

Linda Rosenberg

Jeanne Clarkson

Request \$30,000

Beds for Refugees

Pay for the purchase of 200 box springs and frames for new beds.

The largest non-government agency resettling refugees in the world, and in Northern Virginia, is the US Conference of Catholic Bishops, Office of Migration and Refugee Services (MRS). They work in partnership with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and the U.S. Departments of State and Homeland Security to resettle refugees admitted to the United States on humanitarian grounds. The Arlington office of MRS serves refugees, asylees, refugee and migrant children who are alone with no one to care for them (unaccompanied minors), holders of Special Immigrant Visas, and victims of human trafficking. The Arlington diocese is scheduled to take in **600 refugee families** in the next year. MRS director Patricia Maloof, Ph.D., states that one of her biggest needs is beds. The way things work these days is that refugees go from the airport into their own apartment. Tables, chairs, sofas and most furnishings can be previously used, but beds must be new. Temperpedic has donated 200 mattresses to the MRS office but box springs and bed frames are estimated to cost \$175 each (\$34,000.00 to supply for 200 mattresses).

Our proposal is that Nova give the MRS office \$30,000 to purchase box springs and frames. We think it would make Nova members happy to know when we lay down in our comfortable beds that we helped 200 new Americans do the same.

We suggest giving the money all at once and as soon as possible so that the funds might be leveraged by buying in bulk. Linda Rosenberg will administer and be accountable for the funds in coordination with MRS director Patricia Maloof. Ms. Maloof would be happy to come and speak about refugee resettlement to the Nova Community.

We believe from discussions that many members of Nova are concerned about the refugee crisis in the world today. The US government gives \$925 to each refugee entering the United States. MRS uses that money toward the security deposit on the family's rented apartment. I get the feeling from Ms. Maloof that money to do the good job she would like to perform is scarce. Some Catholics are even against the settlement of refugees here in the United States. Besides our providing beds, the money we donate would free up MRS funds sufficiently so that officers at MRS could accomplish needed projects that haven't been properly funded.

Linda Rosenberg would work with Patricia Maloof and report on the completion of the project complete with photos. Mrs. Rosenberg and her husband sponsored 7 Vietnamese Refugees in 1980 through the office Ms. Maloof now oversees. The method of

“sponsoring” refugees has changed over the years. In 1980 the sponsor picked up the refugees at the airport, brought them into their home, found jobs, found and outfitted an apartment, taught them English, enrolled children in school, took them for health care, and supported them until they were fully integrated into the American way of life. Now, most of these tasks are done by workers at MRS with help from volunteers. Services are offered in five sites throughout Northern Virginia including Arlington, Alexandria, Falls Church, Chantilly and the city of Fredericksburg. At each of the sites, resettlement services are offered to help newcomers become self-sufficient as soon as possible after arrival. Staff members offer case management services in culturally appropriate languages (presently there are 20 languages on staff). The services are made possible by grants from the Virginia Office of Newcomer Services, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, and through the financial support of churches, parishes, groups and individual donors. Discovering the ways the MRS offices use volunteer help might be of great interest to our Nova members.

Linda Rosenberg first became acquainted with the MRS program director when she heard her speak on the refugee crisis at St. Marks Church in Vienna in early spring of 2016. In September, several Nova members at the retreat encouraged Mrs. Rosenberg to submit a proposal for part of Marie Pinho’s Bequest to be used for refugees. Knowing the refugees needed both money and personal help from volunteers, Linda contacted Ms. Maloof and they discussed several of MRS’s current financial challenges in settling the 15 families expected in the next two weeks and the 600 families expected in the next year. Mrs. Rosenberg is willing to work with Ms. Maloof in the next year, both as a volunteer and to help oversee the usage of the Marie Pinho Bequest funds.

MRS is a part of the multi million dollar Catholic Charities. The website states that independent auditors found that Catholic Charities spends 5% of donations on administration, another 7% on fundraising, and 88% goes in funding projects.