

Through the Remote Placement (RP) program, EMM directly trains and supports Community Partners (CP or RPCP) to take on the responsibility of welcoming refugees to their communities. The RP program provides an opportunity for you to empower your new neighbors towards independence and self-sufficiency.

Amplifying your story of sponsorship, the activities of your group, and/or the way your life has been impacted by this experience is a great way to shift public narrative. When we highlight the transformational power of building relationships with our new neighbors and building welcoming communities, we influence the way people think about what it means to be a neighbor.

Ways to share stories:

Write an opinion editorial for your local paper and/or national publications.

Contribute to your congregation's newsletter or offer to write a blog post for the website.

If the individual or family you have welcomed is interested and willing, you can invite them to share their story with your congregation or at community events. Be mindful that many individuals may not wish to share their story publicly.

Post on social media about the experience of community sponsorship. (DO NOT include any personally identifiable information about the individuals you are welcoming.)

Advocate to your Members of Congress and share why it's so important that we welcome newcomers.

Language

Our words hold power. It's important when representing your relationship with the individual or family you are assisting that you avoid paternalistic and possessive language. Instead of referring to the relationship as 'Adoption' or 'We adopted a family,' you can say 'accompanying' or 'Our group is accompanying a family.' Avoid possession and say 'The family' or 'The refugees we are partnered with' instead of 'Our family' or 'Our refugees.'

Consent

If you choose to describe your RPCP experience on social media or choose to engage with the news media, please center the story around your own experience as a member of a RPCP team. You must acquire the full consent of any newcomer with whom you are matched before sharing their story on any platform. No photos or video recordings should be shared on social media or with the press without the written consent of the newcomer with whom you are matched. In all cases, the newcomer should be given the opportunity to share their own story in spaces and ways that they feel comfortable.

Suggested Talking Points When Speaking About Refugee Resettlement

- I first heard about Episcopal Migration Ministries/refugee resettlement when [insert the story of when you first heard of Episcopal Migration Ministries/refugee resettlement]
- I decided to become a team member because [insert your motivation to welcome a newcomer through the Remote Placement program]
- The process of becoming an EMM Remote Placement Community Partner team required me to find at least four other people in my community who were also interested in supporting a refugee through resettlement. Together we had to go through training, undergo and pass a background check, and put together a Welcome Plan detailing how we would find housing, access benefits, arrange doctors' visits, and other important tasks during the newcomers' time with us.

Here are a few other suggestions to consider when speaking with the media:

Most reporters will end their interview with a question like, "Is there anything else you think I should know?" It is good to be prepared for this question. One of the things you can do with that question is reiterate a key point. Examples might be:

- "We decided to do this because we saw a need but we also saw a way that we can come together as a community and do something positive."
- "We think it is really important to get involved because we want to make sure our community is known as a welcoming place. We can do that."
- "When someone comes to a new place they need someone to show them around. We love our town and we are proud of it, so we think we are some of the best people to help new people when they come here. "

It is best not to use this interview to make political points or highlight problems. One of the things that we all hope media attention will do is draw more people into being involved in welcoming newcomers to our communities.

If you get asked about problems, one thing you could do is say, "There are certainly challenges, but we are working together to try and solve those, because part of our goal is to build a strong team beyond our group to make our community welcoming to anyone who wants to come here and work with us to build our community." The political questions may come in the form of questioning community security. One possible response to that might be, "We think that a way to make sure that we keep our community safe is to get to know our neighbors. We think this program allows us to get to know our new neighbors but also work closely with the people who already live here."

Social Media

Social media is a way that many people get information these days. It can be a powerful tool, but there are important things to keep in mind if you post about your experience as a Remote Placement Community Partner team.

- In the time leading up to the arrival of the newcomers do not post details about when or where they will be arriving.

When you write about the experience do not use the names of the newcomer or where they will be living or staying.

- Always get permission when taking pictures of people and if you are taking pictures of children, you must get permission from their parents or guardians. Again, avoid mentioning or identifying places or names of the newcomers.

Consider having a discussion with the newcomers about social media so you have a shared understanding of how it might be used. They too might relate to social media and may or may not be aware of dangers. In this conversation as in many aspects of their settlement, you need to be aware of the inherent power imbalance between you as the long-time resident in the community whom they rely on, and they who may have no other contacts in the community to turn to.

*For assistance with media inquiries,
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