

# Catholic Charities and Archdiocese to Resettle Refugees

## Archdiocese of Newark to Continue Resettling Refugees — Here's How to Help

By Mary Mann Jan-26-2017

Village Green NJ

Plans by the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Newark to [resettle 51 refugees](#) — many of whom are Syrian — in the Newark area in the coming months is continuing as planned at this point, according to archdiocesan officials, despite an Executive Order signed by President Donald Trump yesterday. The efforts include an information meeting to be held at Our Lady of Sorrows parish in South Orange on Tuesday, Jan. 31.

As local resident Nina Cox posted on Swap SOMA Lounge recently, “[The archdiocese is] looking to local communities to come join them in their efforts.” Cox has assured Maria Blancheri, who is coordinating the archdiocese’s resettlement efforts, “that any refugee family would find a very supportive and welcoming community” in South Orange and Maplewood.

For her part, Blancheri, who is senior grants specialist with the Catholic Charities organization of the archdiocese, has said that the resettlement program is continuing as planned: “At this point, we are proceeding ‘business as usual’ until we are told otherwise by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops,” Blancheri wrote in an email in response to an inquiry from Village Green. “The resettlement program has been around for decades and I don’t see it going away entirely. There may be limits on countries or less refugees resettled overall, but we are still moving forward with our program.”

Archdiocesan spokesman Jim Goodness echoed Blancheri’s remarks, writing, “I am unaware of any change at this time. My understanding is that the program will be continuing.”

According to a December report by [NorthJersey.com](#), the 51 refugees to be resettled in 2017 will come from Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Plans are to settle the refugees in Essex and Hudson counties. Blancheri said that none of the refugees are in the U.S. as yet: “We were expecting our first family in March.”

For her part, Cox is excited that the South Orange-Maplewood community can expand efforts to aid refugee families beyond existing programs spearheaded by [local high school students](#) and [a joint effort by Congregation Beth El, Oheb Shalom Congregation and Temple Sharey Tefilo-Israel](#) in South Orange. “The initiative of our local synagogues to help resettle a Syrian refugee family in our community ... has been so inspiring!” wrote Cox.

The resettlement efforts continue despite the fact that President Trump signed an executive order on Jan. 25 “to indefinitely block Syrian refugees from entering the United States and to institute a temporary halt on all refugees from the rest of the world,” according to [the New York Times](#). (See the text of the Executive Order [here](#).)

Blancheri will hold an information session on Tuesday, Jan 31 from 6-8:30 p.m. at Our Lady of Sorrows, 217 Prospect Street, South Orange, NJ, for anyone interested in helping the archdiocesan resettlement efforts. The orientation is open to all, regardless of faith.

Examples of volunteer opportunities to be discussed at the meeting include:

- Having a “virtual” housewarming where people bring donated items for a family
- Helping set up the apartment prior to arrival
- Cooking a meal (ethnically appropriate) for their first night of arrival
- Driving a refugee to an appointment (doctors, grocery shopping)
- (For those who speak their language) Accompanying the refugee to an appointment to translate
- Tutoring adults and children in English
- Helping with resume writing / job search / interviewing

Blancheri is also open to hearing new ideas from our community. She is also working on creating an online wish list for items the families will need which Cox says she will post to Swap SOMA Lounge.

<http://villagegreennj.com/community/archdiocese-newark-continue-resettling-refugees-heres-help/>