A LETTER FROM THE CEO

Friends,

This past year was one of change for Refugee Services of Texas, both for the organization and for resettlement in general. RST’s long-time CEO, Aaron Rippenkroeger, moved with his family to Arizona in early 2018, and I stepped into his shoes in July to lead this amazing organization through a difficult time.

And while it has been a difficult time, it has also been a year of opportunity and change. In FY18, because of unprecedented changes and reductions in the resettlement program from the federal level, RST helped welcomed around 800 individuals, by far the lowest number in over a decade. But we also increased services to survivors of trafficking, helped reunify families at the border, and grew our immigration legal services. We are diversifying funding and populations served to ensure that we are sustainable and efficient, and able to answer the call to ramp up resettlement activities. A call, we know, will be coming.

Though I don’t come from the resettlement world, I bring 25 years of non-profit experience, running programs and agencies, large and small, in Austin and Houston. I grew up in Austin, and come from refugees. My great grandmother, Fania Kruger, helped Jews escape the violence of pogroms in Russia in the 1900’s, until she and her family were forced to flee, eventually landing in Texas.

I am excited to join Refugee Services of Texas, who has been helping welcome those fleeing violence and oppression for over 40 years. In my first few months, I traveled across the state to visit our many sites and meet all of our people. I have helped do airport pick-ups in Austin and Houston, and assisted with apartment set-ups.

In conjunction with a growing board and an amazing leadership team, we are building fundraising systems and processes, improving our finance and accounting operations, formalizing governance procedures, and working on long-term sustainability.

I know that I was only with RST for the last three months of this past fiscal year, so I will have a lot more to say next year. Thank you to our staff, our board, our volunteers, our partners, our supporters, and to the families who put their trust in us to work with them to start a new life in a foreign land.

Russell A. Smith, LMSW
CEO of Refugee Services of Texas

OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Wes Magruder, President
Dallas, TX

Erin Koechel, Vice President/Treasurer
Dallas, TX

Eli VanOort, Secretary
Dallas, TX

Philip Hiatt Haigh
Dallas, TX

Patricia L. Wooldridge
Dallas, TX

Holly C. Bellah
Amarillo, TX
REFUGEE SERVICES OF TEXAS: BY THE NUMBERS

68.5 million forcibly displaced people worldwide.

40 million internally displaced people
25.4 million given refugee status
3.1 million asylum seekers

3,352 number of refugees resettled in TX in 2018

Each year, the number of persons who may be admitted to the United States as refugees is established by the President of the United States in consultation with Congress. For fiscal year 2018, the Presidential Determination for the Refugee Resettlement Program was set at 30,000, the lowest in history.

38% of all refugees resettled in Texas were served by RST.

3% of all refugees resettled in the U.S. were served by RST.
RST's Survivors of Trafficking Empowerment Program (STEP) and 806 ACTS (Anti-Trafficking Collaborative of the Texas Panhandle and South Plains) Programs are designed to help survivors of trafficking from victim identification through achievement of self-sufficiency.

The demographic of RST's STEP & 806 ACTS clients across Texas:

- 79,000 current minor victims of sex trafficking in Texas
- 234,000 current workers who are victims of labor trafficking in Texas
- 313,000 current victims of human trafficking in Texas

298 TOTAL CLIENT REFERRALS

- Domestic: 28.2%
- International: 71.8%
- Female: 79.8%
- Male: 20.2%
- Identified LGBTQ: 2
- Adult: 68.4%
- Minor: 31.6%
Events

Highlights

- Amplify Austin
- World Refugee Day
- North Texas Giving Day
- Open House
- Big Give Houston
- Giving Tuesday
- Panhandle Gives

AMPLIFY AUSTIN
RST Austin participated in Amplify Austin for its 4th year and raised over $23,000 from 274 donors during the yearly 24-hour online fundraising event!

WORLD REFUGEE DAY
World Refugee Day celebrations were hosted in each community that RST serves in partnership with other refugee resettlement agencies and service providers!

NORTH TEXAS GIVING DAY
RST participated in North Texas Giving Day for its third year, raising $13,240 in just 18 hours! The theme for 2018 was Fund the Future, Together and over 120 donors generously gave.

OPEN HOUSES
5 of our 6 sites across Texas held Open Houses for clients, volunteers, donors and community members in 2018 with resource tables from both RST and community partners, musical and dancing performances, games for the kids, and plenty of food and drinks representing the various cultures RST serves!

BIG GIVE HOUSTON, PANHANDLE GIVES AND GIVING TUESDAY
Giving Tuesday, Big Give Houston and The Panhandle Gives were the big triad of online fundraising days for RST! Not only did RST receive monetary donations on this day from our amazing donors in Houston and The Panhandle, donors from across the U.S. also took part in helping with purchases needed from each site’s Amazon Wishlists!

"If you help someone you’re going to be proud of yourself,” said Dastagir, RST client. “So this is what I do. I gave 2,800 people SIV papers to get to the United States and I brought 15 or 20 families to Refugee Services of Texas. If you help them out, they will never forget you.”

-Dastagir, SIV and RST Interpreter and Volunteer

"I am proud to run a refugee resettlement agency that helps individuals from all over the world who have been displaced from their homes by war and violence. I am proud that my neighbors – Jews, Christians, Muslims, Hindus, and so many others – embrace these refugee families and help them start a new life here in America.

-Russell A. Smith, LMSW CEO, Refugee Services of Texas
RST's Employment Services Program assists clients in achieving early economic self-sufficiency. RST is proud to provide support for our clients including resume and application assistance, job development and networking support, job-readiness classes, vocational training, interview coaching and follow-up after job placement. Our clients receive customized service plans based on skill sets, prior education and experience.

RST's Legal Immigration Program services are a compassionate response to the community need for affordable legal advocacy. The Austin and Dallas offices staff full-time immigration attorneys and legal assistants who provide a range of free and low-cost legal aid to all immigrant groups. Virtual immigration assistance is available in Fort Worth and Amarillo.

RST's Community Wellness Program (CWP) in Austin is the only mental health service provision program offered by any refugee resettlement agency in Texas. CWP offers individual, family and group counseling and support services to refugees, asylees, Cuban and Haitian entrants, special immigrant visa (SIVs) holders and the survivors of human trafficking community.
While maintaining our commitment to refugees, RST has been actively diversifying our programs and our funding, adding 480 NEW donors.
VOLUNTEERS

2,300+ Volunteers across Texas

7610.85 Number of volunteer hours given

135 Volunteer & Welcome Team Trainings

Top 5 Volunteer Opportunities:
- Airport Pickup
- Apartment Setup
- Donation Organization
- Client Transportation
- Mentorship

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

"I've especially enjoyed teaching folks how to use the Capital Metro bus system, since mobility allows refugees to travel to so many places as they make arrangements for their new lives. I've even run into refugees on the bus with whom I've been connected on previous volunteer missions!"

Austin Haller, Rockstar Volunteer
RST Austin

LOCATIONS

Refugee Services of Texas has 6 locations across the state to serve refugees, asylees and survivors of trafficking.

Administration
9241 LBJ Freeway
Suite 210
Dallas, TX 75243
T: (214) 821-4422
admin@rstx.org

Amarillo
1101 Fritch Highway
Amarillo, TX 79108
T: (806) 381-0099
amarillo@rstx.org

Austin
500 East St. Johns Ave.
Suite 1.280
Austin, TX 78752
T: (512) 472-9472
austin@rstx.org

Dallas
9696 Skillman
Suite 320
Dallas, TX 75243
T: (214) 821-4883
dallas@rstx.org

Fort Worth
4200 South Freeway
Suite 320
Fort Worth, TX 76115
T: (817) 413-3772
fortworth@rstx.org

Houston
7211 Regency Square Blvd.
Suite 203
Houston, TX 77036
T: (713) 644-6224
houston@rstx.org

Rio Grande Valley
51417 E. Austin St.
Harlingen, TX 78550
T: (512) 472-9472
lpacheco@rstx.org

OUR NATIONAL PARTNERS

Church World Service
Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service
Episcopal Migration Ministries