

## New Lives in a New Land

### *The Chaldean Community Foundation's Campaign to Build a Strong Community*

#### **A people in crisis**

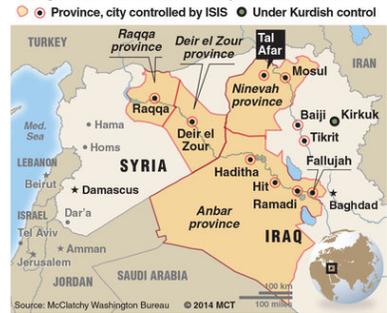
Since the war in Iraq began in 2003, Chaldeans (Iraq's indigenous people, Eastern Rite Catholics) have lived a precarious existence. Chaldeans are an ancient Christian people whose ancestral homeland includes the Nineveh Plains in northeastern Iraq with the city of Mosul at its heart. Chaldeans and other Iraqi minorities have been persecuted by radical extremists and most recently by Islamic State terrorists. Unfortunately, history is repeating itself. These minorities were subjected to the same type of persecution a hundred years ago at the hands of the Ottoman Empire, during which an estimated 400,000 Chaldeans/Assyrians were killed.

Once again these persecuted peoples have been forced to leave their homes, their jobs and most of their possessions and take refuge in camps in Iraqi Kurdistan, Turkey, Lebanon and other countries in the Middle East. While in these camps, refugees are not allowed to work or go to school. More than a million Chaldeans have fled Iraq and are living as displaced people around the world. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is working to resettle Chaldeans to other countries, a process that can take several years. Meanwhile, people languish in overcrowded, unheated camps with poor sanitation and no opportunity to provide for themselves or their families.

The violence against Christians in the Middle East escalates daily. In February 2015, the extremist group known as ISIS or ISIL drove thousands of Chaldean Syriac Assyrians from their villages in northeastern Syria and took as many as two hundred people hostage. Actions like these will continue to increase the flood of displaced people seeking refuge in other countries.

#### **Under ISIS control**

The militant Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) has seized the strategic town of Tal Afar. Areas and major cities/towns it controls:



#### **Portrait of a Refugee**



Emad fled Iraq with his wife and three children and arrived in the United States in November 2013. He grew up in Qaraqosh, a Christian village that was captured by ISIS this past June. In Iraq, Emad was a teacher, a painter and a cartoonist. His cartoons, which were published in local newspapers and on the Internet, reflected his pro-democracy liberal views. His views made him a target of threats and he was forced to take his family and flee.

Emad and his family have found a home in the Chaldean community in Southeast Michigan. He has a job working as a dishwasher in a restaurant and his children go to school. "I want for my children to grow up in a society that values human life," he said.

Now Emad is no longer afraid that the cartoons he publishes will make orphans of his children.

Thanks to Michigan's established Chaldean community, many refugees are seeking resettlement in the United States. More than 30,000 refugees have arrived in Michigan since 2007, with approximately 400 Chaldean refugees continuing to arrive each month.

### **A safe harbor for weary refugees**

In 2011, the Chaldean Community Foundation (CCF) opened a small supportive services center in a strip mall in Sterling Heights, Michigan. The CCF, a 501(c)3 organization and the charitable arm of the Chaldean American Chamber of Commerce, located the Refugee Acculturation Sustainability and Training (RAST) office in Sterling Heights because it was close to where many of the recent Chaldean refugees had found housing. The CCF expected to serve about 400 people a year by coordinating English as a second language (ESL) classes, organizing job training, providing access to health care and helping refugees gain their independence and become less dependent on state and federal assistance.

Instead of serving the anticipated 1,600 people over the last four years, the center's staff have provided assistance to ten times that amount as more than 16,000 individuals walked through the doors for assistance in 2014 alone. RAST caseworkers provided the following services during the 2014 fiscal year (November 1 to October 31):



*RAST clients at an ESL class*

- Filed 4,034 immigration applications
- Conducted 1,168 job placement interviews and placed 345 clients in full-time jobs (a placement rate of 30%)
- Enrolled 203 students in ESL classes
- Provided \$92,000 in auto loans through the Chaldean Loan Fund program
- Arranged free medical services for 231 patients
- Provided 2,600 no-cost prescriptions valued at \$12,000

All this with office space and a staff designed to serve a maximum of 400 people a year! With the needs of current refugees, CCF must expand both services and facilities to meet demand. Because of the quality of service provided by the CCF staff, more than 15% of the walk-ins are non-Chaldean and everyone who walks through the door is assisted.

### **Expanding capacity to meet the rising tide**

The CCF and Chaldean leaders throughout the community are committed to providing assistance both to refugees already living in our region and to the thousands on their way here from the war-torn Middle East. To serve these people quickly, minimize additional suffering, and help them recover their dignity and independence, we need to expand our capacity.

We are launching a \$5 million comprehensive campaign that seeks support from corporations, foundations and individuals. With these additional resources we will:

***Construct an 11,500-square-foot community center in Sterling Heights – \$3 million***

The new Chaldean Community Center will be the new home for a range of support services for Chaldeans, refugees and others who seek assistance with immigration, housing assistance, free or reduced-cost medical and mental health care, ESL and acculturation classes, assistance and advocacy for special needs refugees, and many more services that help vulnerable people stabilize their lives and become self-sufficient once again.

The Community Center will serve as a gathering place not only for refugees but also as a place where Chaldeans from around the region can come together and share their experiences and traditions.

The center will be the first of its kind in this region for the growing Chaldean population that just ten years ago had four Chaldean Catholic churches and now has twelve. The region has also seen its population grow from 75,000 to 150,000. The center will allow the community to become more proactive to the growing needs of the Chaldean community both locally and abroad.

***Strengthen the Chaldean Loan Fund – \$1 million***

Since it began in 2013, the Chaldean Loan Fund has extended \$92,000 worth of loans to Chaldean refugees. Modeled after the Hebrew Free Loan, the Chaldean Loan Fund is designed to provide low-interest car loans and scholarships to community members for the purpose of purchasing used vehicles, starting a business or furthering their education. With a reliable car an individual can get to their job and support their family. With a small loan, individuals can start a business and begin earning an income. By furthering their education, people will have an opportunity to reach for a brighter future. The loans may be small but they are often a critical first step toward becoming independent and free of public assistance.

By growing the Chaldean Loan Fund we will be able to help more refugees earn a living and strengthen their independence. Currently, the loan fund has mainly been providing vehicle loans for individuals who have found jobs with the assistance of RAST. It will grow to provide loans for small business startups to support entrepreneurship in a community that already owns more than 15,000 businesses in the state of Michigan.

***Develop permanent housing for resettled refugees – \$1 million***

The CCF is working with local and state agencies and developers to finance a \$10 million housing project to provide permanent homes to resettled Chaldeans and



other Iraqi refugees. The project would include 100 or more units and include a community center that could also provide support services to refugees.

The Foundation is in the process of seeking an appropriate site and securing financing for this large-scale project to house the growing number of refugees. As soon as a site is selected, the Foundation intends to build a village that will attract many Chaldean bakeries, restaurants and coffee shops. One area being considered has been known historically as Chaldean Town and is located on 7 Mile and Woodward in Detroit.

Currently the CCF has more than 1,100 people on a waiting list for long-term housing. With the increasing number of refugees arriving each month, the waiting list is expected to grow.

### **Together we can do so much more**

The Chaldean community has welcomed the new arrivals by opening their homes, volunteering their time, and making individual contributions. Members of the Chaldean American Association for Health Professionals have given their time and professional services, St. Thomas Chaldean Catholic Diocese provided matching funds to the Chaldean Loan Fund, HelpIraq.org and the Adopt-A-Refugee-Family have raised more than \$5 million to aid displaced refugees throughout the Middle East and more recently those who have been impacted by the Islamic State. But the tide of refugees continues to rise and daily swamps the available resources.

In the 1920s Chaldeans arrived in Metro Detroit drawn by jobs in the automotive industry. A second larger wave of Chaldean immigrants arrived in the 1960s when Saddam Hussein's Baath party came to power in Iraq. Before the current wave of refugees, our region's Chaldean population was more than 121,000 strong. Chaldeans are entrepreneurs and business owners, doctors and lawyers. They own more than 15,000 businesses and contribute hundreds of millions of dollars annually to our local economy.

Our goal is to help the current wave of Iraqi Christian and Chaldean refugees become as independent and productive as members of the established Chaldean community have proven to be. We can no longer manage alone. We are seeking assistance from corporations, foundations and individuals from across southeast Michigan. Together we can do so much more.





# Chaldean Community Foundation Campaign Pledge Form

[Please print all information]

**Donor Name:** \_\_\_\_\_  
*As you would like it to appear in donor recognition listings.*

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_  
*Street Address* \_\_\_\_\_ *Suite / Apartment #* \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ *City* \_\_\_\_\_ *State* \_\_\_\_\_ *Zip* \_\_\_\_\_

**Telephone:** ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) \_\_\_\_\_ **E-mail:** \_\_\_\_\_

**I/We would like to give/pledge \$ \_\_\_\_\_ to the Chaldean Community Foundation.**

Pledge: I promise to give as follows:  
Frequency of Payments (Select One): *Monthly* \_\_\_\_\_ *Quarterly* \_\_\_\_\_ *Annually* \_\_\_\_\_  
Number of Payments: \_\_\_\_\_ Start Date: \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_  
*Month Day Year*

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_  
*Please Sign Regardless of Payment Method Chosen*

**Please direct my/our gift to the following area of interest:**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Refugee Acculturation Sustainability and Training (RAST) | <input type="checkbox"/> Chaldean Loan Fund                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Breaking Barriers  | <input type="checkbox"/> Chaldean Community Center                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Project Bismutha   | <input type="checkbox"/> Housing Development for Resettled Refugees |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> To the most urgent priority                |

The names of all contributors will be included on our honor roll of donors and in campaign materials as appropriate.

I would like my donation to remain anonymous.

**My/Our gift is in honor/in memory of:** \_\_\_\_\_  
*Name*

Please Notify: \_\_\_\_\_  
*Name*

\_\_\_\_\_ *Street Address* \_\_\_\_\_ *Suite / Apartment #* \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ *City* \_\_\_\_\_ *State* \_\_\_\_\_ *Zip* \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks payable to the Chaldean Community Foundation and send to:  
Chaldean Community Foundation  
30850 Telegraph Rd., Suite 200  
Bingham Farms, MI 48025

The Chaldean Community Foundation is a 501c3 organization; all donations are fully tax deductible.