

Mercy-USA

for Aid and Development®

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Dignified Living for Yemeni Refugees

Local Somali authorities greeted Yemen's refugees who fled the war to northeastern Somalia warmly but were not prepared to adequately house and feed the sudden influx of people arriving with nothing more than the clothes on their backs. The refugee families found themselves living in dilapidated college classrooms or tents housing large numbers of related and unrelated people in one space. There was no privacy and little security as the local government and the UNHCR, the United Nations Refugee Agency scrambled to accommodate hundreds of families who fled Yemen by sea

across the Gulf of Aden to nearby Bossaso, Somalia. Women and their children were a particular concern as the lack of separate sleeping quarters placed them in a perilous situation.

Mercy-USA for Aid and Development distributed family tents and household kits to provide the Refugees dignified living while they wait for security to return to their homeland or figure out a new life in a new country. You can read the story of one woman who received this gift from Mercy-USA donors on the next page.

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Mercy-USA for Aid and Development is a nonprofit relief and development organization dedicated to alleviating human suffering and supporting individuals and their communities in their efforts to become more self-sufficient.

Incorporated in 1988, Mercy-USA's projects focus on improving health, nutrition and access to safe water, as well as promoting economic and educational growth around the world.

- Registered with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID)
- Special Consultative Status with the United Nations
- Member of InterAction

44450 Pinetree Drive, Suite 201
Plymouth, Michigan 48170-3869

Telephone: 734-454-0011 1-800-55-MERCY
(1-800-556-3729)

FAX: 734-454-0303

info@mercyusa.org

mercyusa.org

Other Mercy-USA Offices

Tirana, Albania	Tripoli, Lebanon
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Medan, Indonesia	Antakya, Turkey
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Lenda's Story: A Mother Alone in a New Country



Lenda, her husband and their three children led a comfortable and successful life in Yemen. They had a good house in the outskirts of the port city of Aden in Yemen. Just as Lenda was preparing her two oldest children, Ali, age 10 and Abdulkadir, age 7 to start the new school year, war broke out in Yemen. In June 2015, due to its strategic location, fighters seized Lenda's town and neighborhood. During this same attack Lenda's husband was killed. Alone with three little children and no time to even grieve the loss of her beloved husband, Lenda was forced to figure out what to do next. Nearby cities were under attack making any possibility of fleeing more difficult. "As the fighters were making territorial gains, we made the choice to abandon our home in order to keep my children safe" said Lenda. "My children were terrified

and weren't able to walk. I heard people were fleeing to neighboring countries like Somalia and Djibouti. I made the decision to go to Somalia for safety".

As the fighting intensified, Lenda and her children carried everything they now owned in a medium-sized suitcase and rushed to catch a crowded boat for a one-way trip out of Yemen. Lenda arrived safely at Bossaso seaport where she was received at a refugee reception center.

Lenda and her three frightened children found themselves in an overcrowded camp in Bossaso. In a moment it seemed to her that her life had changed into something she could have never imagined. She was a new widow trying to care for her children in overcrowded conditions without privacy to dress or

bathe; they had nothing to sleep on nor any means in which to maintain their dignity. Lenda had to wonder if the hell she had left behind was worse than what she found in the early days of her arrival as a refugee to Somalia. We know that a woman's priorities, no matter how traumatized by war or disaster she may be, will be for her children first and then her own dignity and wellbeing next. Tents to provide privacy and a sense of "home" would be our priority for families like Lenda's. Because Mercy-USA for Aid and Development has a long history of helping refugees like Lenda we worked in close collaboration with UNHCR and the Puntland Ministry of Interior to provide the most vulnerable refugees like Lenda with family tents and non-food items.

"While in the Bossaso reception camp, Mercy-USA gave my children and me a tent, bed sheets, sleeping mats, a fully stocked hygiene kit, mattresses and a family kitchen set". An emotional Lenda said. "These items really changed my life because Mercy-USA has placed a roof over our heads. The kitchen set and other family household items also came in handy. You helped us resume our social lives". Although Lenda has experienced tremendous loss, she is excited that

she still has a future ahead of her. Her two eldest children were able to enroll in the local school and have already made new friends. Lenda is free to focus on caring for Aisha, her two-year-old baby, while also supporting and encouraging Ali and Abdulkadir in their dreams of becoming successful doctors in the future.

"I would tell Mercy-USA God bless you because you set the ground for us. I will not forget to include the donors in my prayers."



The family tents Mercy-USA distributed to Yemeni Refugees have divided interiors to provide privacy and an opportunity to re-establish a normal family life.



Staging area for some of the new tents and household kits that included mattresses, bedding, floor mats, solar lanterns and a kitchen kit. We hope that this "fresh start kit" is having a positive impact on these families who fled the disastrous situation in Yemen.

Michigan Community Sends Warm Clothes to Syria and Receives the Smiles of Children in Return.



Abdullah, just six years old sits in his Aleppo neighborhood that has been all but destroyed. He and his family no longer have a home since it was destroyed in an air attack. Our field worker, Abdulrahman, also an Aleppo resident took extra care

to help Abdullah find much needed new and warmer clothes and shoes at our "Mercy Store" in one of our warehouses in the city.

We think that humanitarian aid should always feel like a warm hug instead of a grim handout to those in need. For the second year in a row, Mercy-USA for Aid and Development facilitated a shipment of new and very gently used clothing into Syria on behalf of the Michigan community. Dedicated volunteers in Michigan worked tirelessly last fall to collect, sort and pack an entire shipping container full of much needed clothing for Syria. We arranged the shipping for the container to Turkey and then trucked the clothing into Aleppo, Syria.

When the shipment arrived, despite a very dangerous security situation, our local field team sorted the clothing and set up one of our warehouses like a big clothing store, complete with racks, hangers and even shopping bags. This extra effort was worth it so that families could browse through the items like they would have done when shops were open and there was money to spend in the days before the war.



We love this project because it's not hard to imagine the feelings of desperation a mother or father must have when tiny toes no longer fit into the last pair of shoes you could buy, or when so many layers of clothing aren't enough to keep a little one warm without a jacket.

Setting up our store and inviting the families to "shop for free" was something that brought our team a great deal of satisfaction. Special thanks go to all the love and care given by the Michigan community.



4-Stars for Six Years Straight!

For the sixth year in a row, Mercy-USA for Aid and Development has been

awarded top honors at Charity Navigator with four stars! We're proud of this distinction and happy to encourage our supporters and those who are looking for a reputable charity to see our ratings on Charity Navigator's website, charitynavigator.org

Mercy-USA Delivering Clean Drinking Water to Seniors in Flint.

Flint, Michigan has been in the national spotlight since it became known that government officials switched the city's water supply from the Detroit Water Department to the Flint River to cut costs. The corrosive river water caused lead from aging pipes to leach into the water supply. This has caused seriously high lead levels in the water throughout the city.

Looking to fill the water supply gaps amongst Flint's most vulnerable citizens, Mercy-USA contacted the Brennan Senior Center and the Hasselbring Community Center, both in Flint, Michigan. We arranged to provide weekly bottled water for all their community members to take to their homes.

These Senior Centers serve the needs of Flint's elderly population with a variety of programs and activities including hot lunches, companionship, health, wellness and recreation activities, education programs, transportation services, and much more.

Our team sat with some of the members of the center and heard their concerns, and while a reliable, weekly delivery of water is crucial to them, they also vented their frustration about this festering water situation. At least one of the seniors told us his grandchild has tested positive for high levels of

lead. Several seniors said they knew the water was polluted long before the rest of the country had heard about it; they complained to government officials about the water source switch but say their voices were not heard. And while they're happy to have the drinking water, these elderly citizens still must contend with using the contaminated water for washing. They told us they have resorted to only showering once a week to try to lessen the skin rashes resulting from the corrosive water.

Mercy-USA will be distributing 260,000 water bottles to these two centers over the next months. We will continue to visit the folks and monitor the problem to see what else can be done to alleviate some of the suffering caused by this disastrous situation.



Virginia 6th Graders Have a Heart for Syrians Suffering Without Heat This Winter.

The Sixth Grade Science class at Al Fatih Academy in Reston, VA read about Mercy-USA's "Circle of Winter Warmth" for Syria in our last newsletter as part of their environmental science unit. The students were excited to learn that we were able to source and provide a cleaner and more eco-friendly fuel from olive pit waste for families in Aleppo who were struggling last winter without heat. What started out as collecting spare change from classmates with the goal to donate a stove and a month's worth of Prina fuel for one family in Syria turned into a much grander success. In ten days the students raised over \$2,500—enough to sponsor new stoves and an entire winter's worth of fuel for four separate homes. We are so inspired by these students and their heartfelt love for children and their families struggling to survive so far away.

Every Drop Counts for Clean Water in Somalia in a Big Way in Sacramento!

Al-Arqam Islamic School & College Prep took on our "Every Drop Counts" program in their school and raised \$12,424 that will build three wells in Somalia plus contribute toward a fourth to be dug this year. The students in grades K-12 learned how the lack of clean water negatively impacts children and their families through materials Mercy-USA for Aid and Development supplied and then "competed for good" amongst each other and raised funds to accomplish this worthy goal. Thanks to the students and their families for supporting clean water in Somalia!



Your School or Youth Group Can Participate in "Every Drop Counts" Community Service Project.

Mercy-USA has developed a fundraising project for kids and teens that has already excited and inspired hundreds of students. We will send you all the materials needed for your youth group, scouts, or students to learn about the need for safe, clean water in Somalia while gaining valuable service/volunteer experience. Call 800-556-3729 to learn more.

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In addition to your one-time charitable donation, there are easy ways to donate. Consider joining Mercy-USA in this vital effort with a sustaining gift:

Automatic Giving Program

A gift of your choice can be automatically deducted monthly from your bank or major credit card account.

Employee Matching Program

Encourage your employer to match your donation.

Stocks

Mercy-USA accepts stocks as a charitable contribution.

Make a Bequest

Remember Mercy-USA's mission in your will.

Be an Advocate for Mercy-USA's Mission

Volunteer in your community to promote Mercy-USA's work. Call us for details on how you can get involved!

1-800-556-3729

Where we work • mercyusa.org



Albania

- English and computer skills training for orphans
- Read to Succeed program for school-age children and teens

Bosnia and Herzegovina

- Vocational and career training for orphans, at-risk teens and young adults
- Agriculture Education Center to aid farmers, and local communities with sustainable farming methods

The Gaza Strip

- School lunch program in Gaza serving approximately 1,500 students

India

- Seasonal food aid

Indonesia

- Aid farmers and local communities with sustainable farming methods. Also assist farmers in forming cooperatives
- English and computer skills training for orphans

Kenya

- Aid farmers and local communities with sustainable farming methods. Training in business development and marketing for farmers.

Lebanon

- Syrian Refugee assistance in Wadi Khalid, Lebanon
- Mobile Health Clinic serves refugees four times a week providing vaccines, pre-and post-natal checks and regular medical exams.

- Palestinian Refugee Assistance in Beddawi and Nahr-Al-Bared Palestinian Refugee Camps
- Vocational training courses

Somalia

- To date about 500 new or rehabilitated wells for access to clean drinking water throughout Somalia
- Nutritional support and health services for mothers and children
- Hygiene and sanitation training and promotion

Syria

- Monthly food baskets for 1,000 vulnerable families in Aleppo, Syria
- Winterization projects for vulnerable children and their families
- Blankets, mattresses, mats for displaced families
- Hygiene packages for 1,000 vulnerable families
- Mother and Child Health Clinic



Donate Online: www.mercyusa.org • Call Toll-Free: **800-55-MERCY (800-556-3729)**

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In Canada: Fiesta RPO, PO Box 56102, 102 Hwy #8, Stoney Creek, ON L8G 5C9 • Canadian Charity Business # 89458-5553-RR0001

Contribution / Pledge Form

- One Time Donation** \$ _____
- Monthly Donation** \$10 \$25 \$50 \$100 \$250 Other \$ _____
- Check**
- Credit Card** (Fill out Credit Card Section)
- Pledge** \$ _____

I give my permission to Mercy-USA/Mercy-USA (Canada) to withdraw from my Credit Card the amount I have indicated above. I also understand that I may change or end a monthly donation agreement at any time with a written notice.

Credit Card Information (Charged in US Currency)

Account No. _____

Expiration Date _____ Sec. Code _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Name (Please print) _____

Address _____ Apt. No. _____

City _____ State/Province _____ Zip/Postal Code _____

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More ways to contribute!

Many companies match their employees' donations; ask your employer if they have a "Matching Gift Program".

Automatic Giving Program: A gift of your choice can be automatically deducted monthly from your bank account. Please call us toll-free at **800-556-3729** for details on how you can make an easy and sustaining gift.