

Families separated by the U.S.-Mexico border reunite at the Rio Grande in 2017 with a hug that lasts four minutes.

OPEN ARMS IN TIMES OF CRISIS

Decade after decade since 1939, crises have pushed LIRS to turn compassion into competence. As tumult caused thousands to flee their homelands for safety, peace, and opportunity elsewhere, we became experts in the work of welcome. Over time, we have provided support to over 500,000 refugees and migrants. Our staff, affiliates, and volunteers have helped to resettle families devastated by war and to reunite children and parents traumatized by family separation. Today, the long welcome might begin with a warm meal, a plush toy, and a soft bed. With our ongoing support, migrants, asylum seekers, unaccompanied refugee minors, and humanitarian parolees become our coworkers, classmates, neighbors, and friends.



Lutheran Immigration
and Refugee Service

**LIRS WELCOMES YOUR
PARTNERSHIP AND SUPPORT.**

Andrew Steele

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GENERATIONS OF WELCOME



1972 UGANDA

After Ugandan dictator Idi Amin expels 75,000 citizens from their country, the U.S. accepts 2,000 as "parolees." LIRS resettles 600 new arrivals as a result.



1939

FOUNDED BY LUTHERANS FOR LUTHERAN REFUGEES, LIRS QUICKLY WIDENS ITS REACH.



1990s

THE BALKANS

We help restore a sense of home to some of the more than 1.5 million civilians displaced by armed conflict, ethnic cleansing, and aerial bombings in the former Yugoslavia.

1940-1950s EUROPE

LIRS resettles 30,263 Displaced Persons from Germany and Eastern Europe at the end of World War II. In 1956, more than 50,000 people flee Hungary. We resettle over 1,500 refugees.

1975 VIETNAM

Within weeks of the fall of Saigon, we grow exponentially, transforming from a four-person team into a crisis-response organization with a staff that is 100 strong. By year's end, we have overseen the resettlement of more than 15,000 Vietnamese refugees. In the words of Dan Larsen, an LIRS staffer who found families across the U.S. to host Vietnamese refugee families, "It's not just a job – it's a calling."



1980

LIRS HITS THE 100,000 MARK IN REFUGEES RESETTLED SINCE WORLD WAR II.

1959 CUBA

Fidel Castro's rise to power triggers an exodus of refugees seeking asylum. LIRS assists in the resettlement of the 100,000 Cubans who were airlifted to Florida.



2010s **AROUND THE WORLD**

We continue the legacy of compassion by welcoming refugees from Syria, Afghanistan, Burma, Tibet, Thailand, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ukraine and beyond.



2020s

OUR PRESENT AND EVERLASTING COMMITMENT

With the capacity to respond to crisis built into our organization, LIRS now has the foresight and strength to avert disaster. When the United States announced plans to withdraw from Afghanistan in 2021, we anticipated the need to help our Afghan allies, mobilizing over 45,000 volunteers to aid in resettlement and advocate for long term support. We continue to focus on family reunification and foster care, as well as our call to action on issues like climate migration, hyper aware that with increased flooding, wildfire, and famine, the rate of displacement will only intensify. We are more prepared than ever to open our arms in welcome. The work of the last 80 years is only the beginning.



2018

LIRS IS ONE OF ONLY TWO ORGANIZATIONS CALLED UPON BY THE U.S. GOVERNMENT TO ADDRESS THE FAMILY SEPARATION CRISIS AT THE U.S.-MEXICO BORDER.

2000s **SUDAN**

We begin welcoming the "Lost Boys and Girls" – young Sudanese refugees separated from their families while fleeing civil war.



**CONTACT LIRS TODAY TO LEARN MORE
AND BECOME AN ADVOCATE FOR REFUGEE
RESETTLEMENT IN THE UNITED STATES. →**



Lutheran Immigration and
Refugee Service (LIRS)
welcomes newcomers who
seek safety, support, and a
share in the American dream.

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