



Iskashitaa Refugee Network

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January 31, 2013

Supervisor Richard Elias
130 W. Congress
11th Floor, District 5
Tucson, AZ 85701

Dear Supervisor Elias:

Recently, at the culmination of several strategic planning and board meetings, Iskashitaa Refugee Network's leadership solidified our unique mission and significance to the community. We are now focused on assisting refugees using food as a common denominator, opportunity for cross culture exchange and education as well as a tool for learning English, job training, Tucson orientation, and community building critical to new refugees healing adjustment. Iskashitaa Refugee Network is committed to aligning our resources to best support our harvesting and culinary arts programs.

We are seeking \$999 to assist us in funding our harvesting program this citrus season, which minimizes food waste in Pima County and feeds thousands of families annually. This program depends on volunteers, and therefore on volunteer coordination. Part of this funding would be applied to Iskashitaa's cost share for our VISTA member, who coordinates the volunteers. Remaining funds would be used to help offset transportation costs for our harvesting activities.

Due to the cancelation of the Community Food Bank's gleaning program this season, demand for our services has dramatically increased. We want to be able to fully respond to these calls in order to maximize the produce harvested and therefore, the number of individuals fed by our work. In order to do this, we will need to increase the number of volunteers we work with. Our fuel costs will also increase as we execute more harvests. During most years, CFB's gleaning program collects three times the amount of total produce we harvest. The produce we harvest feeds the families of the refugees we work with, as well as clients of a dozen local non-profits with hunger programs. The Catalina Magnet High School, Amani International School, and Clinica Amistad are just a few of the organizations we supply with fresh local produce. We also work with Temp. Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Res Care clients by providing culturally appropriate on-the-job training and community service opportunities for their refugee clients. Allowing them a unique opportunity to give back to the community that gave them refuge and second opportunity at a healthy, safe and secure life. These activities with Pima County's family-run farms and organic orchards provides much need support during harvests while connecting refugees and city folk back to their agricultural roots- for refugees this is healing and allows them to breathe fresh air and see more of the community while making friendships.

Iskashitaa Refugee Network's harvesting program is an asset to the residents of Pima County. Please assist us in expanding this program during our busiest season yet.

Sincerely,

Barbara Eiswerth, Ph.D.
Director, Iskashitaa Refugee Network
Harvesting Hope, Empowering Change

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