



November 18, 2015

Statement Regarding Syrian Refugee Placement

Since the 1940s, Catholic Charities Oregon has provided refugee resettlement services to thousands of individuals and families from across the world. In the last three years, Catholic Charities has resettled 1,032 refugees from Iraq, Somalia, Bhutan, Burma, Cambodia, Iran, as well as from other nations experiencing conflict, violence, and persecution.

As a designated organization that provides direct refugee resettlement services on behalf of the US government, Catholic Charities does not control who is chosen to resettle in Oregon. The United States handpicks these refugees, and they are resettled only after a rigorous screening process conducted by the Department of Homeland Security, the FBI, the Department of Defense, and multiple intelligence agencies. This vetting process is consistent and applies to all refugees, regardless of place of origin. Syrian refugees fleeing from ISIS and other forms of terrorism are no exception.

While Catholic Charities has not yet settled a Syrian refugee, we stand ready to welcome any refugee, regardless of faith or nationality, ensuring that they find a safe haven from persecution and the opportunity to build a new life. As a Catholic organization rooted in social justice, it is our moral obligation to do nothing less. Our efforts to serve any refugee, regardless of place of origin, are aligned with the policies set forth by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

We also urge public officials and the community at large to avoid misplaced blame that creates an atmosphere of fear. Instead, we hope that communities will engage in discovery, discernment, and thoughtful dialogue around finding solutions for the problems that plague our brothers and sisters locally and across the globe.

As Pope Francis recently said, we must “view them as persons, seeing their faces and listening to their stories, trying to respond as best we can to their situation. To respond in a way which is always humane, just and fraternal. We need to avoid a common temptation nowadays: to discard whatever proves troublesome.”