

December 18, 2006

Dear Friend:

A home should be a refuge. No one appreciates this more than refugees. Forced by persecution and violence to flee their original homes, refugees wait as long as 15 years to have a chance to resettle in a new country where they can live without fear. Their hope is a place where their children can play safely, where they can walk to the bus and grocery store without being harassed, and where neighbors are friendly and landlords care about their properties.

Interfaith Refugee Ministry (IRM) provides many essential services to refugees: case management, English classes, job assistance, children's education, and arranging health care. But the task of finding affordable decent housing is the most problematic. Limited resettlement funds and a refugee's low income usually points to the city's least expensive apartments — which all too often come with roaches, mice, leaky roofs, unresponsive landlords, and high crime rates.

But this is not the way for Connecticut to welcome its newest Americans, and it's not the way for refugees to start on the road to self-sufficiency. IRM is determined to find clean and safe housing for refugees as they transition to life in America. Our approach costs more, but it's worth it. Safety and health, and the accompanying peace of mind, are too important to be sacrificed for mere affordability. Our policy is to find small modest apartments in safe neighborhoods near good schools, and supplement the refugees' rent payments for 6 to 12 months. **We hope you agree and will make a donation to this worthy cause.**

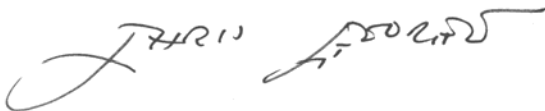
If you donate this month, your gift will be matched dollar-for-dollar, thanks to the "Make a Good Gift Better Campaign," launched by the Community Foundation of Greater New Haven. Every dollar you contribute will double. If you've considered making a tax- deductible donation to IRM, this is the perfect time.

Just last week we welcomed a family of seven Somalis to New Haven. They survived a brutal civil war, a devastating famine, and 15 years of waiting in refugee camps. Now that they have been invited by our government to start a new life in the United States, they shouldn't have to worry about drive-by shootings, a cold apartment, drug dealers on their doorstep, or a neglectful absentee landlord.

Fortunately, with the help of generous donors we were able to place this family in a clean and safe apartment with a responsible landlord on a friendly street. The parents are able to walk to English class at the IRM office and the children can walk to the nearby school. Please help us do the same for the other refugee families in New Haven.

This holiday season, we ask you to give a gift that brings warmth, safety, and health to a family of new Americans. Give them a place they can call *home*.

Thank you,



Chris George
Executive Director