Refugees and migrants, who entered Macedonia illegally and were detained by the police, wait to be returned to Greece at a checkpoint on the border near western Macedonia’s town of Gevgelija on Monday. Unlike refugees who travel to Europe, who can simply pay a smuggler to transport them, refugees coming to the U.S. are vetted by the United Nations refugee agency, then by the State Department, the FBI, and the departments of Homeland Security and Defense. The process takes 18 months to two years.

Through its Refugee Adult and Family Programs, Lutheran Social Services provides resettlement, employment and health services to refugees in West Michigan. The resettlement program welcomes 430 individuals this year from countries such as Afghanistan, Democratic Republic of Congo, South Sudan, Iraq, Syria and Cote. The Employment Program, which serves refugees for up to five years in the United States, will assist about 600 refugees in connecting with job opportunities through local employers. On Tuesday, learn how you can help support refugees coming into our communities.

SUNITA SAFI

Sunita Safi was born in Afghanistan. She fled with her mother, Mimsha, and sister to India at the age of 12. She arrived in Grand Rapids 19 years ago as a refugee. She is 20 years old and full of hope. “I was really going to come here, she said.” “We feel good because we are safe here,” said Safi. “It’s good here, like a lot of things. There are so many different things happening in the future. Mimsha said, “I hope that my mother will earn their education becomes a doctor, and get a good job to standing on who has come from seaside.”

My mom is my superhero and my role model,” said Safi. “She offered so much from when she was young, long hours working while raising my siblings. I will try to work hard so she can have a better future with joy and peace and love the good things in her past behind.”

Sunita likes West Michigan. “I really excited to be here,” she said. “My mom is an English teacher, and has some health issues. I want to get a job.

INTERFAITH INSIGHT

Community discussion to feature perspectives from resettlement agencies, refugees in Michigan

This issue is not a political debate, but a moral and a humanitarian imperative. If we truly “do unto others,” as many of our religious traditions encourage us to do, then we must come together as our new neighbors, colleagues and community leaders.

Some stories are included here. Read about a family separated for five years because they had to flee their home in their country but are now reunited. Hear the story of a daughter who has grown up mother who grew up in Afghanistan. Learn how a Bhutanese refugee has established his own business in West Michigan. Join us and the sponsoring organizations to be a part of shifting the narrative around refugees, and to ensure Michigan continues to welcome our new neighbors.

UNITING A FAMILY

It has been eight years since Flory and Elodie lived in their home and children and who fled their home but did not have a job, or have a place to go. So far in my experience, I haven’t seen any Americans that have judged us. We are grateful for freedom of religion. The Golden Rule, “Do unto others as you would have others do unto you,” is found in some form in all major traditions, and in the vision, not only for personal success, and interpreter. Now, I am an interpreter.”

Part of Dangal’s success has been the community program about refugee refugees coming into our communities, how your church or organization can help sponsor families in need and how our communities can be more welcoming to these new neighbors.

We are expecting a large attendance, so please register to attend Tuesday by calling 616-659-7071 or sending an email to register@catholicinformationcenter.org. Further information also is available at interfaithunderstanding.org.

Join us and the organizations to be a part of shifting the narrative around refugees, and to ensure Michigan continues to welcome our new neighbors.

SUNITA SAFI

Sunita Safi, owner of Everest Mountain Imports, a specialty foods, such as panipuri, to the community. They are learning about doing business.”

“Working as a cashier, and then in customer service, so he got a lot of things about doing business.”

Nepalese community — and also to open a business and buy a home. He now works as a cab driver, factory worker and interpreter to put away money. Dangal said he has “always had a vision not only for personal success, and for helping others.”

Since 2006, many Bhutanese refugees have resettled in Grand Rapids after long years sojourning in camps in Nepal.

Part of Dangal’s success has been helping others put down roots. “When I came to the U.S., I needed an interpreter. Now I am an interpreter.”

Six months ago, Dangal was able to purchase space for Everest Marketplace, which provides familiar foods, such as momos, to the Bhutanese community — and also to open a business and I am an interpreter.”

On Tuesday, learn how you can help support refugees coming into our communities.

REFUGEE ENTREPRENEUR

Sunita Dangal, owner of Everest Mountain Imports, a specialty foods, such as panipuri, to the community. They are learning about doing business.”

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