



## OFFICE OF REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT

Dear colleagues,

As the Thanksgiving holiday approaches, I wanted to take this opportunity to give thanks to each and every one of you for your continued commitment to providing the utmost in service to those in need. Collectively this past year, we provided services to an estimated 70,000 refugees, 21,000 Cuban/Haitian Entrants, 28,000 asylees, 750 victims of trafficking, and nearly 58,000 unaccompanied minors--more than 175,000 persons in total. From direct service providers in our communities who provide the initial welcome to our country's newest arrivals, to the state, national and federal partners who support those programs and coordinate linkages at all levels, ORR's wide network of partners and stakeholders shows that it does indeed take a village.

Your daily work supports three key humanitarian programs that represent the ideals on which this country was founded: the resettlement of refugees who have fled persecution based on race, religion, identity or belief; assistance to victims of human trafficking and a far-reaching awareness campaign to end this inhumane practice, and the temporary care and custody of children who arrive at our borders unaccompanied by parent or legal guardian.

Thanksgiving is a celebration of many things, from unity and collaboration, to the simplest appreciation of life's gifts. It is also a time when many of us gather with our families--however we define the term--and celebrate not just the bounty of the feast before us, but also the people in our lives with whom we are privileged to share it.

Most of the children in the Unaccompanied Children's program who come to the United States join family members living in states across the nation, some of whom they haven't seen for years. For many refugees, asylees and victims of trafficking, family reunification is their primary goal after years or even decades of separation due to circumstances beyond their control. That desire to be with family is natural and familiar, even for those of us living free from the persecution that propels people to seek safer horizons.

This Thanksgiving, I hope that you all will be able to celebrate the holiday with family and good friends. I also encourage you to think about the people that we have collectively served in the past year, and know that the work you do means that many of them are likewise sitting down to dinner surrounded by their own loved ones.

As I've said many times before, the mission of the Office of Refugee Resettlement embodies the true meaning of public service to our country, and specifically to vulnerable unaccompanied children and refugees. Your daily efforts make an indelible impact and visible difference in people's lives, and each and every one of you contributes in unique and very important ways to this work. I greatly appreciate not only the compassion you show and the dignity you bestow upon our mission, but also the skill and dedication each and every one of you brings to the table as we work toward our shared goals.

As always, I am honored to work with you all in fulfilling our humanitarian mission of providing assistance to vulnerable children and refugees, and thank you again for your dedication and exceptional efforts. Happy Thanksgiving!

Thank you,

Eskinder Negash  
Director  
Office of Refugee Resettlement  
Administration for Children and Families  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

ADMINISTRATION FOR  
**CHILDREN & FAMILIES**  
OFFICE OF REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT  
901 D Street, SW, Washington, District of Columbia 20447  
202.401.9246