In 2015, the number of people displaced across the globe as a result of war, violence and persecution, reached the highest numbers since World War II. Today, there are more than 20 million refugees—so many of whom are Syrian—who need our compassion, our advocacy, our friendship, our prayers and our support.

Whether our new neighbors journey to this country as refugees fleeing persecution or as migrants seeking safety, our collective efforts will always strive to protect the most vulnerable among us. We are called to welcome the stranger, and in this moment’s fear-filled climate, we are resolute in our commitment to educate, invite and engage others in this work of welcome.

Since 1939, Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service has responded with bold welcome to the hundreds of thousands of refugees and migrants who have made the long journey to this country.

Our vision that all migrants and refugees are protected, embraced and empowered in a world of just and welcoming communities is needed as much today as it was three quarters of a century ago. We are pleased to report that in 2015, LIRS continued to change lives as we welcomed so many new neighbors.

In 2015, our work of welcome was made possible through an amazing national network of service partners, Lutheran leaders and congregations who offered safety, a new beginning and a long welcome to tens of thousands of newcomers.

In the pages of this report, you will meet a few of these remarkable and courageous people.

LIRS is deeply grateful for your ongoing support of our efforts. Your generous support has enabled us to have a notable impact on newcomers seeking safety and protection here in order to create better lives for themselves and for their families. When you volunteer and mentor, serve as a foster parent or a friend to refugees, speak out for fair policies, donate or pray for people who are displaced—you are a valued partner on the front lines of extending the long welcome. We thank you for walking alongside refugees and migrants.

Yours in faith,

Linda Hartke
President and CEO

Linda Hartke
President and Chief Executive Officer
The LIRS network includes more than 60 social and legal service providers across the U.S., serving tens of thousands of our neighbors each year.

Learn more about our partners by visiting LIRS.org/service.
In 2015, countless numbers of refugees left their families, friends and homelands behind as they fled war, famine and unspeakable violence. At great risk, most dream of going home and are willing to wait years or even decades just across a border from a conflict zone with the hope of going home. For some, their hope runs out and they seek safety and a future in a new place, leading less than 1% of the world’s refugees to be resettled in a new homeland each year. When refugees’ long journey to this country ends, LIRS and our partners are here as their next journey begins, offering welcome and assistance as they begin to rebuild their lives in this foreign land that will become their home.

LIRS works with a superb national network of service partners and volunteers to connect refugees with the basics they need for safety and well-being, while also helping them integrate into their new surroundings. We provide job-readiness, English-language training, and cultural orientation. We connect refugees with the legal services necessary to ensure that they do not have to return to a life filled with danger and fear; and we even equip receiving communities and local employers to appreciate the vibrant gifts that refugees can bring. Most importantly, we help our newest neighbors realize their potential to be vibrant, necessary contributors to their new communities and to experience having a new and wider circle of friends invested in their success.

**Top 5 Countries of Origin, LIRS Resettled Refugees 2015**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Resettled</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Burma</td>
<td>2535</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somalia</td>
<td>1349</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>1260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afghanistan</td>
<td>1086</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic Republic of Congo</td>
<td>1003</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
On a cold day in February, Debra wore her bright orange jacket as she walked into the Ascentria Client Center, formerly Lutheran Social Services of New England. It was her first day as a volunteer with refugees in the Cultural Orientation program.

A nurse who works in public health, Debra was prepared to teach a class to recently arrived refugees about hygiene in America. Her presentation covered topics like washing hands regularly and covering coughs.

At the end of class, a young Somali woman named Amaani* approached Debra with a translator. Amaani wore traditional all-black Somali clothing and wanted to express her admiration of the vibrant color of Debra’s jacket.

Debra smiled and asked Amaani if she’d like to try it on. Amaani was surprised, but she gladly tried on the jacket. It was a perfect fit! Without hesitation, Debra told Amaani to keep the jacket. Surprised, Amaani accepted and beamed a happy, confident and grateful smile.

LIRS supports refugees in both expected and unexpected ways as they adjust to life in a new country and culture. We believe in a long welcome that brings refugees and Americans like Amaani and Debra closer together.

*Name changed to protect privacy.

10,208 Total refugees settled by LIRS in 2015
Beatriz* was forced to flee Guatemala for the US with her infant son, seeking safety and to rejoin her mother. A LIRS partner organization contacted Beatriz’s mother and connected them at last. After a difficult journey, Beatriz is grateful for opportunities to study and be with family in safety. Still, Beatriz misses her grandmother, to whom she is very close. She wishes she could visit her grandmother in Guatemala and return to the United States to pursue her dreams, but as an undocumented immigrant, such a journey would likely be impossible.

At 16 years old, Beatriz has dreams for her future and for her son. She dreams of becoming a doctor and looks forward to the day when her son is old enough to attend school. She knows it will not be easy, but she is ready to work toward a career as a doctor, so she can help people and provide for her son as he grows up.

*Name changed to protect privacy.
In 2015, we received requests for over 2,000 copies of *First Steps*, LIRS’s comprehensive guide to assist refugees, asylum seekers, and migrants released from detention.
For 35 years, LIRS has welcomed children to this country who have left their homes to escape violence, domestic abuse and extreme poverty. When possible, we reunite them with family in the United States. When children arrive without family here, we match them with safe, loving foster families.

With the support of LIRS and our service partner network, children integrate into their new communities. Many become civic leaders and teachers, doctors, lawyers and pastors. They are our neighbors, family, and friends.

18,248
Children Served
Through family reunification, foster care, and new homes for unaccompanied refugee minors.

The Long Welcome

The Long Welcome is the process by which newcomers are received—and eventually integrated—into their communities. Successful protection, stabilization, and integration processes are core elements of the LIRS mission that encompasses the efforts of newcomers, receiving communities, professionals, and volunteers.
LIRS knows that our newest American neighbors provide amazing gifts to our existing communities. But after their long journeys to find better lives here, many migrants find themselves separated from their families and even incarcerated for lengthy periods of time. To combat such injustice, LIRS works with survivors of torture who are now imprisoned in our American jails, and we collaborate with a nationwide team of volunteers and legal professionals to provide support for migrants who have been released.

We also proactively combat the inhumane practice of family detention. We provide emergency assistance to mothers and children who are released and then simply left to fend for themselves. In 2015, we also piloted a program to provide case management services to families released from detention, and we successfully made the case to the US government to release more families and provide more humane—and cost-effective—alternatives to detention.

Protection

We work to ensure that policies and programs are just and protective of migrants and refugees who face great risks, and that human rights are advanced through legal services, advocating for legal reform, and pursuing systems change.
The majority of the world’s 21 million refugees are women and children.
“All are welcome in this place.”

That is the motto of Immanuel Place, a community-based center that provides hospitality and temporary housing for female detainees released from the Northwest Detention Center in Tacoma, Washington.

The motto is posted on a prominent banner in the entry hall, and is one of the first things guests see when they arrive at the house. Their guests are women from all over the world who spend anywhere from one night to several months at Immanuel Place as they seek legal protection and wait to hear about their asylum cases. Since the house opened in 2014, women from Ecuador, El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala, China, Ethiopia, Nigeria and Afghanistan have found a welcoming place to stay as they prepare for the next steps in their lives.

Ursula Bannister is a volunteer at Immanuel Place, where she and other volunteers transport guests to medical and dental appointments, accompany them to immigration court hearings, and celebrate their victories together.

Using resources such as the LIRS First Steps guidebooks, volunteers like Ursula are also able to help the women at Immanuel Place as they navigate the complex immigration system by providing important information on legal rights, responsibilities, and eligibility for services such as healthcare and education.

Ursula walks with these women in the midst of unpredictable times in their lives. We “hold them close and pray for them in times of uncertainty,” she says.

A welcoming community and place to stay make a big difference in the lives of people who have fled violence and are seeking safety in a new country. Ursula and the Immanuel Place volunteers make a lasting impact on each woman who has been welcomed into that home.

Stabilization

We are committed to developing sustainable approaches for migrants and refugees to access food, health, housing, and jobs.
Our 2015 efforts focused on continued support for the US Refugee Resettlement Program, pushing for an increase in refugee admissions from countries such as Syria due to the unprecedented displacement of people. We also continued to lead efforts to assist unaccompanied children and families from Central America who seek protection in the United States. LIRS continues to engage with Congress, the Administration, and directly with Lutheran leaders to shape the critical policies and legislation impacting the lives of migrants and refugees.

10,845
Advocacy messages sent through the LIRS Action Center

165
Meetings with Congressional offices

Integration

We promote a spirit of welcome in U.S. communities, encouraging hospitality for newcomers, reaching out to those at risk, and embracing inclusivity.
Participants in the LIRS Migrant and Refugee Leadership Academy meet with White House officials in the Old Executive Office Building in Washington, D.C. in June 2015.
Migrant and Refugee Leadership Academy

The LIRS Migrant and Refugee Leadership Academy is a unique and powerful training program that equips former refugees and migrants to become ambassadors for migrant and refugee issues in their local communities by equipping them with leadership enrichment skills and legislative advocacy tools. Participants become energized and ready to mobilize their communities and engage in ongoing outreach efforts in order to create welcoming communities. Our goal for the 2015 Migrant and Refugee Leadership Academy was to lift up the voices of all migrants and refugees and empower them to become strong advocates for issues of importance to their communities. We focused on the rich power of storytelling and trained participants to share their own powerful and life-changing stories.

Since its inception, the Academy has trained over 150 refugees and migrants from thirty-seven states. Participants are chosen from a pool of applicants with demonstrated leadership experience, strong ties to their local communities, and a desire to mobilize others in support of pro-migrant and refugee attitudes and policies. Academy attendees represent many countries of origin, and each has an inspiring story of overcoming hardship to become a community leader.

“I am encouraged every day by the resilience of the people who have walked this journey and who have made it their life’s work to advocate for refugees all over this country.”

– Rosette, Academy Planning Committee

Leadership and Advocacy

LIRS acts and speaks with courage and integrity, building service capacity, and mobilizing in support of pro-migrant and refugee policies.
Participants in the Migrant and Refugee Leadership Academy meet with Senator Joni Ernst of Iowa in Washington in June 2015.
In 2015, LIRS shared our mission to support migrants and refugees with Lutheran congregations across the country, with leadership from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LCMS), and the Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (LELCA). Perhaps our greatest outreach was through an experiential learning exhibition about migrant children from Central America that we created for the 2015 ELCA National Youth Gathering, attended by 40,000 youth and 10,000 adult chaperones. We also continued our detention visitation program in 2015, reaching thousands of detainees and hundreds of mothers, children, and unaccompanied children.

We need your help NOW MORE THAN EVER.

Join us in transforming lives and communities

**VOLUNTEER**   Put welcome into action.   LIRS.org/act

**ADVOCATE**   Raise your voice for fair immigration policies.   LIRS.org/action

**DONATE**   Help migrants and refugees rebuild their lives.   LIRS.org/donate

Celebrate Refugee Sunday

Watch videos, take action, and download resources. Visit LIRS.org/refugeesunday

CONTACT US

Toll-Free   877-291-7061   Email   LIRS@lirs.org

Share your story and social media posts

[Social media icons]
Funding Partners and Donors

INDIVIDUAL DONORS

$10,000+
Estate of Dr. Aina Galejs-Dravenieks
Ms. Linda J. Hartke
Dr. Lyndon Haviland and Mr. Thomas Neff
Mr. Bob and Ms. Patty Lane
Mr. Paul Pfeifer
The Rev. Elizabeth Senft and Dr. Mark C. Steinhoff
Mr. William F. Swanson and Ms. Lauren Payne
Estate of Ruth Emma Ziegler

$5,000-9,999
Anonymous
Mr. Keith L. Anderson
Mr. Mark Hanson
Mr. Joseph and Mrs. Virginia Knappenberger
Ms. Carolyn S. Rusk
Ms. Linda L. Stoterau

$1,000-4,999
Anonymous
Mr. Chris D. Andersen
Ms. Jutta F. Anderson
Ms. Jane Anthon
The Rev. James L. Bailey
Mrs. Amedine A. Bella
Mrs. Judith and The Rev. Dr. David Benke
Mr. Wayne M. and Mrs. Deborah P. Benseler
Mr. Jeff and Mrs. Barbara Benson
The Rev. Myrin D. and Ms. Audrey A. Bentz
Ms. Evelyn Bonander
Mrs. Victoria and Mr. Gary Borlaug

CHURCH BODIES
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
The Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod
Presbyterian Church USA

GOVERNMENT AGENCIES
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Office of Refugee Resettlement
Administration for Children and Families
U.S. Department of State
Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration

FOUNDATIONS
The Annie E. Casey Foundation
Bruggere Family Foundation
Edwards Family Foundation
InFaith Community Foundation
Institute of International Education
John P. & Eleanor R. Yackel Foundation
The Lutheran Foundation, Fort Wayne, IN
M&T Charitable Foundation
Maine Community Foundation
MurthyNAYAK Foundation
Oak Foundation
Silicon Valley Community Foundation

CORPORATE & NON-PROFIT PARTNERS
$1,000+
Augsburg Lutheran Home
Community IT Innovators, Inc.
Conoco Phillips
ELCA Mission Investment Fund
Konterra Group
Meyer Partners
Portico Benefit Services
Thrive Financial for Lutherans
U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops
United Food & Commercial Workers
Intl Union, CLC
Wheat Ridge Ministries

CHURCHES
$1,000+
Ascension Lutheran Church
Bethany Lutheran Church
Bethel Lutheran Church
Christ the King Lutheran Church
Concordia Lutheran Church
Edina Community Lutheran Church
Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Advent
Good Shepherd Lutheran Church
Holy Trinity Lutheran Church
La Crosse Area Synod
Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church of Washington, DC
Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church
The Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd
North Carolina Women of the ELCA
Northeast Pennsylvania Women of the ELCA
Northeastern Ohio Synod
Our Savior Lutheran Church
Region 8 of the ELCA
Resurrection Lutheran Church
Saint John Lutheran Church
Saint John-Saint Matthew-Emmanuel Lutheran Church
Saint Mark Lutheran Church
Saint Paul Lutheran Church
Spirit Lutheran
Susquehanna University
Office of the Chaplain
Trinity Lutheran Church
University Lutheran Church
Upper Dublin Lutheran Church

BERNTHAL LEGACY SOCIETY
Mr. Benjamin A. Bankson
Mrs. Mildred Bernthal
Ms. Cynthia D’Agostino
Mr. Ralston H. Deffenbaugh
Dr. Judith Ann Diers
Ms. Judith Joan Dirks
The Rev. Paul K. Erbes
Mr. William G. Geuss
Ms. Joan Geuss
Ms. Linda J. Hartke
The Rev. Roger K. Hoffman
Mrs. Judith B. Hofmann
The Rev. James E. Janke
Mr. Louis Kovacs
Mrs. Marlene Krenzke
Ms. Maxine Lillie
Mrs. Edith M. Lohr
The Rev. Dr. Harold Lohr
Mr. Carlton E. Meier
Ms. Darlene Midlang
The Rev. Ronald F. Moen
Ms. Megan Morrow
Mr. Roger A. Myhre
Mrs. June S. Nyblade
The Rev. Frederick G. Overdier
Mr. Thawng Pao
Ms. Denise M. Peterson
Ms. Timatha S. Pierce
Ms. Julianne Steele
Mr. William F. Swanson
Mr. William C. Tremitiere
The Rev. Dr. Paul M. Werger

BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Mr. Chris Andersen
Ms. Judy Benke
Rev. Dr. Stephen Bouman
Mr. Wilmot Collins
Rev. J. Bart Day
Ms. Lori Fedyk
Mr. Theodore Goins
Ms. Melissa Graves
Ms. Christine Grumm
Mr. Orville Johnson
Ms. Esther Lopez
Mr. Evan Molian
Ms. Diane Padilla
The Rev. Michael Rinehart
Ms. Linda Stoterau
Ms. Selena Sujoldzic
Mr. William Swanson
Ms. Linda Hartke
Audited financial statements and Form 990’s are available at LIRS.org/financial

Programs 90%
Management and General 8%
Fundraising 2%

Statement of Financial Position

AT DECEMBER 31, 2015
Dollars in thousands

Current Assets
Cash & Cash Equivalents $ 9,197
U.S. Government Receivable 4,331
Investment in Lutheran Center Corporation 3,750
Other Assets 1,902

TOTAL ASSETS $ 19,180

Current Liabilities
Accounts Payable and Accrued Expenses $ 8,365
Long-term Debt 2,096

Total Liabilities $ 10,461

Net Assets
Unrestricted $ 8,028
Temporarily Restricted 691

Total Net Assets $ 8,719

TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS $ 19,180

Statement of Activities & Changes in Net Assets

FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2015
Dollars in thousands

Support & Revenue
Contributions $ 2,258
U.S. Government and State 51,606
Fees and Other Revenue 2,164

Total Support and Revenue $ 56,028

Expenses
Program Services $ 50,248
Management and General 4,768
Fundraising 1,014

Total Expenses $ 56,030

Change in Net Assets $(2)
Net Assets, Beginning of Year 8,721

Net Assets, End of Year $ 8,719

EXPENSES 2015
90% Programs
8% Management and General
2% Fundraising

Audited financial statements and Form 990’s are available at LIRS.org/financial