

NEIGHBORS FOR REFUGEES

August 16, 2023

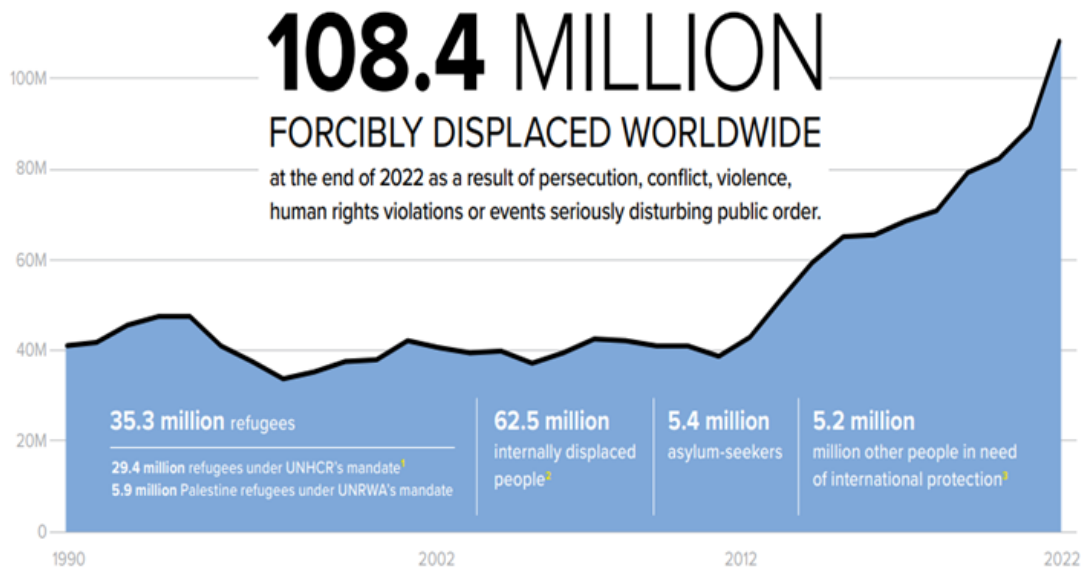
Dear Neighbors,

Welcome to [Neighbors for Refugees' \(Neighbors'\) Summer Newsletter - Part 1](#), a high-level update of developments so far in 2023. “High level” because we’ll follow shortly with more news of what Neighbors is doing to make profound and positive differences in the lives of refugee families, with the help of donors and volunteers:

- [Refugee update](#)
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Refugee Update

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) released its [annual Global Trends report](#) in June. The report highlights the **largest ever number of displaced people (108.4 million) as of the end of 2022, an annual increase of 19 million people**, who have been forcibly displaced from their homes because of conflict, violence, and disaster.



Source: UNHCR, *Global Trends Forced Displacement in 2022*, pg 2 "Trends at a Glance"

In 2022 alone, the world witnessed the **largest increase in the number of refugees (from 8.2 million to 35.3 million) who have been forced to leave their home country**. The UNHCR states that, "The Russian Federation's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 created the fastest displacement crisis, and one of the largest, since the Second World War. At the end of 2022, a total of 11.6 million Ukrainians remained displaced, including 5.9 million within their country and 5.7 million who fled to neighbouring countries and beyond."

The UNHCR expects continued growth in refugees as the result of conflicts in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Sudan, violence in Myanmar, and insecurity and drought in Somalia.

Meet Our New Neighbors

Since January, **we've welcomed four new families – 17 people** in total – for whom we are **providing the full range of Neighbors' support**, which includes furnishing and setting up their new homes; and paying for rent, utilities, food, and other necessities for up to a year. The time period for support depends on family members getting employed and becoming financially independent. Neighbors also assists with enrolling families in government support programs and children in school; navigating healthcare needs and services; teaching English and tutoring; and assisting with community orientation and transportation.

- In February, we collaborated with the Open Arms Resettlement Group (based in Ossining, NY) to welcome an **Afghan couple** who were granted U.S. immigration status under the Diversity Immigrant Visa Program (Green Card Lottery). The couple **escaped from Afghanistan to Islamabad, Pakistan, after the 2021 evacuation**, to complete the visa application process and

await final visa approvals and clearance to travel to the U.S. Many stars aligned at the last moment for the family to arrive in the Westchester area -- their travel permission was granted by the U.S. State Department just a few days before their medical clearances would have expired (and they would then have been obliged to start the entire process all over again). They have recently welcomed a baby girl!

- We welcomed an **Afghan family of five** in April, in collaboration with HIAS/Common Point Queens. They **arrived by way of a refugee camp in Turkey**. Settled in Queens, the adults and our employment team are working diligently to obtain employment, while the entire family is engaged in learning English.
- We settled and are supporting a **Ukrainian family of six**, under the auspices of HIAS's Welcome Circle program. Since their April 1 arrival in Westchester as Humanitarian Parolees, the family has focused on intensive English language study at Westchester Community College and at home with ESL tutors; the parents are engaged in job searches with support from Neighbors' employment team; and the older children have become involved with their local community's summer camp; plus are actively engaged in local soccer and volleyball teams.
- In July we collaborated with Hearts and Homes for Refugees to resettle an **Afghan family of four**. The family lived in a **refugee camp in Jordan for 10 months** before obtaining authorization to travel to the U.S. and coming to us under the auspices of HIAS/Common Point Queens. The two children are excited about going to school in September.

In addition to supporting these families, we have helped to **set-up apartments for 23 other newly arrived families (80 people)** by providing furniture, household goods, small appliances, cleaning supplies, and move-in/set-up support. These families hail from Afghanistan, Ukraine, El Salvador, Ecuador, Yemen, and Myanmar. Our support has been in collaboration with HIAS, International Rescue Committee, and Ruth's Refuge.



We are so grateful to the generosity of Neighbors' many supporters, who have donated the financial and in-kind resources, plus the hands-on skills and time to welcome and help launch so many refugee families.

Grants Received by Neighbors

Thus far this year, **six local not-for-profit organizations have granted a total of \$95,000** to Neighbors, to support our work to welcome and support refugee families. We very much appreciate these organizations' endorsement of our efforts.

Neighbors Grants to Refugee Families

Through June, Neighbors has **provided financial grants to 21 refugee families** for a variety of urgent needs – e.g., rent, groceries, medical expenses, and clothing. Grants (total YTD \$13,000) have ranged from \$136 to \$1,225. Grant recipients have come to the U.S. from eleven countries: Afghanistan, Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Iran, Jamaica, Kuwait, Niger, Sierra Leone, and Tibet.

Financial Update

Our ability to welcome and support so many refugee families depends entirely on volunteers and the financial support of donors. **Generous donors have provided us with \$241,000** thus far for 2023, which is fully committed to existing families. **We must raise additional funds to enable us to take on additional new families this fall.** Please consider [donating](#) today – any amount is appreciated and will make a significant difference in the lives of people who are committed to building their lives in the U.S.

Sincerely,

Michael J. Reichgott

Michael J. Reichgott, MD, PhD
President

PS, All of this is only possible because of your donations. Neighbors **needs your support now more than ever to be able to welcome the families awaiting our immediate support this fall.**

