

CATHOLIC CHARITIES DIOCESE OF ARLINGTON
MIGRATION AND REFUGEE SERVICES

March 2, 2015

Rev. Ramel O. Portula, C.I.C.M., Pastor
St. Ann's Parish
5300 10th Street North
Arlington, VA 22205

Dear Father Mel:

On behalf of Catholic Charities Migration and Refugee Services, I offer you this note of our most sincere appreciation for remembering our refugee clients throughout the year. We are also most grateful to you and your parishioners for your donation of \$5,510 in giftcards for the emergency needs of our clients. We also thank you and your Resettlement Committee for your ongoing donations of household goods for arriving families and assistance in setting up housing for these families. Please extend our special thanks to Michele Mrozek and Peter Fox for heading up the Resettlement Committee and to all the members of the Resettlement Committee for their generosity of time and talent.

When Michele delivered the giftcards to our office we were completely flabbergasted. Among those who have already been assisted by these giftcards are Christian families from Iraq and Syria who were forced to flee on account of their faith and Iraqi and Afghani families who were forced to flee due to their assistance of US armed forces. These gifts also assisted parents of three severely disabled children and a family that is struggling to attain self-sufficiency because the father was diagnosed with advanced cancer upon arrival in America. Your generous gifts will continue to touch even more people over the coming months, all of whom have been offered humanitarian refuge in the U.S. by the State Department.

As we received the giftcards, and earlier in the year as we received your household donations, we felt as if we were witnessing small miracles. Your overwhelming generosity has touched the hearts of all who were involved. Where there had been such great need, there was a sudden and great abundance to meet the need. It has been such a pleasure to witness this outpouring of love for our new neighbors. Tears of gratitude flowed in our offices and in the homes of our refugee clients as they became overwhelmed by your generosity. Even our staff shed some tears of relief as they saw the basic but urgent needs of their clients being met.

80 North Glebe Road, Arlington, Virginia 22203 ☎ Phone (703) 841-3876

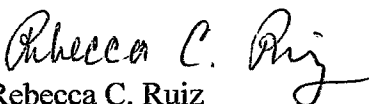
Fax (703) 778-9138 ☎ www.cdda.net

It is important to recognize that helping our refugee clients is so much more than just purchasing a giftcard or household item. Yes, our clients love receiving the gifts and they serve to meet very real needs. However, the act of *giving* of these items symbolizes much more. To people who have been rejected and run out of their homelands, getting a gift from a stranger in this new land is completely “mind boggling.” These individuals have not experienced this kind of mercy, kindness, or generosity *anywhere* along their journey to America. They have fled violence in their countries and run to refugee camps where there is still little refuge from violence and injustice.

It is often the case that when we distribute these gifts, clients question, “but *why would they do this for us?*” These are the people that have been “the least among us” throughout the world. We tell them that the people at St. Ann’s care about them and want to welcome them. You would be amazed at how your gestures of generosity can turn lives around. These gifts often start a profound healing process that, over time, leads to the restoration of the dignity of these wounded individuals. Your kindness to our clients speaks volumes about God’s love for all of his children and bears powerful witness to the love of Christ outpoured for all including, and especially, “the least among us.”

Please accept this tapestry as a small token of our appreciation. Your parish is like a beautiful garden of God’s love as you continue to witness to Christ’s love for all of His children.

Sincerely,



Rebecca C. Ruiz

Arlington Diocese “Parishes Organized to Welcome Refugees” Program Manager

80 North Glebe Road, Arlington, Virginia 22203 ☎ Phone (703) 841-3876

Fax (703) 778-9138 ☎ www.cca.net/programs_mrs.php