

# “I Was a Stranger”

## Boston Stake Relief Society



1. **Church-wide Initiative:** website [IWAsAStranger.lds.org](http://IWAsAStranger.lds.org) in several languages. “We each have the invitation as women and young women to open our eyes and our hearts to see those among us who may feel alone, afraid, or uncertain so that we are no longer strangers (see Matthew 25:35–36; Ephesians 2:19). We are invited to share our love, our confidence in the Lord Jesus Christ, and our hands to strengthen others and love them as the Savior would have us do. This is not a program; it is who we are.” Contents of that website:
  - How to get involved, with ideas as simple as "Make a new friend" or "invite someone to your family night" OR as ambitious and robust as volunteering at local resettlement agencies and community nonprofits.
  - List of Church partner organizations (OVER)
  - Letters and talks, including this advice: "No sister is obligated, and no one should serve at the expense of her family and other responsibilities (see Mosiah 4:27)." (see the full letters on the website).
  
2. **Boston Stake Efforts** (FYI: Within our stake boundaries, the cities and towns with the highest refugee populations are Worcester, Waltham, and Boston.)
  - Stake Relief Society Humanitarian Service Coordinator: train and support ward coordinators and RS sisters. Service splits with missionaries are especially encouraged.
    - Workshop at Stake Women’s Conference: “‘I Was a Stranger’: Serving Refugees in the Boston to Worcester Corridor” by Marci McPhee, Stake Relief Society Humanitarian Service Coordinator
  - Provide and continually update resources and current/past service partners in the area, with a new focus of refugees on our website: [www.BostonRS.org](http://www.BostonRS.org)
  - Organize service opportunities, with a focus on refugees
    - Collect soccer equipment donations for unaccompanied minor refugees for Stake Women’s Conference, partnering with Ascentria Care Alliance in Worcester ([www.Ascentria.org](http://www.Ascentria.org))
    - September service project before General Women’s Meeting and other coordination with Young Women and Primary
  - Explore future stake-wide partnerships and projects
  
3. **Ward Efforts**
  - Ward Relief Society humanitarian service coordinators and RS presidencies continue current local service and look for new opportunities for missionaries and RS sisters.
  - Thanks to the previous hard work and inspiration of our members, Boston stake and ward Relief Society Humanitarian Service Coordinators already partner with dozens of local organizations to serve local refugees, coordinating efforts of missionaries (2-10 hours per week) and members who have time to serve. Partner organizations include the Charles River Public Internet Center (English classes), eleven food pantries and community kitchens, and local community organizations (tutoring, mentoring, home winterization for low-income families, playground building in low-income neighborhoods) (OVER)
  - Coordinate service projects.
  - Encourage service and visiting splits with missionaries.
  
4. **Personal Efforts**
  - Support ward and stake efforts as prompted by the Spirit.
  - Pray to know how best to serve in our communities.
  - Prayerfully select and nourish one long-term, individual relationship with someone in need of refuge.

## Churchwide Global Relief Partners

Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA)  
Catholic Relief Services (CRS)  
International Committee of the Red Cross/Red Crescent (ICRC)  
International Medical Corps (IMC)  
International Rescue Committee (IRC)  
United Nations Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF)  
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

**Donations:** [www.LDSPhilanthropies.org/Humanitarian-Services](http://www.LDSPhilanthropies.org/Humanitarian-Services) or on a tithing slip on "Humanitarian Aid" line.  
100% of donations goes directly to help those in need.

## Massachusetts Refugee Volunteer Opportunities

**Teaching English as a Second Language (ESL)** using the Church curriculum "Daily Dose" – see [store.lds.org](http://store.lds.org)  
(Extremely practical lessons: teaching about getting directions, going to the pharmacy, making an appointment, etc.)

### New and potential partners:

1. Ascentria Care Alliance, [www.Ascentria.org/volunteer/massachusetts](http://www.Ascentria.org/volunteer/massachusetts)
2. Refugee Immigration Ministry, [www.R-I-M.net](http://www.R-I-M.net)
3. Lifting Hands International, [www.liftinghandsinternational.org](http://www.liftinghandsinternational.org)

**Selected existing partners** that serve refugees and others, with previous work listed, which could be expanded  
(see [www.BostonRS.org](http://www.BostonRS.org)):

1. **Abby House (Worcester)** - one of the first emergency shelters for women with or without children in the US)
2. **Action for Boston Community Development (ABCD) North End/West End food pantry (Boston)** - antipoverty agency, serving more than 95,000 low-income residents annually through its city-wide network of neighborhood-based organizations) food donation, assist with client pickup orders
3. **Catholic Charities (Boston)** – assist clients in food pantry, serve meals, clean office
4. **Centro Las Americas food pantry (Worcester)** - load and unload trucks, stock shelves
5. **Community Servings (Jamaica Plain)** - for those living with critical and chronic illnesses) – serve food in the community center, deliver food to homebound clients
6. **Cradles to Crayons (Brighton)** – sort donations for poor and homeless children
7. **Greater Boston Food Bank (Boston)** - sort food for distribution to the hungry
8. **Habitat for Humanity ReStore (Worcester)** - nonprofit donation centers that sell new and gently used furniture, home accessories, building materials, and appliances to the public at a fraction of the retail price) - sort donations, assist customers, run the cash register and handle checkout.
9. **Hidden Treasures Thrift Shop (Clinton)** – run by United Way) – sort donations, assist customers, unload trucks, stock shelves
10. **Prospect Hill Community Center (Waltham)** - an afterschool program for elementary and middle school children in a low-income housing neighborhood) – help with homework, crafts, and games, help build a playground
11. **Rosie's Place (Boston)** – serve lunch to women experiencing homelessness
12. **Salvation Army (Framingham)** - serve at the food market
13. **Sudbury Food Pantry (Sudbury)** - assist patrons in gathering food items from the pantry
14. **Teaching/Tutoring English (Roslindale)**
15. **Waltham Family School (Waltham)** – potential ESL tutoring and mentoring
16. **WATCH CDC (Waltham)** - "Barnraising" (winterizing low-income homes), teach ESL
17. **Wheat Community Services (Worcester)** – help in the food pantry, move furniture, organize thrift store displays, and assist with the Community Café

As of 5/14/16