



# THE REFUGEE RESPONSE

2018 Organizational Report

# A MESSAGE

from Ann Zoller, Board Chair  
and Patrick Kearns, Executive Director of TRR



Ann Zoller



Patrick Kearns

The Refugee Response is an organization unlike any other. The programs we operate include the Ohio City Farm as well as programs for youth, teens and adults. We engage with a wide and diverse group of stakeholders, clients and supporters. These connections have rooted us in the local community. They have become the center point for how we respond and how we make decisions. From our annual CSA members, to local chefs, and teens, youth and families newly arriving to the area, these roots have grown deep, they have grown stronger and they have started to grow in exciting new directions.

This year our theme is building bridges. In all aspects of our work we look to make real and meaningful connections in the wide variety of communities with whom we engage. Your support has been a crucial part of our success and our ability to grow, reach new families and continue to respond when situations demand. At present the challenges new families face are tremendous while traditional federal resources are being drastically reduced. The situation demands that we do more, and we are ready.

Our organization has grown stronger and our future is bright. This is due to the kindness, compassion and generosity of so many foundations, local businesses, corporations and individuals, like you.

We believe in this work and it means so much that you believe in us.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ann Zoller'.

Ann Zoller

Board Chair

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be a stylized 'PK'.

Patrick Kearns

Executive Director



## Mission Statement

The Refugee Response empowers resettled families to grow roots, supporting them in becoming engaged, self-sufficient and contributing members of their new communities.

## Vision Statement

The Refugee Response will be a local leader and a national model for innovative programming serving resettled families, utilizing our strong bonds with the local resettled community and our deep understanding of national and global refugee trends. TRR will have an increased qualitative impact on the lives of those we serve by ensuring their voices, skills, experiences, and knowledge are at the center of our decision making.

## Values

We believe in the importance of the resettled community and its unique contribution to the region and country. At the Refugee Response, we:

- ♦ Respect diverse cultures
- ♦ Provide high quality individualized education and personal support
- ♦ Utilize multiple program strategies to support family success
- ♦ Place the voices of resettled families at the center of decision making and programming
- ♦ Believe that our services, in collaboration with refugee families, promote a better quality of life for the entire community



# 57

Resettled youth have been paired one-on-one with a mentor for a two-year period.



# 91%

Of students enrolled in the Home Mentoring Program reported as showing improvement in literacy and language.

# 92%

Of students receive two-years of support with no gap in services provided.



# 32%

Of students enrolled in the Home Mentoring Program exceeded their Ohio English Language Proficiency Exam (OELPA) growth targets.

# 40

Afghan female refugees have been paired individually with tutors for a period of two years.



# 29.3%

Was the total of the annual budget contributed by the earned income of \$177,000 from the Ohio City Farm.



# 30

Teenagers resettled to the US who will be enrolled in the Teen Response program at John Marshall High School, initiated in 2018.



# 38,625

lbs. of organically farmed local produce from the Ohio City Farm was grown with love, harvested and distributed for sales throughout greater Cleveland, OH.



## MENTOR REFLECTION

“As much as I am teaching Obedi, he is certainly teaching me just as much. He and his siblings find wonder and beauty in almost everything, which has truly inspired me to further reflect on how I view moments in life. For example, it was pouring rain two weeks ago, and I walked into the house and apologized to Obedi for not being able to go on an outdoor field trip. He responded by saying, “That’s okay, Chris. Isn’t the rain beautiful? Look how it falls and makes tiny splashes on the grass.” Admittedly, it has been years (decades?) since I have taken the time to slow down and appreciate the little things like how the rain falls on the grass. He is truly a special child, and I look forward to learning more from him throughout the remainder of our time together.”



Mentor Chris Butler with Obedi and Stephen

# HOME MENTORING

The Home Mentoring Program started in 2010 and since this time has been one of the foundations of our work.

The Refugee Response Home Mentoring Program provides one-on-one mentoring to over fifty refugee students in Cleveland, Ohio. The Refugee Response pairs each refugee student with a volunteer mentor from the community to provide meaningful academic and acculturation support to their student. Students spend two hours once a week after school with a mentor over the course of two academic years before completing the program.



*Naila Paul*

Director of Education

Mentors spend time developing a relationship with the student and the family to better understand their individual needs and priorities for support, and submit monthly reflections on students’ progress. Mentoring takes place primarily at the student’s home, with opportunities to plan excursions of cultural and educational value to the student.

A critical component to the success of this program has been the relationships formed with local schools and school systems. In 2018 the Refugee Response established official partnerships with Lakewood City Schools and the Cleveland Metropolitan School District to access student scores and information, so that we are able to provide data driven and targeted educational support.

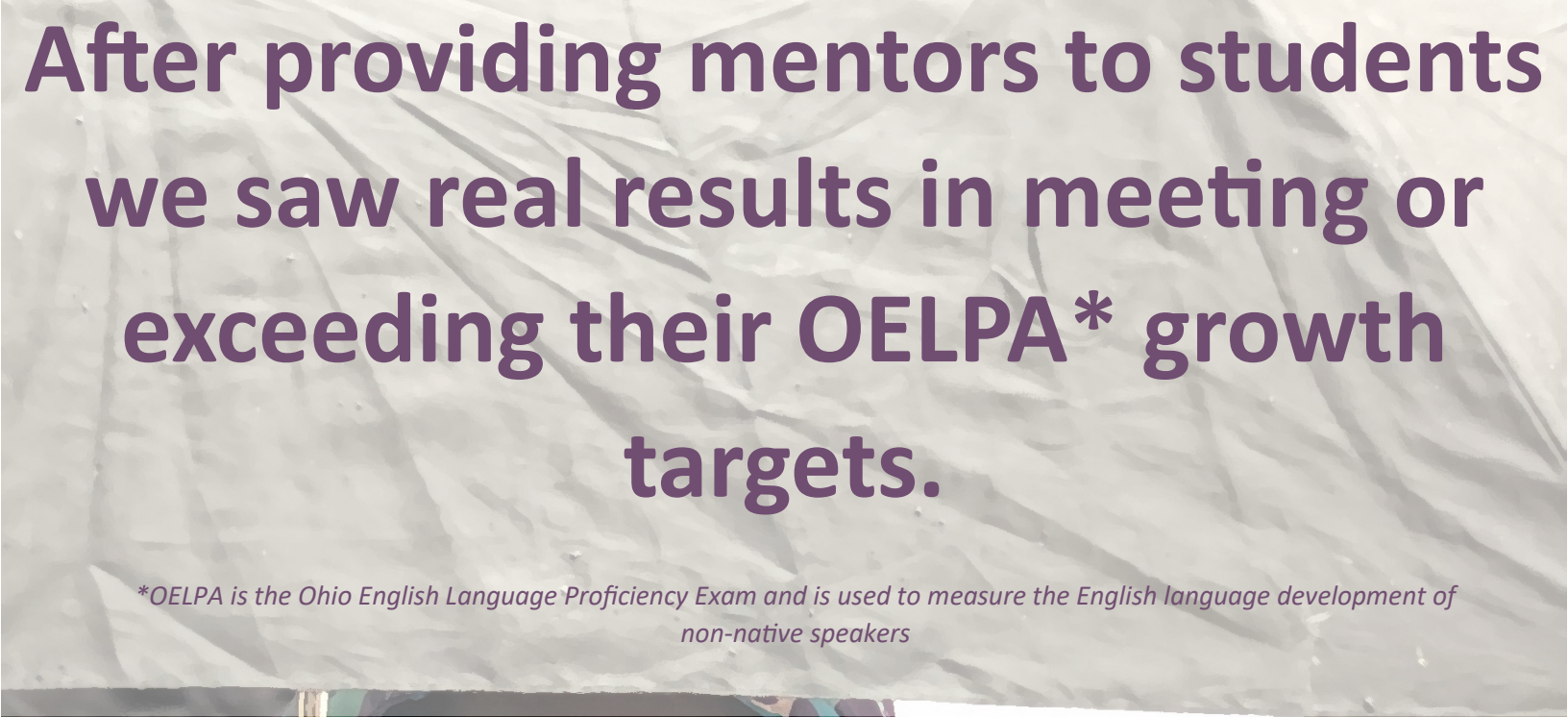


## ACADEMIC SCHOLARSHIPS

The Refugee Response continued to provide scholarship opportunities to 6 students. In 2018 our scholarship students attended St. Joseph’s High School and Urban Community School. Scholarships have been supported through the Carfagna Family Foundation and in cooperation with the Geis Foundation and the Catholic Community Foundation.

*This year Nay Soe and Htoo Htoo, two scholarship students attending St. Joseph’s Academy, were selected by the Cleveland Foundation as Place Makers as a part of an exhibit by local photographer Billy Delfs*





# After providing mentors to students we saw real results in meeting or exceeding their OELPA\* growth targets.

*\*OELPA is the Ohio English Language Proficiency Exam and is used to measure the English language development of non-native speakers*

**50%**

Of students paired with a mentor  
for one year met or exceeded their  
OELPA growth targets

**70%**

Of students paired with a mentor  
for two years met or exceeded their  
OELPA growth targets

**32%**

Of students paired with a mentor  
for one or two years exceeded their  
OELPA growth targets



# ADULT TUTORING

“Can your teacher teach me, too?” “Do you have to pay her?” “How can I get a tutor?” If my students, recently-resettled women from Afghanistan, were asked these questions once, they were asked dozens of times. Rana Noormal, Anita Azimi, and I began working together three years ago, but had only been meeting a short time before the persistent inquiries from their friends began. I had met Rana and Anita informally through the Refugee Response who was kind enough to get us started but there was not yet a formal program.

In the meantime, I fell in love. Make no mistake: this is a love story. I bonded very quickly with these warm, intelligent young women and their growing families. I fell in love with their culture and hospitality. I was inspired by their determination to learn English and to gain independence in the U.S. The hours spent with them were the best hours of my week.

Rana and Anita have their driver's licenses now. They can manage doctor's visits, school meetings, and shopping without a translator. Next year they will be eligible to become citizens. Sitting with these young women for a couple hours each week, I have experienced joy and fulfillment beyond anything I've ever known. I've learned that I can do something I didn't know I was capable of, and that I can make a real difference in the world with nothing more than my willingness. I'm convinced that if lasting bridges are to be built across cultures and religions, it will happen like this - woman to woman, one conversation at a time.

**Sandra Sauder ~ Adult Tutoring Program Mentor/ Donor/ Creator**



Sandra Sauder with Rana Noormal and Anita Azimi at a home tutoring session.



*Mohammad Noormal*  
Adult Tutoring Program Manager

## TUTOR REFLECTION

“Leda is an excellent student. We began with the alphabet and phonics, which she mastered. We went on to word creation, and are now on to creating sentences and paragraphs...A big success is that together we prepared for the driving exam which Leda successfully passed several weeks ago!”

— Mary Flood, tutor working with Leda Mirzauddin since June, 2018.

In early 2018 the adult tutoring program started with 20 Afghan women who were matched to a tutor, this quickly expanded to reach 40 women by the end of the year. Learners are provided support for a minimum of two years, with many setting individual development goals that include attaining a driver's license and passing the citizenship exam.

In 2019 the program will be expanding to reach additional clients, potentially including adults from Myanmar and the Democratic Republic of Congo.



Tutor Naomi Opdycke and Fazela



**The Ohio City Farm** was founded in 2010  
in partnership with Ohio City Incorporated,  
Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority and  
Great Lakes Brewing Company.

As one of the largest and most productive urban  
farms in the nation, the Ohio City Farm welcomes  
thousands of visitors each year and stands as a  
successful model for mission driven businesses.







*Michael Bartunek*  
Senior Farm Manager



*Lar Doh*  
Ohio City Farm Manager



**FOUNDED IN 2010** the Ohio City Farm is powered by the Refugee Response and is located in the historic Ohio City Neighborhood in the near West Side of Cleveland, Ohio.

In 2018 the Ohio City Farm transitioned from a program model to a for-profit business with a robust social mission. Triggered by the loss of federal funding in late 2016, a new vision for the Ohio City Farm was fully implemented in the 2018 growing season. A farm advisory board was established, comprised of professionals in the farm, food and non-profit worlds.

The Ohio City Farm created 11 positions, including 9 resettled refugees. Farm sales totaled \$176,625 accounting for 29.3% of the total operating budget of the Refugee Response.

Significant investments were made to improve the infrastructure of the farm. This included installing an electrical connection, a walk in cooler, an additional high tunnel, a tractor as well as additional material for composting, recycling and attachments for the walk behind tractor. The strength of the farm team and the improved infrastructure led to our highest ever harvest of 38,625 lbs of organically grown produce sold to the Cleveland community.

## OHIO CITY FARM ADVISORY BOARD 2018

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A woman with a blue headscarf and a colorful patterned top is smiling. Behind her is a chalkboard with handwritten prices for various vegetables: Radish - 28¢, Eggplant - 17¢, Parsley - 7¢. To the right of the chalkboard is a poster for the Ohio WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) with a 2017 FMNP Card. In the foreground, there are several baskets and bags of fresh produce, including large green leafy vegetables, bunches of rainbow chard, and green bell peppers.

## COMMUNITY SUPPORTED AGRICULTURE (CSA)

**“We initially bought the CSA because we were looking for a way to support refugees, but we were amazed by the quality of the vegetables – better than what we can get at a farmers’ market!”**

David Harris – 2018 CSA Member





# REAP the Benefit—Feed the Land

Over 500 guests were in attendance for this year's annual benefit. 21 restaurants served dishes featuring produce from the Ohio City Farm and over \$100,000 was raised for the evening. The Key Note Speaker and Guest of Honor was Mr. David T. Dombrowiak, President and CEO of the Community West Foundation. Community West, apart from being a major supporter of the Refugee Response, was the Presenting Sponsor for our most successful benefit ever.



**"I always tell people that my mentee and her family do more for me than I could ever do for them. Through them I've learned and practiced resiliency, empathy, patience, and commitment.**

**Being a mentor will challenge you to be a better you. And it will give you the opportunity to make a real difference in a child's life."**

***Mentor Brittany Gonzalez  
and Marie***







Photo by: Joan Lederer

# 2019

## UPCOMING DEVELOPMENTS

- **Launching Teen Response** - a new program for 30 refugee teens at CMSD's John Marshall High School
- **Hosting Cartography** an original theatrical production from NYC in partnership with Playhouse Square and Cuyahoga County Public Libraries
- **Expanding the adult tutoring program** to reach an additional 20 learners
- **Hiring a full time community engagement coordinator** to support children's education at home and in the community
- **Expanding the CSA Memberships** to 230 members for the 2019 growing season
- **Launching a 4 season growing plan** on the Ohio City Farm with the increase in infrastructure
- **Moving to a new headquarters** based on the Urban Community School campus in mid-2019
- **Furthering Collaboration and partnerships** with other refugee services providers and beyond
- **Continuing to respond to those we serve.**



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We would like to express our deepest gratitude to the following friends and supporters  
who made 2018 our most successful year to date!

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We greatly appreciate each gift given in support of the Refugee Response and the Ohio City Farm, and we have made every effort to ensure the accuracy of this listing.

Please notify Patrick Kearns, Executive Director, of any inaccuracies or omissions at (513) 410-5194.

We regret any errors.



**We would also like to extend our deepest appreciation to all of our 2018 CSA Members and our restaurants partners who keep the farm running, as well as Urban Community School and all the members of the Refugee Services Collaborative.**



A black and white photograph of a city skyline at night. In the foreground, a string of warm-toned, glowing light bulbs hangs diagonally across the upper half of the frame. Below the lights, the silhouettes of trees are visible on the left. In the background, several skyscrapers are illuminated against the dark sky. The most prominent building on the left is the Bank of America Tower, and to its right is the Chrysler Building, recognizable by its Art Deco spire. Other smaller buildings are visible to the right of the Chrysler Building.

Thank you.