

Friends & Mentors Program

A Refugee is defined as a person who has fled his or her country of origin because of a well founded fear of persecution based on race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership in a particular social group.

There are over 12 million Refugees in the World.

Every year 300 or more of those Refugees come through the Resettlement Department at IIB.

Getting acclimated to a new place can be extremely stressful and can take time depending on the person. Refugees can find it challenging to handle the day-to-day demands of life and understand U.S.American value and culture. The Friends & Mentors program can help with this culture shock.

What are the basic services provided under the Friends & Mentors Program?

- ❖ Assist in setting up the refugee's apartment.
- ❖ During the first week after arrival:
 - Take them on a tour of the immediate neighborhood
 - How to use American currency: paying for things at a store
 - Where to find the Grocery store and
 - How to find their way around it
 - Show them how to use local bus routes and transportation
 - What is the post office
 - How to wash clothing at the Laundry Mat
- ❖ Invite the refugee/family to at least one social gathering
i.e. dinner, free events happening all over the city, take them to Niagara Falls etc.

How do I become a part of the Friends & Mentors Program?

- ❖ Establish if the program will be the right fit for you and/or your family
- ❖ Determine which services you will be able to assist with
(Further options discussed with the case manager)
- ❖ Complete and send in the application (located online at www.iibuff.org/volunteer)
- ❖ Attend an orientation (orientations are conducted on the first Thursday of the month)
- ❖ Go through the Interview process and meet with case manager
- ❖ Assist a refugee or family in their acclimation process