

BUILDING PEACEFUL BRIDGES

"Bridging the hearts and minds of all people"



Bridge Builders with BPB mentored and sponsored families

BPB Family Update

BPB welcomes two new families in partnership with Catholic Charities. Ghufran and her children arrived in Chicago from Syria via Turkey. She is a gifted seamstress and wants to develop a business. A Bridge Builder generously donated a sewing machine. The children started school equipped with new backpacks and school supplies from BPB. We are grateful for Ghufran's hospitality including her delicious tea and meat pies. We plan to spend more time together practicing English, learning more about each other's cultures and addressing any needs of the family. We are thankful to Ahlam for providing translation.

Ali and Razieh and their three daughters arrived in Chicago from Iran also by way of Turkey. Ali is from Afghanistan. He is enrolled in English classes at the Howard Area Community Center (HACC) four days a week. Bibi and their older daughters will soon begin English classes. He and his wife are eager to find jobs. Their work experience is in the hotel industry. Also, Ali worked as an upholsterer. Their youngest daughter has begun second grade. Oghay, another wonderful volunteer, has provided translations for our visits.

The Issaka family now has a car! Haroun received his driver's license with the support of BPB. The family received a car donated by ICNA Relief. The car will enable him to explore new job opportunities. He previously traveled four hours daily by bus to his job.

The Issaka girls have been expanding their horizons with the help of our volunteers, Laura and Marilyn. Most recently the four took a field trip to Lincoln Park Zoo.

BPB mentors took out the children to their first trick or treating during Halloween day.

Lastly, all of our families received winter clothing from our very successful Fall Clothing Drive.

CALENDAR

Learning Luncheon
Monday, November 15
Noon to 1pm

Rachel D'Onofrio
Katie Kelly
Bilingual Education Program,
Evanston Township H.S.

Winter Boot Drive
Friday, November 12

Giving Tuesday
Tuesday, November 30

BPB Annual Event
Thursday, December 2



Dear Bridge Builders,

What an exciting time building welcoming communities for our new immigrant families. The influx of Afghan evacuees (expected to be over 100,000) and the increased

Presidential Determination ceiling (15,000 to 125,000) allowing refugees entrance into America provides the U.S. with a fresh backbone for economic growth and a new opportunity for humanitarian rights. As BPB works with new families we see in them the values that we hold dear as Americans: family first, hard work, compassion, patience, resilience, courage, education, and the importance of a democracy.

Currently, BPB is mentoring an Afghan family providing English lessons, homework assistance, cultural awareness and driving test preparation. In addition, we are assisting the family petition the U.S. government for Humanitarian Parole status for their remaining family members in Afghanistan. BPB is fortunate to have Baker McKenzie providing pro bono legal services to the Afghan family and to Catholic Charities providing a letter of support for the Afghan families' application along with BPB and other faith based organizations.

We look forward to seeing everyone at two BPB upcoming events. The first is the November 15th Learning Luncheon, with Rachel D'Onofrio and Katie Kelly, of Evanston Township High School. They will discuss the Bilingual Education Program at ETHS and the cultural assistance provided to their students. Language is the key, opening the door to success for new immigrants.

The second is our Annual Event on December 2nd, 7-8 p.m. CST. BPB families will share their cultural foods and stories of life in their countries. Be sure to buy raffle tickets for a chance to win a basket of gastronomical delights including Afghan, African and Iraqi cookbooks and gift certificates to a few ethnic restaurants. At the event, we will honor our 2nd Bridge Builder Award winner, Ann Balusek. Ann "bridges the hearts and minds of all people" daily. BPB's Mentoring and Sponsoring program is modeled after Ann's sponsorship of Ahlam's family, building a relationship of over 10 years.

Thank you to our donors, volunteers, speakers and communities for all of their support of "bridging the hearts and minds of all people".

"If not me, who? If not now, when?",

Lori Consadori Lucchetti, President & Co-Founder



Bridge Builders

GIVING TUESDAY

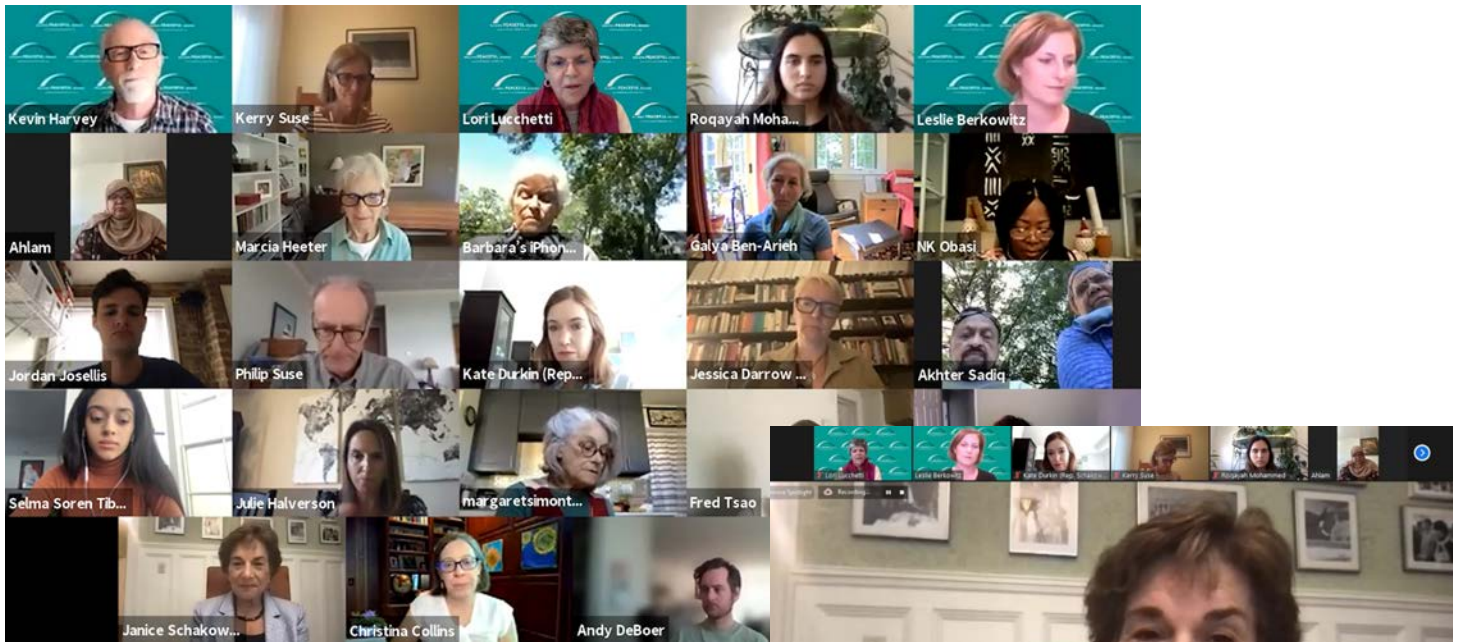
Afghan Housing Assistance
 Goal: \$50K
 Raised: \$25K

"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.





Bridge Builders at third Learning Luncheon

Learning Luncheon

Building Peaceful Bridges' (BPB) welcomed Congresswoman Jan Schakowsky to our third Learning Luncheon of 2021. She led an engaging discussion about the critical needs of new immigrants.

The discussion with Congresswoman Schakowsky was a catalyst for generating ideas on how to solve the challenges facing new immigrants. She suggested scheduling a Roundtable of organizations involved with integrating new immigrants, including state and local agencies and representatives. These conversations would identify critical issues facing refugees and ultimately propose solutions. BPB supports this initiative and is eager to partner with other organizations to explore creative ways to support our refugee community.

The Congresswoman supports the Biden Administration's efforts in resettling our Afghan allies and their families, as well as at-risk individuals. She commended the Administration for forward policy thinking and rebuilding federal agencies involved with refugee resettlement.

Watch the discussion on Vimeo: <https://vimeo.com/602100323>

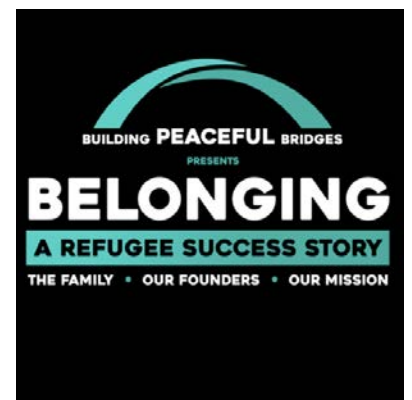


Congresswoman Jan Schakowsky leading a discussion about new immigrants.

Board Transitions

We are pleased to welcome Zeyad to our Advisory Board.

Zeyad was born in Baghdad, Iraq. He graduated from the University of Baghdad, B.S. Civil Engineering. He was an entrepreneur and business owner in Iraq. Zeyad married his childhood sweetheart, Bushra and they have a lovely family of four children. He became an American citizen in 2019. Currently, he is a Home Renovation Expert.





Roya Hakakian discussing *A Beginner's Guide to America: For the Immigrant and the Curious* with BPB Bridge Builders

Reading Refuge

Building Peaceful Bridges (BPB) was delighted to host Roya Hakakian at our third Reading Refuge Book Club. Roya led our discussion about her book, *A Beginner's Guide to America: For the Immigrant and the Curious*. This event was co-sponsored by Hakafa, a Reform Jewish Congregation in the Chicago area.

Roya explained the reasons for writing her book, a large factor being the anti-immigrant political climate and the Muslim travel ban, which included Iran. She described her experiences as a former Irani refugee and her journey of belonging in the U.S. As a Persian Jew, she mentioned how her identity played a factor in writing this book as she comes from a long line of descendants who have had to constantly flee their homes because of their identity.

In discussion of the critical situation in Afghanistan, Roya provided her insight and shared the similarities between what is happening now and what she witnessed during the Iran Revolution of 1979. She pointed out that women and girls experience the most negative impact and this dire reality sets the nation back decades.

Watch the discussion on [Vimeo](#)

"If you are lucky, the officer will look up with a smile and say, "Welcome to America!"... though America is not yet your home, it is the place where you have come to breathe, find peace, and rest at last."

-Roya Halakian

Call to Action - Fall Clothing Drive

When BPB called on donors to support our Bridge to Belonging's Fall Clothing Drive, the response was phenomenal. We received over 40 bags of clothing. BPB volunteers collected, sorted, and delivered warm clothing, boots, hats, and coats to BPB families. One refugee family of seven was able to join our efforts and pick out clothing for themselves. It was a wonderful experience to work with them. BPB shared warm clothing with several organizations including ICNA Relief and the Rohingya Cultural Center. Thanks to our donors and volunteers' efforts, many refugee families will be warm this winter.

As more refugee families arrive in our community, BPB continues to be called on by partner organizations to collect warm clothing. Next month we will collaborate with a local elementary school and religious organizations who have offered to collect and donate winter hats, gloves and coats. BPB is thrilled our community is working collectively to welcome new immigrants.



Fall
Clothing
Drive

Volunteer Spotlight

Nadia and Fatima have been amazing mentors for our Afghan family. They have built a wonderful relationship with the family and their children, who look up to them as older sisters. Nadia is currently at Chamberlain University earning her Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree. Fatima is at the University of Illinois at Chicago, pursuing a bachelor's degree in biochemical engineering.



Fatima Rashid



Nadia Alzerijawi

Call to Action - Act Now!



BPB is collecting boots for our families who will be experiencing their first winter in the U.S. Winter boots for men, women, and children will be accepted.

To donate, please contact us here: www.buildingpeacefulbridges.org/donate/

Thank you for supporting the BPB mission!

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OUR BELIEFS

Compassion bridges to Trust.
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