

# Open Arms Network

Where community comes together to support refugees on their journey to a new life in Southcentral Pennsylvania



## What is the Open Arms Network?

Open Arms Network, an initiative of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) East Coast's Southcentral Pennsylvania Program, brings together organizations and congregations to provide a holistic support system to refugees in southcentral Pennsylvania.

Bringing together Church World Service (CWS) Lancaster, Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS) and local congregations, Open Arms Network addresses immediate and long-term needs. In all aspects of the program,

Open Arms Network provides culturally-sensitive services to help refugees heal from past traumas and rebuild their lives.

Southcentral Pennsylvania has a long history of welcoming immigrants, including refugees and asylum seekers. Many of these newcomers are fleeing conflict, persecution, and other forms of violence in their home countries and are seeking safety and security in the United States.



...I was a stranger and you invited me in...Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.

Matthew 25: 35-40

## Vision and Mission

The Open Arms Network envisions refugees arriving in southcentral Pennsylvania successfully navigating the resettlement process, enabling them to build and enjoy a full, enriching life in their new environment. Through collaboration and support, we strive to create a network that provides comprehensive assistance, addresses immediate needs and fosters long-term self-sufficiency for individuals seeking a better future for themselves and their family.

Open Arms Network's mission is to provide immediate essentials such as food, shelter, clothing and household items, while also extending assistance in education, job training, and mental health support through partnerships with faith-based and humanitarian organizations. We aim to build a strong safety net that helps refugees thrive, contribute and become integral members of communities throughout Southcentral Pennsylvania.

## ★ How to get involved

Contact Rolando Flores-Rentas, MCC East Coast Southcentral Pennsylvania Program Coordinator by emailing [RFlores@mcc.org](mailto:RFlores@mcc.org) or call (717) 681-3410.

◆ **Mennonite Central Committee East Coast**  
517 West Trout Run Road, Ephrata, PA 17522

(717) 738-0885 | [www.mcc.org](http://www.mcc.org)

## How does the Open Arms Network support churches who want to help refugees?

**Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) East Coast** administers the Open Arms Network program. It provides financial and material resources to churches in south-central Pennsylvania that form a Welcome Team to assist a refugee family in their resettlement process. These churches can request a one-time grant per family to help them with the direct expenses of the refugees. MCC funds can be used to purchase household items or anything else the refugee family may need. The MCC can also assist church Welcome

Teams by providing quilts, school kits, food boxes and hygiene kits. The MCC East Coast program coordinator can also support Welcome Teams and refugee families by visiting them and connecting them with other resources as needed.

**Church World Service (CWS)** Lancaster's resettlement team provides initial welcome and core services like housing, school enrollment, work readiness support and ESL classes to new refugee neighbors. MCC's partnership with

CWS Lancaster through the Open Arms Network invites congregations in southcentral PA to form CWS Welcome Teams that can support refugee families during their resettlement process.

**Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS)** recruits, organizes and empowers volunteers to repair and rebuild the homes of those impacted by disasters in the United States and Canada. MCC's partnership with MDS through the Open Arms Network supports churches who wish to house refugees by providing materials and recruiting volunteers to do home repairs on a property that the church already owns or plans to acquire.

## Support refugees and immigrants through the Open Arms Network!

# 1

Donate hygiene items and nonperishable food items to MCC. Find a list of food box contents, hygiene kit contents and drop-off locations at [mcc.org/groceries](http://mcc.org/groceries) and [mcc.org/hygiene-kits](http://mcc.org/hygiene-kits).



# 2

Donate to MCC at [mcc.org](http://mcc.org), call **1-888-563-4676** or mail a check (made out to "MCC" with "MCC East Coast Open Arms Network" in the memo line) to **MCC, PO Box 500, Akron PA 17501**. If donating online, write "MCC East Coast Open Arms Network" in the "Other notes or instructions" box when completing your donation.



# 3

Get involved with CWS Lancaster by volunteering on a Welcome Team, renting housing to a refugee family, or donating household cleaning products, kitchen items, small appliances or furniture (in good repair). Visit [cwslancaster.org](http://cwslancaster.org) to learn more.

