

BUILDING PEACEFUL BRIDGES

"Bridging the hearts and minds of all people"



Clockwise from above: Adam and his new kitten; Marcia delivering food and household items to the Kadjemba family; Ardita and Roqayah celebrating with the family.

BPB Family Update

As BPB Mentors look forward to sharing in person time together with our families, we continue to find much joy from our weekly virtual meetings including a virtual Thanksgiving celebration. Life is busy for each of the families we mentor as they work diligently to navigate life during the pandemic and establish a foothold in America.

Bushra and Zeyad's family has been engaged with jobs, school, English accent refinement and personal financial training as well as adding two new members to the family – a cat and a bird! Adam is enjoying preschool where he continues to develop his language skills. Mohammed and Abdullah have adapted well to online learning. Zahra graduates from Penn High School in January and starts college the same month! Zahra also completed a pharmacy tech certificate program and hopes to start working at a local pharmacy. In addition to all they have to manage, Bushra and Zeyad have been generous with their time supporting the development of the film we will share at our Annual Event December 17th.

Since BPB started mentoring the Kadjemba Family earlier this year, their family has expanded to include Hawa's husband, Ahadi Chibabira, and soon a baby boy. Ahadi, who has been in the U.S. for five years, has excellent English skills and works for Uber. He is studying for his upcoming citizenship exam. Nuhru and Grace attend school online and we recently learned that Nuhru earned all A's in the last grading period!

We are grateful to all of the members of the BPB Mentoring and Sponsoring team as well as to these families for allowing us to walk with them as they continue their resettlement journey. We look forward to doubling the number of families we support in 2021!



Hawa and Ahadi expecting

CALENDAR

Inauguration Day
2021
Wednesday, January 20

Strategic Planning
Retreat
January 12 & 13, 2021

Upcoming
Luncheon Meeting
Virtual - March 22
Monday: Noon - 1 pm

Please visit our website
or send an email for
more details



Dear Bridge Builders,

Congratulations, what an amazing year of fellowship with refugee families, creation of personalized training programs, engaging knowledge experts to educate ourselves on refugee services and policies, and successful Calls to

Action. We are very thankful for all the support we have received from sponsors and partners.

In the summer, we began work on a documentary about one of our refugee family’s story and about BPB’s mission and values. In BPB’s documentary, "Belonging", to be screened at our Annual Benefit on December 17th, we highlight a refugee’s success story. We presented the family’s journey towards "belonging" from refugee to U.S. Citizen and independence. Belonging is feeling at home in a new country.

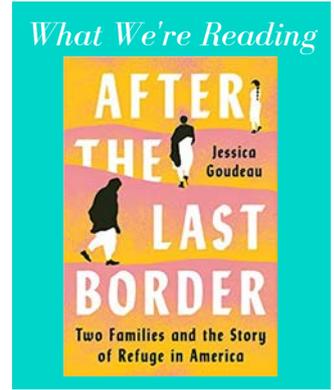
In 2020, BPB’s Learning Luncheon knowledge experts educated us on:

- o the importance of English as a second language,
- o the refugee resettlement process,
- o U.S. Immigration and Refugee Policy and
- o transitional schools for refugee children.

Our increased knowledge will guide BPB strategically in serving the refugee community.

We are excited to initiate a BPB Book Club in February. Our first book is "After The Last Border" by Jessica Goudeou. Details to follow on the BPB Website.

In spite of a pandemic, economic collapse and social injustice, we received increased donor support and expanded our volunteer network. BPB is energized about working with the Biden Administration to improve resettlement policies and programs in preparation for the increased number of refugees entering our country in 2021-2022.



Wishing you all a very Happy New Year!
Stay healthy and safe!

“If not me, who? If not now, when?”,

Lori Consadori Lucchetti

Lori Consadori Lucchetti, President & Co-Founder



Bridge Builders

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world: indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.”

-Margaret Mead

Building Peaceful Bridges is a nonprofit organization supporting people of all faiths whose mission is to foster multicultural relationships by assisting in the integration of refugees into American society and educating communities on the challenges facing refugee populations through their stories.





Question and answer session for the "Day One" virtual luncheon

Learning Luncheons

On December 7th, BPB welcomed Lori Miller, Kelly Moore, and Donnie Harris to speak about the “Day One” Documentary at our virtual Quarterly Learning Luncheon. BPB screened the “Day One” documentary about the Nahed-Chapman New American Academy (NCNA), a unique public school for refugees and immigrants in St. Louis, MO.

The panelists spoke about the establishment of the Academy, the refugee students they educate, the filming process, and ways in which people can be involved in helping newcomers receive quality education. They referenced the need to be prepared for the potential increase of refugees with the new Administration.

Lori, director of “Day One”, captured the lives of young refugees in this remarkable documentary. When asked what was the most challenging part of making the film, Lori commented that on such a sensitive subject the emotional communication was harder and the understanding of cultural differences a priority. Lori called the filming a “magical process”.

All three panelists discussed what the refugee students taught them. Gratitude, a sense of community and appreciation of education were at the top of their list. Kelly, current director of the high school program, was grateful for the film shining the light on the stories of their students and families.

Donnie, former principal of NCNA, felt that everyday at school was “A Beautiful Day”. These voices need to

be heard at the policy levels of the U.S. Department of Education. BPB, Lori and NCNA are exploring ways to collaborate in 2021 to present the documentary to policy makers and discuss replicating newcomer schools like NCNA within our community and across the country.



Lori Miller Kelly Moore Donnie Harris

"Day One" Panelists

If you are interested in watching the December 7 panel discussion, please visit the BPB YouTube Channel. The video will be available after Dec. 18. <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC9Lwi3K8mR912vfEnFQQbGA>



Volunteer Spotlight

Fr. Joseph Kayongo joined the BPB Team last year as a Swahili translator, a critical role in mentoring our Congolese family. We wish him well as he returns to his home in Uganda next month. We look forward to our paths crossing again.



Fr. Joseph Kayongo

Clothing Drive - Call to Action

The cold weather prompted a Call to Action for warm clothes for 8 refugee families. BPB volunteers collected and delivered warm clothing, jackets, hats, and gloves meeting the needs of our families and those served by our partner, ICNA Relief. BPB also collected baby items for the Chibabari Family. A special thanks to Carrie Classick Johnson and the Tarazi Family with the help of their Chicago and Glenview neighbors.

One of the donors shared: *"All the best to the new family! Thirty-five years ago, my parents were new in this country and received donations before I was born. I wish the families all the luck in the world."*



BPB's donors joined the effort with monetary donations for new boots and gloves. Many of the families will experience their first Chicago winter with limited resources due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The clothing drive has helped keep them and their children warm this season.

"Be the change that you wish to see in the world."
-Mahatma Gandhi

Call to Action
Hunger, housing and joblessness are the greatest challenges facing refugee families. A young refugee family needs financial support.

DONATE NOW
Double your impact!
Donations received through December 25th will be matched up to \$3,000.
Goal: \$6,000
(for 5 months rent, food and baby supplies)
BPB and the family are very grateful for your help during this pandemic.
Thank You!

Thank you for supporting the BPB mission!

Be a Donor, Educator, Influencer, Mentor, Speaker, Sponsor



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OUR BELIEFS

Compassion bridges to Trust.
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