



## Why I Do This: A Perspective from an IWR Supporter



IWR's work is grounded in a community of people from many different walks of life who share a commitment to our mission: to partner with newly arrived refugees and immigrants as they rebuild their lives in Tompkins County. In this month's blog post, we are excited to share the story of one IWR supporter, Mihal Ronen. Mihal is a retired ICSD school teacher who has called Ithaca home for 30 years. She shares insights on IWR's cause from her own life, and her motivation for supporting IWR over the years. [Read her story](#) here.

---

## Celebrating IWR's Photo Competition Winners



We are delighted to announce the winners of our photo competition on the theme of Ithaca's spirit of welcome, marking 10 years of IWR's existence! The winning photograph, above, is titled 'Rally on the Commons, Feb 7th 2025', and was taken by Joe Schlimmer. Our second and third prizes were awarded to Vasant Laplam and Yuliia Karpysyn. Congratulations to all three and thank you to everyone who submitted an entry! Thank you also to the competition sponsors [Discover Cayuga Lake](#), [Sunbeam Candles](#) and [Odyssey Bookstore](#) for donating prizes. All the pictures we collected will be used in IWR communications to share our mission and grow our community of supporters.

---

## IWR in the Community

This month, IWR has joined concerned community voices in advocating against the use of AI-powered police cameras, which have been installed on roads by Flock Safety in recent months under contracts with the City of Ithaca and Tompkins County. While the intended purpose of the cameras may be to reduce crime, the technology endangers immigrants in general because it could be used by immigration agents to track people on the basis of algorithms. The growth of mass surveillance through the use of Flock Safety cameras [should be a concern to everyone](#), and immigrants are among groups subject to political targeting that are particularly vulnerable to its misuse. IWR Executive Director Casey Verderosa submitted a public comment on this subject at a Common

Council meeting of the City of Ithaca and at a Tompkins County Public Safety meeting. At the County level, officials recently [accepted state funding](#) for upkeep of Flock Safety cameras for the next year, but local debate on the future of this surveillance system continues. Consider lending your voice on this subject at upcoming local government meetings.

---

## Current Needs

We are organizing moves and collecting furniture and housewares for two households this month. Please check the following needs lists and reach out through the form if you have something to donate.

- [Needs list for a family of 5](#)
- [Needs list for a single individual](#)

We are also seeking **children's coats, hats and gloves** for IWR families! Please drop off these items at the IWR winter wear drive collection box at [Alphabet Soup](#), 171 E. State St.

We welcome donations of **gift cards from grocery stores** in the area that we can pass on to families we are working with who are struggling with food insecurity. Please note the amount on the face of the gift card and mail it to Ithaca Welcomes Refugees, 315 N. Cayuga St., Ithaca, NY14850.

If you have **gently used baby and children's items**, please donate them to the Mama Goose & Jillian's Drawers store on Clinton Street and add any store credit to IWR's account. Check the [Mama Goose schedule](#) for drop-off dates.

For questions about donations, please contact our Welcome Home team at [welcome.home@ithacawelcomesrefugees.org](mailto:welcome.home@ithacawelcomesrefugees.org).

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

---



# BUSKING FOR JUSTICE

**Local musicians put out the basket for humanitarian aid.**

*All donations fund legal aid and bail for immigrants impacted by the threat of deportation.*

First Fridays 5:30 – 7 pm  
Café DeWitt in the DeWitt Mall, Ithaca  
*Café DeWitt will offer food for purchase.*

**September 5 – Naomi Sommers & Rick Manning**

*Naomi Sommers, vocals, guitar and Rick Manning, vocals, fiddle, mandolin*

**October 3 – Deep Tones for Peace**

*Tristen Jarvis, double bass; Drew Martin, Sax; Ken O'Rourke, percussion*

**November 7 – The Makers Duo**

*Nate Silas Richardson guitar/vocals; Lydia Garrison fiddle/banjo/vocals*

**December 5 – Cayuga Vocal Ensemble & Ithaca College Jazz Vocal Ensemble**

*Cayuga Vocal Ensemble selected members directed by Adam Perl  
Ithaca College Jazz Vocal Ensemble directed by John White*

For more information, text Jayne Demakos at 607-256-9488

***No cages. No silence.  
Compassion, Solidarity, and Due Process.***

---

## Jewelry Donations Collection Continues ahead of Fall Fundraiser for IWR



The much-awaited fall jewelry sale fundraiser will take place on November 22 in the First Baptist Church of Ithaca, with all proceeds going to IWR programs. There is still time to donate gently used jewelry for the sale! Contact Debbie at 607 279-7174 (Dpbenzer@twcny.rr.com) or Yvonne 607-592-2799. More details [here](#).



*Copyright © 2025 Ithaca Welcomes Refugees, All rights reserved.*

Call us: 607-288-3815

If you know someone who might be interested in this newsletter, please send it on to them. If you received this newsletter as a forward and would like to subscribe, please click [here](#).

Want to change how you receive these emails?  
You can update your preferences or unsubscribe from this list.

