



THE CENTER<sup>SM</sup>

201 Bleecker Street | Utica, New York 13501 | 315.738.1083 | [TheCenterUtica.org](http://TheCenterUtica.org)

**For Immediate Release**

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**World Refugee Day Virtual Run/Walk**

The Center (formerly the Mohawk Valley Resource Center for Refugees) and presenting sponsors; Fidelis Care, CNY Arts, and Bank of Utica invite the public to join them in recognizing World Refugee Day on Saturday, June 20<sup>th</sup>, 2020. Observed every year, World Refugee Day provides an opportunity to honor the courage of refugees and recognize their resilience in building new lives in communities throughout the United States. The Center will be joined by refugee resettlement agencies across New York State to commemorate World Refugee Day 2020, raise awareness, and raise dollars. These agencies provide direct services to thousands of our most vulnerable, build community, support resiliency and honor the dignity of all human beings with their work every day. Partner agencies include:

The Center, Utica  
Catholic Charities of Buffalo  
Catholic Family Center, Rochester  
International Institute of Buffalo  
Jewish Family Service of Buffalo and Erie County  
Journey's End Refugee Services, Buffalo  
U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants, Albany

"A Walk in Their Words" will provide participants the opportunity to listen to refugee and immigrant audio stories during the virtual walk/run and hear the personal experiences and journeys of individuals from many different regions of the world. Listen to the courageous and inspiring journeys of those who have left or been forced to flee their home in hope of a safe and brighter future.

*When Obaida was 6 years-old, her home was bombed and she and her family were forced to escape to a refugee camp in Pakistan, where she lived for six years. She learned English through her beloved ESL classes and graduated high school a year early because of her hard work and dedication. After having three children, she was determined to go to college. Now, she tells her story to her children.*

*Samir was presented with an opportunity to work with an Iraqi freedom group as an interpreter for the US Army. Though he had a difficult time moving his family to the United States, he feels that it was the best decision he has ever made. After encountering a kind couple at the JFK airport, he knew that he would be safe and happy in the US.*

*Tek is a self-described family man from Bhutan. He and his family were forced to flee the nation under*

**Many Cultures. One Community.**



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*government orders. His family struggled in a refugee camp for eighteen years, until they were accepted as refugees in the United States in 2011. He wants to improve the lives of his four children in the U.S. and hopes that Americans will accept his family into their hearts.*

The Center's Executive Director, Shelly Callahan, is proud to be a part of a statewide virtual event that "recognizes the extraordinary journeys that individuals and families have endured to survive and build a new life in the United States. Refugees bring their hope, resilience, courage, as well as their talents and skills, which truly enrich our community in immeasurable ways that I am grateful for every day".

For a \$30 minimum donation, individuals can participate from anywhere!

- Walk or run on your treadmill
- Take a walk or run in your neighborhood
- Run in the park, but please be sure to follow all County or State regulations, as well as the CDC's guidelines of social distancing.
- Receive a virtual gift bag with your registration!

Go to [www.awalkintheirwords.org](http://www.awalkintheirwords.org) for more information and to register for the event.

*The Center is a nonprofit organization dedicated to assisting refugees, immigrants, and Limited English Proficient (LEP) individuals throughout the integration process and helps them achieve independence and self-sufficiency by developing products and services that enable us to build community with many cultures. Since its inception in 1981, the organization has been instrumental in stabilizing the area's declining population, fostering significant economic growth, and cultivating a thriving, vibrant and inclusive multicultural community.*

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