



February 1, 2017

Dear Friend of InterFaith Works,

The recent Executive Order of the Trump Administration severely limits refugee resettlement for our nation. It is a bitter pill to swallow for an agency like ours which has worked tirelessly to support the hundreds of people coming out of war and terror to find a new home in a new land.

The Order halts the arrival of new refugees for at least four months, preventing mothers from joining their children, husbands from joining their wives and families, and sisters from joining their brothers. Our agency has specialized in the reunification of families who have been separated from each other and one of our greatest joys has been to see these reunifications happen at the airport and in our community.

The Order also limits the arrival of people from predominantly Muslim countries, unless they are not Muslim. This is effectively an attack on one faith tradition, and history has shown us the danger of this kind of discrimination. Jews, Sikhs, Mormons and other Christian traditions have been targeted in this way, just to name a few. It is our duty as Americans to oppose this proposal to halt access to resettlement for people of certain nationalities.

Our agency will not close. Our work and mission are more important now than ever before. Our Board, supporters, and staff are committed to using this time to strengthen the agency's ability to serve refugees once the American door is again open to them. We are committed to an expanded dialogue to include ALL Americans, including those that support the Trump agenda, so that honest, courageous conversations can be fostered.

In the four months of closure, we will be forced to lay off a significant number of staff and reduce salaries for even more. Every one of us remains committed to the mission of the agency, and we pledge to undertake this regrettable task with dignity for all.

AND, we will redouble our efforts in the following areas during this hiatus. We will:

1. *Initiate and expand the dialogues on ending racism and ending Islamophobia* to better inform the public conversation about who Americans are and the benefits of diverse ethnic, religious, and cultural traditions. We will do this through our El-Hindi Center for Dialogue.
2. Activate our supporters to work for *public education on the value of refugees* to our community. Empower our supporters to reach out to those opposed to refugees and Muslims so that more and more *Americans develop empathy for their brothers and sisters, and stand against an attack on any faith tradition.*

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3. Multiply the numbers of events and forums across the region to *increase interfaith understanding* through our new program, Interfaith Initiatives.
4. Establish a *transitional house* for refugee families that arrive with special needs and/or who arrive without the time and ability of our agency to properly prepare their permanent housing. We will work with our faith partners, especially Plymouth Congregational Church, and the city of Syracuse's Land Bank to make this home a reality.
5. Continue explorations with *Common Grounds and the churches of Cazenovia*, to extend the opportunity to refugee families to come and live in this welcoming village.
6. Relocate the Match Grant in-kind services to *Pebble Hill Presbyterian Church*.
7. Streamline the warehouse operation and the Mower's Room of Innovation at 1010 James Street. This will provide *opportunities for interns* working with our refugee program and Ethnic Community leaders to have a place to work on behalf of their people, while also *preparing for better operations* once the refugees return.
8. Conduct Strategic Planning for the Center for New Americans that guides our next ten years of refugee work, including expanded work for people who have been settled, but still need help with English, employment, and who are *recovering from the trauma and/or torture* that they endured in their home country.

There will be many news stories in the weeks to come about the effects of this Order on our agency. While we are saddened about the staff cut-backs, we are ALL more deeply saddened about the impact on refugees around the world. America cannot abdicate its leadership role on human rights and refugee protection, and InterFaith Works plans to be here for the long-haul to continue this work.

As a loyal supporter and partner, we wanted you to know this directly from us. Many thanks for your vote of support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Beth A. Broadway". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping "B" and "y".

Beth A. Broadway
President/CEO