



Sowing seeds and growing roots: Khurshid's story



Khurshid Hussainy arrived at Cornell University four years ago as a refugee. With IWR's support, she has found community and branched out beyond her studies, growing roots that are both literal and figurative. Our [latest blog post](#) shares her story.

Spring Appeal success boosts support to IWR families

We are delighted to report that our Spring Appeal concluded with a total of \$62,603 raised from the community to support refugee and immigrant families in need among us. Our deepest thanks to all who contributed to making this appeal such a success.

In the wake of still unfolding developments to federal immigration policy under the Trump administration, members of the IWR community have been left highly vulnerable, with some families losing the right to work and thus all their income as a result of humanitarian parole being terminated for a growing list of countries. With your support, we are increasing aid on a case by case basis to help people meet basic needs, and we will continue to provide enhanced financial support for as long as we can while there is a need. The families affected are waiting to be eligible for their asylum-based work permits, which can be granted six months from the date their asylum claim was filed.

Current needs

An IWR family is expecting a baby in September. We are looking for the following items to donate:

- baby monitor
- rocking chair
- bottle warmer
- diapers: newborn and size 1

Additional items we are seeking for IWR families:

- small ironing board
- iron
- box and table top fans

To donate, please contact our Welcome Home team at welcome.home@ithacawelcomesrefugees.org.

For up to date information on items we are seeking, check the [Current Needs for Families](#) page on our website, or follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) or [Bluesky](#).

Experienced displacement? IWR mural project seeks your input



We invite people of all ages with lived experience of displacement to input thoughts and ideas into the design of our mural project through **hands-on workshops with artist Hugo Medina running through August**. For details, contact Development Director Leila Wilmers at leilaw@ithacawelcomesrefugees.org. Please share this message with refugees and immigrants you know who might be interested in taking part.

New chance to enter IWR photo competition for 2026 calendar!

We continue IWR's decennial anniversary year with a new effort to source and share community impressions of Ithaca's inclusive spirit. In the spring, we

launched a photo competition inviting members of the public to submit their snaps on this theme. Having received few entries, we are now [re-launching the project](#) with expanded outreach to encourage groups and individuals of all ages to take part. Our goal is to create a 2026 calendar celebrating and promoting local inclusivity.

Want to make this a fun activity for your team, club, social group, or kids' summer camp? Know a place where we can advertise the competition to reach more potential participants? We would love to hear from you! Write to IWR Development Director Leila Wilmers at leilaw@ithacawelcomesrefugees.org. You can also submit entries by email to this address. See competition rules on our [website](#), along with a list of prizes for the best photos, donated by local businesses. The new deadline for entries is **September 22, 2025**.

Use your voice

Ongoing federal changes to immigration policy hang heavy over our community, leaving ever more groups in the limbo of newly insecure or unclear immigration status. While it is easy to feel helpless, there are real channels for helping improve our displaced neighbors' chances by exercising our democratic rights. Earlier this week it was confirmed that Temporary Protected Status for Afghanistan has been [terminated](#), after the move was earlier delayed by an [appeals court stay](#). This puts thousands of Afghans in the US at risk of losing the right to work and deportation. Please call your elected representatives and ask them to support an extension of TPS for Afghanistan! If you do, please take the opportunity to also advocate against the systematic dismissal of asylum claims and deportation of claimants, [planned by the federal administration](#).

Concert to raise funds for hospital in Ukraine

Enjoy an evening of Ukrainian folk music and support medical assistance to victims of the war in Ukraine by attending this upcoming concert in Ithaca!

Kommuna Lux

An urban folk band from Odesa, Ukraine

A concert for Ukraine



TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 2, 2025

7 p.m.

First Unitarian Society of Ithaca

306 N. Aurora St., Ithaca

Tickets: \$25 / \$20 if purchased by 8/15



Please make a donation to a Rotary project to purchase treatment beds (each costing \$2,500) for the burn center at Kramatorsk City Hospital in the Donetsk region of eastern Ukraine. You can donate at the link below or at the concert.
<https://www.every.org/kmlx/f/burn-unit-beds-for-front>



IWR in the community

This month IWR was honored to speak at a meeting of Area Congregations Together, a multi-faith association committed to local and global community service, drawn from religious groups in Tompkins County with wide range of perspectives. Programs Coordinator Leigh Bacher discussed current issues facing refugees, IWR's work, and ways in which people can help. If you lead a community that would like to host a talk from IWR to learn about these topics, please get in touch.

Gratitude

A shoutout to Rick Manning who organized a heart-warming summer concert fundraiser in aid of IWR programs, and to all the performers - Burns & Kristy,

Sommers & Manning, and Carlos Gutierrez - who made it a delightful event!
Our thanks also to everyone who came along and helped to raise \$2069
towards our Spring Appeal in the course of the evening.



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