized.

Prince of Peace donated a number of book bags with the required items in them according to grade and school district.

Donations are never turned away. Items that can not be used for the new or secondary refugees or for another group supported by CSSMV are taken to Goodwill or a non-profit like St Vincent de Paul. Goodwill gives vouchers to CSSMV for clothing that is donated on their behalf. The vouchers are used by the refugees to buy clothing. The number of bags donated determines the number of vouchers. The size of the bag does not matter.

One of the biggest issues that I have discovered, is that well intentioned people donate items that are not suitable for refugees arriving from Africa. All of the refugees that the state department sends to our area are from Africa. Some of the body lotions that are donated are from Bath and Body and not cheap but contain a fragrance and therefore not suitable. One that smells good to or on one person maybe just the opposite on another. Fragrances are also an issue with sensitive skin. Many of the shampoos donated would cause significant damage to their hair, as in it breaks off. They need shampoos that are for naturally curly hair or at the very least moisturizing. Out of 200 combs at the shelter we were only able to keep 3 or 4. Most of the combs would be better for nit removal that curly hair.

I was wondering if we could ask everyone attending district conference to bring a comb or a bottle of shampoo or conditioner or unscented body lotion. If we are already collecting something then I do not think we should ask for these items. I would write up a note with specifics and examples of each one. I believe people want to donate items that are appropriate, but do not realize what is actually needed. I would include where the items can be purchased and pictures. So what do all of you think?

Respectfully Submitted,

Linda Brandon, RRTT