

NOW MORE THAN EVER

2014 ANNUAL REPORT



Lutheran Immigration
and Refugee Service



Dear Friends,

SINCE OUR BEGINNING IN 1939, we have responded boldly to migrants and refugees in need, working tirelessly to welcome them as valued members of communities all across this country and to ensure that they are protected and embraced. The mission of supporting migrants and refugees is needed now more than ever and we are pleased to report that in 2014 Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS) has changed lives and successfully influenced policies and programs.

In 2014, the number of people around the world living as refugees from war or persecution exceeded 50 million—the highest since World War II. As we collaborated with our service partners and Lutheran leaders to support the ongoing work of refugee resettlement, much of our effort was also focused on responding to and supporting many of the 60,000 unaccompanied migrant children who crossed the U.S. border fleeing horrific violence in Central America. At the height of the border crisis, our team met daily to assess the ever-changing situation, evaluate capacity, and plan our response. LIRS also convened an international roundtable of Lutheran leaders, service partners, and child welfare experts from around the world to advance a coordinated response. Whether the need is immediate or long term, our collective impact relies on our efforts to take action on behalf of the most vulnerable.

From an advocacy standpoint, we were very active in 2014 with efforts to end the inhumane practice of detaining immigrant families—pressuring the Obama Administration and lawmakers to stop jailing immigrant families who are apprehended at the border. We will continue to be vigilant in working with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to expand more humane alternatives to detention. It is more essential than ever to ensure that forcibly displaced families are protected and empowered.

“The mission of supporting migrants and refugees is needed now more than ever...”

In our efforts to equip others, our annual World Refugee Day Academy trained former refugees to engage their local communities in welcoming migrants and refugees. During the Academy, LIRS facilitated over 100 visits to lawmakers on Capitol Hill. In partnership with Lutheran leaders, service partners, and other allies, we continued to advocate for reforms that reflect our values on long-term integration and empowered newcomers.

We are especially thankful for the support of our Lutheran partners in commemorating our 75th anniversary in 2014 with a resolution honoring World Refugee Day, designating June 22 as Refugee Sunday. This was a bold declaration of the importance of ministry with new Americans. Refugee Sunday was the first time that Lutheran

congregations and individuals across the country reflected in a coordinated way on the courageous and often perilous journey made by millions of refugees. It celebrated how our new neighbors have become beacons of hope and renewal in our communities.

We are deeply grateful for your enduring commitment as we continue to confront the many challenges that impact migrants and refugees here in the United States. Your generous support has enabled us to have a notable impact on newcomers who remain resilient in creating better lives for themselves and their families. We thank you for your ongoing partnership and for standing with us as we seek to create just and welcoming communities for migrants and refugees.



Linda Hartke, President and Chief Executive Officer
Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service

Refugee Resettlement

“To me, home is not where you grow up. Home is where you find peace, love, and freedom. The United States is my home.”

— SAHAM, FORMER REFUGEE FROM IRAQ

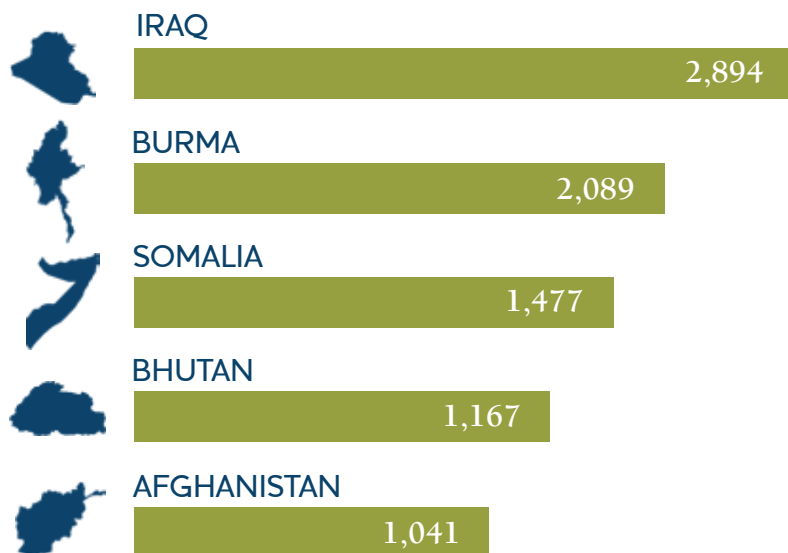
2014 SAW THE HIGHEST LEVELS OF FORCIBLY DISPLACED PEOPLE since World War II. Refugees fled persecution, trauma, and unspeakable violence. Their journey to safety was not an easy one. It required unrelenting resilience, courage, and strength. Forced from their homes, refugees often survive in camps or cities with little hope for their future. And their journey does not end when they are resettled in the United States. Separated from family, friends, customs, and all they know, they must begin to rebuild their lives in a foreign world.

LIRS and our national network of service partners walk alongside refugees throughout this journey to help lift their burden. We prepare refugees for their transition prior to their arrival in the United States. As refugees begin to rebuild their lives here in their new communities, we provide job training, English lessons, cultural orientation, housing and more. Local churches and volunteers add critical support in these ministries, driving refugees to appointments, orienting them in their new cities, and welcoming them into their homes. And we take a step further, educating receiving communities and local employers about their new neighbors and the gifts they bring.

11,565*

REFUGEES WERE RESETTLED BY LIRS IN 2014

LIRS Resettled Refugees from (top 5 countries)



*Number includes refugees and persons with special immigrant visas.

A woman from Burma laughs during a Thanksgiving dinner for new Americans, hosted by St. Mark's Evangelical Lutheran Church (ELCA) in North Dakota.

Children's Services

UNACCOMPANIED MIGRANT CHILDREN


“This country has given me hope and a better life. When I came here, I didn’t have anything. Bethany Christian Services [an LIRS partner] opened a door for me.”

—UNACCOMPANIED MIGRANT CHILD FROM CENTRAL AMERICA

IN 2014, OVER 60,000 CENTRAL AMERICAN CHILDREN made a dangerous journey seeking refuge. Fleeing gang violence, domestic abuse, and extreme poverty, they came to the United States for protection. During the border crisis, LIRS and its partners were there for the children who needed help reuniting with family in the United States, and for those who had no family at all.

Watch Carlos, an unaccompanied minor from Central America, tell his story in our video, *The Journey*, at LIRS.org/2014annualreport.

Oaxaca, Mexico. Central Americans ride cargo trains through Mexico to the United States. Read more at LIRS.org/2014annualreport.
Photo credit: Ruido



In response to the 2014 border crisis,
LIRS impacted the lives of thousands
of Central American children:

19,171

POTENTIAL CAREGIVERS SCREENED

2,348

CHILDREN PLACED IN TRANSITIONAL
AND LONG-TERM FOSTER CARE

1,342

REFERRALS FOR DOMESTIC FOSTER
CARE MADE

1,079

CHILDREN REUNITED WITH FAMILY IN
THE UNITED STATES



Children's Services

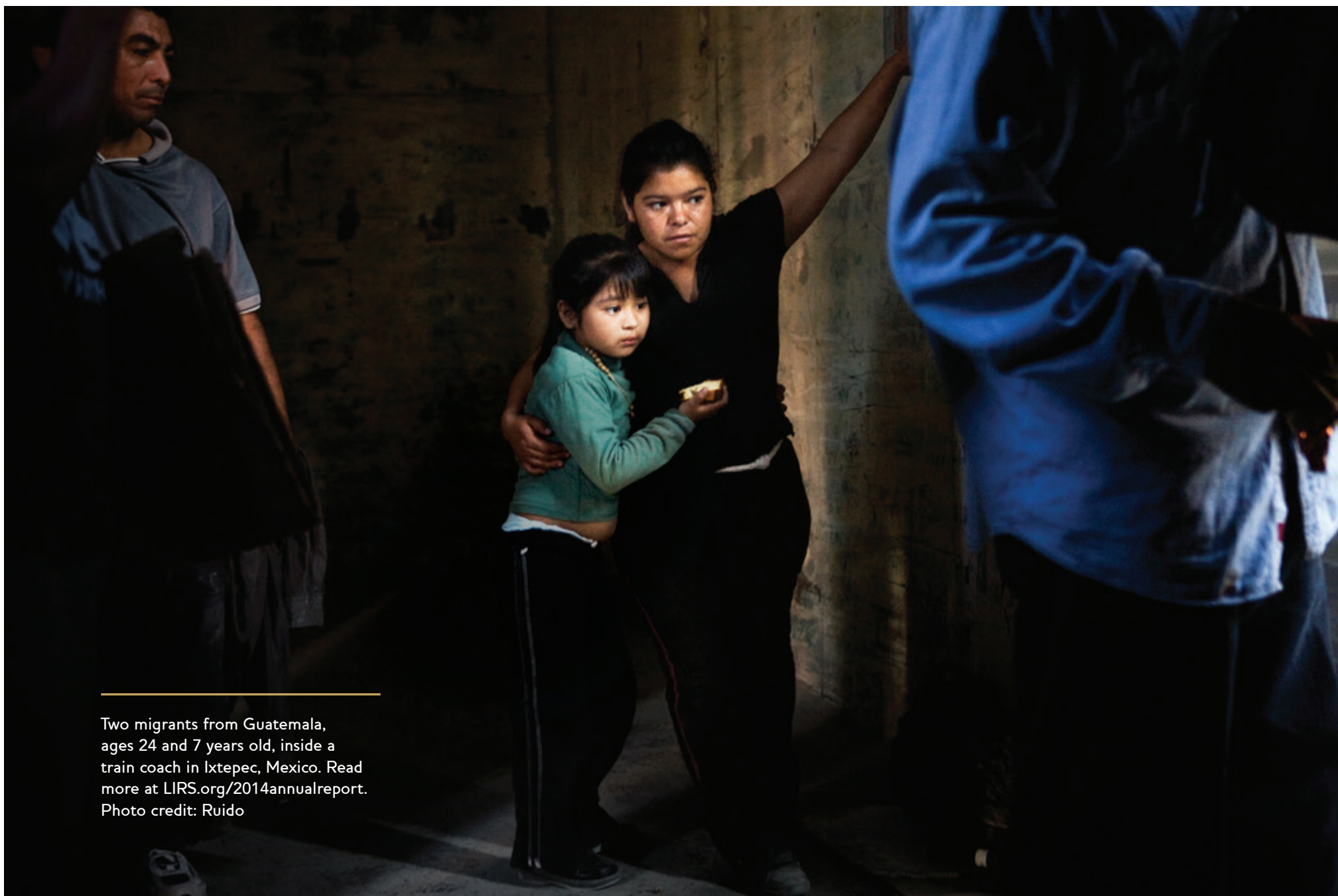
UNACCOMPANIED REFUGEE MINORS

“I have brothers and sisters, a mom and dad, a church, and no soldiers.
I am happy!”

—FOSTER CHILD IN MICHIGAN

Azi, an unaccompanied refugee minor from Burma, was resettled by LIRS to a loving foster family in Michigan. Watch Azi share her story at LIRS.org/2014annualreport.

FINDING LOVING HOMES FOR CHILDREN who have no family is a service we've offered since 1978. Last year we served 1,111 children from Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala, Eritrea, Democratic Republic of Congo, Burma, and others in local foster care programs. With families, children heal, thrive, and become part of their adopted communities.



Two migrants from Guatemala, ages 24 and 7 years old, inside a train coach in Ixtepec, Mexico. Read more at LIRS.org/2014annualreport. Photo credit: Ruido

International Roundtable for Collaborative Lutheran Response

“Look into their eyes. These are not cartels smuggling drugs across the border. These are children seeking asylum.”

—BISHOP MICHAEL RINEHART, TEXAS-LOUISIANA GULF COAST SYNOD, ELCA

AFTER SPENDING THE SPRING AND SUMMER

responding to the record number of children fleeing violence in Central America, we knew we had to do more. Drawing from our strong Lutheran history of welcoming the stranger, we led an effort to organize an International Lutheran Roundtable to derive meaningful ways for Lutherans around the world to care for migrant children and families. We mobilized the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the

Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod, and Lutheran World Relief to help facilitate the Roundtable. **More than 48 participants from six countries, representing 18 church institutions and organizations** participated. We came away with a deeper understanding of the root causes of the exodus of children and families from Central America, the United States immigration system, and how to best assist Lutheran churches in their ministries to these children and families.



Rich Cho accepts the Walk of Courage Award.



Rich Cho, Walk of Courage Award recipient, with his mother, Shirley, and brother, Chris.



Rev. John Frerking, Walk of Faith Award recipient, and his wife, Eileen.

Walk of Courage Award Gala

“Programs like LIRS are critical to not just assisting refugees in acclimating to life in the United States, but also in integrating them as a part of the fabric of our community.”

—RICH CHO, 2014 WALK OF COURAGE AWARD RECIPIENT

EACH YEAR WE HONOR THE COURAGE OF REFUGEES at the Walk of Courage Award Gala. In 2014, LIRS awarded Rich Cho, a former refugee from Burma and now General Manager of the Charlotte Hornets, the Walk of Courage Award. Staying true to his father’s advice to “take pride in everything you do,” Rich overcame indomitable odds and rebuilt his life here in the United States. His family was present as he dedicated the award to his mother and father.

We also honored Rev. John Frerking with the Walk of Faith Award for his tremendous compassion to migrants and refugees. Rev. Frerking and his former congregation, Faith Lutheran Church, walked alongside more than 200 refugees. Over 400 guests attended the celebration and, through their generous support, we raised \$376,000 so that our ministry can reach and welcome even more newcomers seeking safety.

Innovating Welcome for Refugees

CAREERS & CONNECTIONS MENTORING PROGRAM

“In my country I could not look someone in the eye. Now I understand that in this country I am the same as everyone else.”

—FORMER REFUGEE FROM BHUTAN AND MENTORING PARTICIPANT

LIRS BELIEVES IN THE LONG WELCOME, ensuring newcomers are not only protected but also become valued members of their new communities. We are constantly seeking innovative ways to foster this long welcome. Careers and Connections, an employment mentoring pilot project which began two years ago, has matched sixty refugees with a mentor—someone with professional experience and a strong network who can walk alongside persons who are ready to take steps towards defined career goals.

With the assistance of our local partner, Lutheran Children and Family Service in Lancaster, PA, refugee participants have taken steps to enroll in nursing school, gain their GED certificate, and make many other connections for both long-term employment success and deeper community integration.

45 MENTORS

REPRESENTING A MYRIAD OF PROFESSIONS WERE MATCHED WITH REFUGEES INCLUDING A:

- Fire Chief
- Vice President
- Operations Manager
- Diving Supervisor
- Financial Advisor

AS A RESULT, THE REFUGEES:

- Completed high school graduation equivalency programs
- Began small business training
- Regained their credentials as medical practitioners
- Entered college

A case manager who is a former refugee, left, checks in with a former refugee and client, right, at a fabric shop in Georgia.



Advocacy and Outreach

“As Lutherans, we are called to welcome.”

—BARBARA RUHE, LIRS SUPPORTER FROM CONNECTICUT

IN 2014, OUR ADVOCACY PRIORITIES FOCUSED ON BUILDING SUPPORT for the U.S. Refugee Resettlement Program; ensuring the protection of migrant and refugee children; safeguarding the rights of migrants; and advancing fair and humane immigration reform. We believe welcoming communities and fair laws are essential to ensuring that migrants and refugees are fully integrated into society. We directly engage with Congress and the Administration to shape critical

policies and legislation impacting the lives of migrants and refugees and the communities that receive them.

THE WORK OF LIRS WAS MENTIONED IN
**over 8,000 news articles
in 2014**

6,323

MESSAGES SENT BY LIRS SUPPORTERS TO CONGRESS AND PRESIDENT OBAMA THROUGH THE LIRS ACTION CENTER

5,253

INDIVIDUAL EMAILS SENT BY LIRS TO MEMBERS OF CONGRESS RELATED TO LEGISLATION IN SUPPORT OF MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES

271

IN-PERSON MEETINGS WITH MEMBERS OF CONGRESS OR CONGRESSIONAL STAFF INCLUDING 120 CONDUCTED BY FORMER REFUGEES DURING LIRS WORLD REFUGEE DAY ACADEMY

27

ADVOCACY RELATED STATEMENTS/PRESS RELEASES PUBLISHED ON LIRS'S POSITIONS ON KEY LEGISLATION AND EVENTS




A former refugee from Bhutan, left, and LIRS staff member, right, on Capitol Hill during LIRS's World Refugee Day Academy.

Access to Justice

“I understand that I am equal here.” —FORMER REFUGEE

ASYLUM SEEKERS AND SURVIVORS OF TORTURE FLEE to the United States in search of protection. But upon arrival, they are often imprisoned in immigration detention before they can make their case. LIRS’s network identifies detained torture survivors and offers critical legal support. It often means the difference between life, and a new start, or deportation, and even death.

We equip local partners to train volunteers in providing services to migrants impacted by detention. And when the federal government reinstated the obsolete practice of family immigration detention in an effort to deter Central American families from seeking safety in the United States, LIRS and our network immediately went to work supporting these families.



11,987

CHRISTMAS CARDS SENT TO WOMEN AND CHILDREN in family immigration detention through LIRS's Hope for the Holidays campaign

5,564

DETAINED IMMIGRANTS RECEIVED INFORMATION ABOUT THEIR RIGHTS AND LEGAL SCREENING

2,604

DETAINEES VISITED THROUGH LIRS'S VISITATION MINISTRY BY 685 VOLUNTEERS

389

TORTURE SURVIVORS IDENTIFIED so that they may access legal, social, medical, and other services critical to ensuring their ability to advocate for their legal cases and begin to forge free and safe lives

Funding Partners & Donors

CHURCH BODIES

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)
Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church of 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

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The Annie E. Casey Foundation
The Calvin K. Kazanjian Economics Foundation
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Hissho Foundation
InFaith Community Foundation
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\$1,000+

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Lutheran Services in America
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Lutheran World Relief
M&T Bank
Mission Investment Fund, ELCA
National Restaurant Association
National Roofing Contractors Association
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Ober, Kaler, Grimes & Shriver
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CHURCHES \$1,000+

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Bethel Lutheran Church of Northfield, MN
Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church of La Mesa, CA
Christ Lutheran Church of Sedona, AZ
Christ the King Lutheran Church of Houston, TX
Christus Victor Lutheran Church of Baltimore, MD
Edina Community Lutheran Church of Edina, MN
Episcopal Church of Christ the King of
Baltimore, MD
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First United Church of Christ of Northfield, MN
Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church of Dover, OH

Grace Lutheran Church of River Forest, IL
Holy Trinity Lutheran Church of Hickory, NC
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Minneapolis & St Paul, MN
Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church of East
Brunswick, NJ
Our Saviour's Lutheran Church of Arlington
Heights, IL
Prince of Peace Lutheran Church of Saratoga, CA
Saint John's Lutheran Church of Northfield, MN
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SERVICE PARTNERS

The LIRS network includes more than 60 social and legal service providers across the country.

Learn more about our partners by visiting [LIRS.org/service](https://lirs.org/service).

The pastor at St. Mark's Evangelical Church (ELCA) in North Dakota hands blankets to a refugee man and his family.



Statement of Financial Position

AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2014 • Dollars in Thousands

Current Assets

Cash & Cash Equivalents	\$7,527
U.S. Government Receivable	5,751
Investment in Lutheran Center Corporation	3,669
Other Assets	2,188

Total Assets	\$19,135
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Current Liabilities

Accounts Payable and Accrued Expenses	\$8,207
Long-term Debt	2, 207

Total Liabilities	\$10,414
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Net Assets

Unrestricted	\$7,896
Temporarily restricted	825

Total Net Assets	\$8,721
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TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	\$19,135
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Note: Audited financial statements and 990's are available
at LIRS.org/financial

Statement of Activities & Changes in Net Assets

AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2014 • Dollars in Thousands

Support & Revenue

Contributions	\$2,668
U.S. Government and State	55,341
Fees and Other Revenue	2,064

Total Support and Revenue **\$60,073**

Expenses

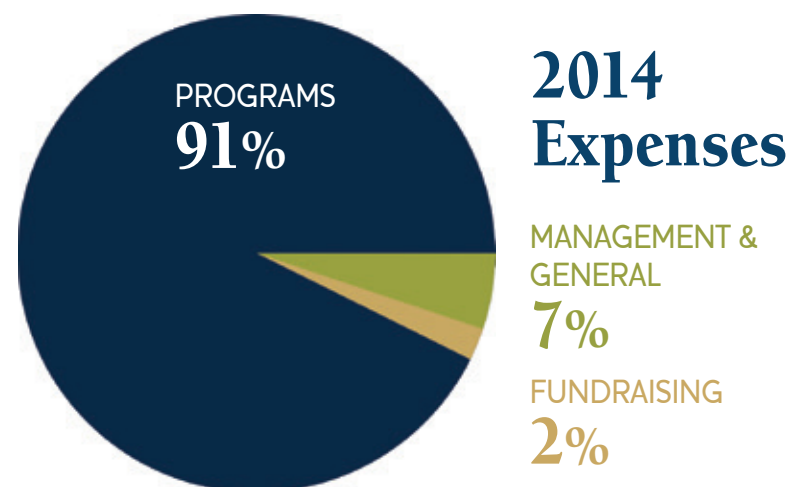
Program Services	\$53,936
Management and General	4,440
Fundraising	1,186

Total Expenses **\$59,562**

Net Assets

Change in Net Assets	\$511
Net Assets, Beginning of Year	8,210

Net Assets, End of Year **\$8,721**



Note: Audited financial statements and 990's are available at LIRS.org/financial



Three World Refugee Day Academy graduates at the Walk of Courage Award Gala.

STARTED BY LUTHERAN CONGREGATIONS IN 1939, Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS) is a national organization walking with migrants and refugees through ministries of service and justice, transforming U.S. communities by ensuring that newcomers are not only self-sufficient but also become connected and contributing members of their adopted communities in the United States.

We need your help NOW MORE THAN EVER.
Take a lead in transforming lives and communities as a:

VOLUNTEER: Put welcome into action at LIRS.org/act

ADVOCATE: Raise your voice for fair and humane immigration policies at LIRS.org/action

DONOR: Give to help children and families rebuild their lives. Visit LIRS.org/donate or use the enclosed envelope

STORYTELLER: Share your story and social media posts with us at Facebook.com/LIRSorg and Twitter.com/LIRSorg

Celebrate Refugee Sunday!

Choose any Sunday during the year to celebrate refugees in your congregation and community. Visit LIRS.org/refugeesunday

**Witnessing to God's love for all people, we stand with
and advocate for migrants and refugees, transforming
communities through ministries of service and justice.**



**Lutheran Immigration
and Refugee Service**

700 Light Street, Baltimore, MD 21230 • (410) 230-2700