



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Hana Cowart
Gulf Coast JFCS Communications Manager
media@gcjfcs.org
727-503-7856

A gift of hope now can go farther: \$250,000 match empowers refugee lives

(CLEARWATER, FL – May 1, 2025) – This week marks ninety days since a Trump administration executive order indefinitely paused refugee resettlement, not just for clients served by Gulf Coast JFCS, but across the country. For the last three months, Gulf Coast JFCS has served the last refugee families to arrive through the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program, and they are now moving toward self-sufficiency.

For the past three months, Gulf Coast JFCS continued our commitment to humanitarian assistance welcoming 200 refugees who arrived before the pause. They are included in the approximately 2,000 refugee services clients being served today by Gulf Coast JFCS.

Under federal law, the required 90-days of initial reception and placement support provided to refugees is closed. Community assistance and financial support enabled Gulf Coast JFCS staff to continue aiding families in achieving self-sufficiency, including settling into new residences, rebuilding relationships with long-separated family members now reunited, enrolling children in school, and securing initial employment opportunities in Tampa Bay.

Although the future of U.S. refugee resettlement remains unclear, Gulf Coast JFCS continues to offer services and support for refugees, asylum seekers, special immigration visa holders, and other individuals and families who are legally in the United States but unable to return to their countries due to war and humanitarian crises. Many are encountering additional difficulties as legal status and work authorization are prematurely terminated, and long-standing protections are reduced. Gulf Coast JFCS refugee programs provide essential workforce development, behavioral health, and service systems navigation to assist our newest neighbors in America in achieving success and community integration.

To continue this work, Gulf Coast JFCS is proud to announce a \$250,000 match campaign designed to empower refugees, doubling donations to support brighter futures and improved quality of life for those impacted by the current refugee resettlement and integration crisis.

This campaign not only uplifts refugee lives but strengthens Gulf Coast JFCS' ability to respond effectively during the ongoing refugee crisis. We intend to continue to meet refugees' most basic needs in the wake of federal funding reductions. Every dollar donated to the Refugee Assistance THRIVE Fund will be matched up to \$250,000. Every contribution is impactful.

In the last two years, Gulf Coast JFCS has helped over 3,000 refugee - families and individuals - rebuild their lives.



Community donations matched by this \$250,000 gift will ensure support, helping refugees achieve self-sufficiency and thrive in their new communities. Contributions to the Refugee Assistance THRIVE Fund will address housing gaps, employment assistance, school enrollment, and English language training, prioritizing those most in need.

Help us uplift lives and donate today. Donations can be made online at www.GulfCoastJFCS.org/RefAssist or mailed to the Gulf Coast JFCS Refugee Assistance THRIVE Fund. Every donation between now and June 30th will be matched dollar for dollar and go directly to supporting refugee services at Gulf Coast JFCS.

It is imperative to end misinformation about the status of refugees. We offer several local experts who can answer related questions including:

- Sylvia Acevedo, Director, Refugee Wellness Programs
- Abdel Dana Roca, Director, Director of Refugee Integration Services
- Kelly Jordan, Vice President of Philanthropy
- Elke Cumming, Sr. Vice President for Programs and Administration

ABOUT GULF COAST JFCS: Protecting the vulnerable, strengthening families, and empowering individuals throughout the state of Florida since 1974, Gulf Coast is a Clearwater-based 501(c)3 organization supporting more than 30,000 diverse individuals and families of all backgrounds annually through its numerous programs across Greater Tampa Bay and beyond. Learn more about Gulf Coast JFCS at www.GulfCoastJFCS.org.