



# A Proclamation of the City of Kirkland

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## Proclaiming June 20, 2023, as World Refugee Day in Kirkland

**WHEREAS**, in Resolution R-5240, the Kirkland City Council declared that the City aspires to be a safe, welcoming, and inclusive city for all people, including those who have left their homelands as refugees; and

**WHEREAS**, Kirkland believes that all who immigrate to the United States deserve liberty and to pursue happiness, and recognizes volunteer organizations such as Kirkland Interfaith Network and congregations such as Holy Spirit Lutheran Church, Holy Family Catholic Church, St. John Mary Vianney Catholic Church, and Kol Ami: A Center for Jewish Life, who assist people who have endured the unimaginable to pursue a better life here; and

**WHEREAS**, immigrants sometimes arrive in our community with so little, and volunteers help these most-vulnerable refugees with emergency food bags, hygiene products, bus tickets and grocery or clothing gift cards; and

**WHEREAS**, these and other community volunteers work to equip refugees and immigrants with the skills, resources, and support they need to live fulfilling lives; help them learn English, find a place to live and work, and gain citizenship; and help them in rising above their challenges, build upon the strength and courage that got them here, and support their hopes to become vital contributors to our communities; and

**WHEREAS**, in addition to local volunteer professionals in the greater Seattle area who provide much needed services to asylum seekers and resources, nationally-recognized agencies such as Refugees Northwest, a program of Lutheran Community Services NW, and other non-profits assist with immigration challenges; and


**WHEREAS**, asylum seekers face numerous challenges, including not being able to work for an average of 18 months after arriving in the United States and not being eligible for any federal benefits, and so are vulnerable to food insecurity and homelessness; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Kirkland, with the help and sponsorship of its faith communities, has welcomed and assisted refugees and asylum seekers from Laos and Vietnam in the 1970s through today's refugees from Syria, Afghanistan, and Ukraine; and

**WHEREAS**, World Refugee Day was first proclaimed by the United Nations and celebrated on June 20, 2001, to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and to shine a light on the rights, needs and dreams of refugees, helping to mobilize political will and resources so refugees can not only survive but also thrive;

**NOW, THEREFORE**, Mayor Penny Sweet, on behalf of the City Council and with gratitude for all Kirkland community members who have done this good work, do hereby proclaim June 20, 2023, as World Refugee Day in Kirkland, Washington, and call upon all community members to watch for and participate in opportunities to help these most vulnerable individuals and families.

Signed this 20th day of June 2023

  
Penny Sweet, Mayor

