



Impact Report:

As of 2016, a record 65.5 million people were designated as refugees across the world. The city of Chicago is one of the top ten cities in the United States which settles the most refugees each year. In recognition of the cultural traditions brought to the city of Chicago and the surrounding region since its founding by Native Americans, refugees, and immigrants, on Sunday, June 18th, 2017 the World Refugee Day committee in partnership with the Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events, the Chicago of Chicago's One Chicago Initiative, and community members organized a celebration of the diversity shared as members of Chicago's refugee and immigrant communities. Gathered at the Chicago Cultural Center, the event's aims were to provide a space for Chicagoans and visitors alike to learn about our city's rich multicultural history through an exploration of music, multimedia works, food, arts, and more.

Aptly titled, *A Celebration of Culture*, World Refugee Day 2017 aimed to:

- Center Refugee voices and experiences in the city of Chicago
- Connect social service organizations to the general population
- Provide interactive educational experiences to all Chicago residents and visitors
- Engage in cultural food sharing as a way of building community
- Provide a space to celebrate the diversity of cultures in the city

Partners during the planning of the event:

In addition to the support of the City of Chicago, a wide array of community partners stepped up to provide interactive experiences, financial support, and in-kind donation. The Planning Committee worked with a number of organizations during the three month planning period including ART WORKS Projects; the Center for Forced Migration Studies, Buffett Institute of Global Studies, Northwestern University; DePaul University's Refugee and Forced Migration Studies; Digital Tapestries; Facing History and Ourselves; Heartland Alliance; Heshima Kenya; Larc, INC, Pozen Family Center for Human Rights, University of Chicago; 90Days90Voices. With the support of the Center for Forced Migration Studies and Heshima Kenya, the outreach to community partners resulted in 24 distinct experiences during the hours of programming from 2 PM to 5 PM.

With the generous support of Dolores Connelly, the Frankel Family Foundation, Free for All- the Chicago Community Trust, and the Goldin Institute the committee was able to procure honorariums for the graphic designer who created the logo, helped manage the website and provided all of the signage as well as the photographer of the photo booth. We were also able to



provide support for the global café experience by purchasing coffee as well as accoutrements to make the experience interactive. Additionally, in-kind donations from GOLIN, Chicago who provided all of our social media outreach as well as consultation for press-releases and social media advertising was tremendous in securing participants. Gourmet Gorilla graciously provided food and staff for the Global café with additional donations from Lifeway Kefir and Whole Foods. Larc, Inc. provided expertise in setting up and realizing the vision of the room and LYFT provided discounted rides for participants who used the app.

Participant organizations were encouraged to join one of five components- Intercultural, Performance, Crafts, Education, and Global Café. Organizations such as Karam Foundation, Loom Chicago, CAIR Chicago; International Refugee Assistance Project (IRAP); ACLU, Chicago; Iraqi Mutual Aid Association; United Heart for Africa; ALIANZA AMERICAS to name a few, brought informational materials and also helped shape the mood of the event. Participants could learn about the work

During the event, participants engaged with a number of exercises including Chicago Mapping experience facilitated by CFMS volunteers. Guests were also encouraged to make 'Refugees Welcome' signage, learn how the participants of Loom Chicago create unique crafts, and listen to the stories of Immigrants and Refugees from the 90Days90Voices project. These experiences were accompanied with the sounds of Surabhi a troupe of Senegalese, Spanish, Middle Eastern, and Indian Fusion musicians and dancers. Participants also enjoyed the dishes from Gourmet Gorilla staff from places such as Iraq and Uganda, as well as an exhibition of different coffee types and techniques including Ethiopian and Turkish coffee. Participants were also provided the space to view Sanctuary/Sustenance: The Story of Many Journeys in the Theater.

After a welcome by Galya Ben-Arieh and Zean Dunbar of the Center for Forced Migration Studies, Rodrigo Carrillo, the Deputy Clerk in the Office of the City Clerk greeted the crowd and informed every one of the new Municipal ID initiative in the city. Alderman Lopez of 15th Ward gave a moving account of how the *Back of the Yards*, his community, acts as a gateway in the city of Chicago for many refugees and immigrants. Alderman Lopez finished his remarks by conveying the importance of compassion, for community, and celebration. Following Alderman Lopez, Jerome McDonald of WBEZ Worldview greeted all. The event ended to a stellar final performance by Surabhi.



Outcomes:

- Through the Global Café Gourmet Gorilla served about 200 guests,
- Overall approximately 500 people attended the event,
- Thousands more individuals were reached on media (radio and television)

Based on the success of the 2017 beta year of the WRD event, plans are underway for the 2018 event. The City of Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events has committed to continuing their role as host of the event and has secured an exterior site at Millennium Park for use. This will allow the WRD celebration to include a great many more attendees. Additionally, as planning is beginning now, we will be able to leverage our network of community partners to include an even larger group of participants and deepen our organizational partnerships. Our pro bono communications partners will be able to reach more media outlets with this one year ramp up period. The budget for 2018 includes a part-time staff member who will be able to leverage these opportunities and ensure that this event grows in its impact.

At a national level, our team is reaching out to other Sanctuary Cities to inspire them to join this effort - using Chicago's lessons learned as a springboard. Given the recent announcement of federal attempts to drastically limit previously legal immigration in the coming decade we are more committed than ever to demonstrating the commitment to an inclusive America that the World Refugee Day Celebration exhibits.