

**APRIL 2024 OUTREACH OF THE MONTH**  
**MICHIGAN REFUGEE HOPE**

A crisis was brewing in 2017 regarding unaccompanied minor refugee children who had arrived in the United States. A number of the children were being cared for by the nonprofit Samaritas here in Michigan, but their processing and documentation needed in order to remain in the U.S. had significantly slowed. Many children were reaching their 18th birthday before attaining status to remain in the US.

Samaritas contracts with the US government limited their ability to help these children once they turned 18. At that point, Samaritas reached out to their contacts in the Lansing and Jackson areas. A number of church groups came together to form Michigan Refugee Hope in order to help these post-18 refugee youth. post-high school educational support, mentoring, and tutoring for the residents. Michigan Refugee Hope supports Faith Lutheran by funding costs associated with these activities as well as utilities and maintenance of the post-18 house.

Faith Lutheran Church in Okemos converted their former parsonage to a post-18 home for refugee boys. The post-18 home provides housing, food, medical care, high school and It brings great joy to see these young men succeed and make progress in their lives. If this work inspires you, please consider serving as a board member of Michigan Refugee Hope. There are currently six young men at the house. The young men come from countries around the world including Afghanistan, Sudan, Mauritania, and several Central American countries. They are enrolled at Okemos High School to obtain high school degrees. These young men face major challenges here. Put yourself in their shoes and imagine being in a country where English is not your native language, where the system is unlike any you have experienced, where the food is foreign, where social systems are strange, where you are on your own and all this after you experienced trauma fleeing your home country. Michigan Refugee Hope strives to help these young men and give them some hope for the future.

You can help by volunteering to mentor and tutor these young men or by making a donation. You may write a check to University Lutheran Church or donate electronically at the ULC website ([www.ulcel.org](http://www.ulcel.org)) via PayPal or a credit card. Please include "Michigan Refugee Hope" in the memo/notes.

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*Bryan Rahe, Social Action Team*