



Letters to Refugee Families



Moving to a new community presents many challenges, most especially when you are entering a culture that is really different from your own and where you may not speak the language. In order to help welcome the many Afghan refugees who are being settled into Ypsilanti and the surrounding areas, you can write them letters to tell them what you love about our community.

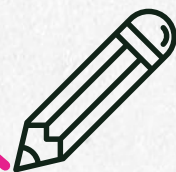
Afghan Refugees Hosted by EMU

In collaboration with Jewish Family Services of Washtenaw County (JFSWC), Eastern Michigan University is hosting about a dozen refugee families from Afghanistan on campus. The number of Afghan refugees increased when, following the U.S. military's withdrawal from Afghanistan in August 2021, the strict religious and militaristic group known as the Taliban took over, and the Afghan government collapsed. The Eastern Echo published an article about the refugee families coming to campus and about their needs shortly before they arrived. The article also reported that, overall, approximately 50,000 Afghan refugees are expected in the United States.

The goal of writing heartfelt cards and letters is to welcome these families into our community by sharing what we love most about Ypsilanti and its surrounding area. You can also Google Jewish Family Services of Washtenaw County's Resettlement and Immigration Services webpage or go directly to their webpage at <https://jfsann Arbor.org/resettlement-integration-services/> for information on how to further support their efforts.



Guide for Younger Writers



Postcard

For this activity, you will create your own postcard for these new families in our community.

Items you will need:

- A piece of cardstock or paper, folded to make a postcard-sized rectangle (ranges from 4"x6" to 6"x9")
- Pencils, crayons, markers, pens, or other favorite writing/coloring instruments

Instructions:

1. On the front of your postcard, draw a picture of anything that reminds you of your favorite things about Michigan or the city or town you live in. For example
 - a. What is your favorite place in or near your town? This might be a restaurant, park, store, or other place you like to visit. Draw a picture of this place, or of you doing something fun in this place.
 - b. What kinds of activities does your family like to do in the area? Draw a picture of something your family likes to do that others families might also enjoy.
 - c. What's another place in Michigan that you like to visit? Draw a picture of this place.
2. After you've drawn a picture, color it in. Focus on making your postcard bright and colorful.
3. On the back of your postcard, write a message. Get as creative as you'd like! Some ideas are below. You can also ask an adult for help.
 - a. Describe the place you drew on the front of the card and what is special to you about it.
 - b. Write a story about one of your favorite memories of something fun you did with your family or friends in the place you drew on the front of the card.
 - c. You can start out or end by welcoming them to Michigan or telling them you're happy they're here.
4. Make sure to sign your postcard with your first name!



Guide for Teen and Adult Writers



Welcome Note

In this activity, you will write a welcome letter to an Afghan refugee family or individual. This could take the form of a handwritten note or card.

Items you will need:

- Paper or card
- Pen or pencil

Instructions:

1. Think about why you are thankful to be living in Michigan and how you might share some of your favorite places and activities with these new members of the community. Some prompts to get you started include:
 - a. My favorite thing about living in Michigan is ...
 - b. My favorite thing to do on the weekend is ...
 - c. In the winter, I enjoy ... Or, in the summer, I enjoy ...
 - d. I like to travel to _____ with my friends (or family) because ...
 - e. I like my school because ...
 - f. My favorite food or place to eat is ...
 - g. I want to tell you about my favorite place in my city. It is ...
 - h. One of my favorite events every year is ...
2. Write your note! Start with, "Dear new community member." Continue with an opening like "I'm writing this note to welcome you to Michigan." Then write down some of your favorite things about your community and/or the state, your favorite places to go, or your favorite activities. You can conclude your note with well wishes such as "I hope you like Michigan (or maybe enjoy the natural beauty of Michigan) as much as I do."
3. You could create a drawing or other decorations to make your note stand out.
4. Sign your note with your first name.

