

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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World Refugee Day South Haven

SOUTH HAVEN, MI — The public is invited to recognize World Refugee Day on Monday, June 20, from 7:00-8:30 p.m. at Lake Michigan College, South Haven Campus in Room 141 and 142. The South Haven Refugee Task Force in collaboration with the South Haven Diversity Coalition, Bethany Christian Services of Michigan, and Lake Michigan College South Haven Campus will host a panel discussion describing the current plight of refugees.

World Refugee Day was established in 2000 by the United Nations General Assembly to commemorate the strength, courage and perseverance of millions of refugees forced to flee their homes under the threat of persecution, conflict and violence.

Guests will hear stories of former refugees and meet refugee foster care families. Attendees will also learn about various ways to assist refugees locally. Reception at 6:30 with desserts provided by Café Julia.

The South Haven Refugee Task Force, a recently formed group united by their common interest, is in the planning stages for developing various ways community members can contribute and offer refugee support.

Special guest speaker Ramea Almubarak, graduate student at Western Michigan, will be speaking on her family's experience fleeing Syria and their current status.

Balla Hounakey, Caseworker for Bethany Christian Services, will speak on her personal experience coming to the United States and being in the Refugee Foster Care program.

Julie Ludwig, South Haven Refugee Task Force member, will discuss the mission and scope of the local group which provides opportunities for community involvement for refugee relief. According to Ludwig, "The refugee crisis in Europe is horrifying and so distant it is difficult to imagine people in Michigan can do anything to offer assistance. Yet, we have heard there are specific opportunities to help."

Joel Bell and Alisa Otto, Bethany Christian Services staff, will provide information on how Bethany Christian Services, a global nonprofit organization, brings families together and keeps families together. Bethany has responded to the need of families forced to flee their homes due to war, natural disasters, or persecution through their Refugee and Immigrant Foster Care program along with other refugee services in Kalamazoo, Michigan.

This is a free and family-friendly event open to the public.

Contact (269) 993-2728 or email julia@heading-home.org for more information about the panel discussion. Lake Michigan College, South Haven Campus is located at 125 Veterans Blvd. in South Haven.

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