

MOSAIC MOMENTUM

May 2024



MOSAIC
FAMILY SERVICES

Thanks for stopping by!

Hi there! My name is Cindy Nguyen, and I joined the development team as the Volunteer Coordinator in March of 2024. I'm so honored and privileged to be working at Mosaic Family Services.

I started my career at the Children's Advocacy Center of Collin County as a Family Advocate Intern Caseworker. My beliefs aligned with their core values, and I've always firmly believed that children should be free from harm and adversity. After I graduated college, I started working for LifePath Systems which operated as a unit of local government and nonprofit center. I worked at LifePath Systems as a Service Coordinator, which introduced me to Mosaic Family Services.

I love that Mosaic provides culturally and linguistically competent services for survivors in our community, and I am grateful for the work Mosaic does for clients. Before accepting this position, I studied Mosaic's history, and I truly admire Dr. Walter Nguyen's commitment to create good after overcoming so much adversity. I often think about how much my family would have benefitted from such an organization as Mosaic, especially after the fall of Saigon.

As the Volunteer Coordinator I get to work closely with Mosaic House, our emergency shelter. It's heartwarming to see the dedication from our staff and volunteers to serving survivors of human trafficking, refugees, and domestic violence. Thank you so much for all that you do. I could wax poetic about Mosaic, but there's not enough words to describe my respect for Mosaic and its mission.

Warm Regards,

Cindy Nguyen

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Volunteer Spotlight: Hunt Helpers give back at Mosaic House!

Volunteers do so much when they serve at Mosaic House. Their seemingly simple gift of time and effort speaks volumes to the shelter residents and creates a lasting impact for survivors.

During National Volunteer Month, we had the pleasure of welcoming first-time volunteers from Hunt Helpers to Mosaic House!

Hunt Helpers are truly an amazing group who came ready to work! Volunteers helped with various maintenance projects to make sure that Mosaic House is beautiful and welcoming place for shelter residents. Volunteers were hard at work refinishing the playground, purchasing new benches for the tranquility garden, powerwashing the porch, doing yard work, and so much more.

The need for compassionate and hard-working volunteer partners cannot be overstated, and Hunt Helpers embody just that. Their commitment to service and can-do attitude was energizing, and powered the volunteers to tackle so many projects in just one day.

"Hunt Employees were honored to serve at the Mosaic Services Emergency Shelter for our 2024 Hunt Helpers Day of Service. A Hunt employee team assembled benches, weeded and mulched, cleaned and pressure washed the playground, sorted donations, and so much more. Most importantly, Hunt employees were exposed to the amazing impact that Mosaic is making on our local Dallas Community and the incredible staff at Mosaic that makes it all possible. Hunt employees look forward to continuing to

build personal relationships with Mosaic and watching the significant positive impact that this organization makes in our Community," Said Elizabeth Smith, Business Development Manager at Hunt Energy Network.

We are so grateful for the opportunity to work with these incredible volunteers!



You give survivors the chance to find themselves

When Hanna arrived at Mosaic House with her three children, she was anxious, scared, and unsure of what would come next. A global pandemic was taking place, and with an abusive husband terrorizing her at home, Hanna had nowhere to turn. Originally from Iraq, Hanna and her husband had only recently arrived in the US with their children, and she had no other family in the country.

Hanna spoke little English and had never worked outside of the home. Once at the shelter, Hanna was paired with a case manager who spoke her native Arabic, and the shelter staff got to work making Hanna and her children feel safe and secure.

With Mosaic's support, Hanna worked hard to start rebuilding her life. She arranged childcare with the onsite Childcare Center so that she could focus on the many tasks ahead of her: getting her drivers license, attending ESL classes, and taking parenting classes to strengthen her ability to guide her children through the enormous transitions they'd experienced. Hanna also began

therapy through onsite counseling to begin processing the trauma she'd endured. Slowly but surely, Hanna's situation improved, and within a few months, she obtained her first job ever.

After living at Mosaic House for nearly a year, Hanna and her children moved into one of Mosaic's Transitional Housing apartments. The Transitional Housing program provided Hanna with rental and utilities assistance while she worked with Mosaic staff to plan her budget, apply for rental assistance with a local Housing Authority, and start planning for the family's eventual transition to permanent housing. While she received a housing voucher, it was very difficult for Hanna to secure her own safe and stable apartment because of rising housing costs and limited availability.

Hanna remained steadfast and continued working, improving her English, healing through counseling, and saving money. With the help of her Mosaic attorney, Hanna finalized her divorce and obtained custody of

her children. And after seven months, Hanna finally secured an apartment with the help of transitional housing staff.

Today, Hanna and her three children live in their own lovely apartment and are stable, safe, and secure. Hanna expressed her happiness and cried tears of joy when she first stepped into her apartment with her children. In her own words: "I am so grateful for Mosaic for giving me a safe place to find myself again."



Mental Health Access for Newly Arrived Refugees

Written by *Mirjana Omeragic*
Senior Director of Refugee Services

Although mental health is a topic we must discuss daily, May is the perfect month to raise awareness. As someone who came as a refugee to this country, I would like to focus on newcomers, those who were born outside of the United States, and the importance of culturally responsive services when addressing mental health in these communities.

During my journey as a refugee, I have learned many things about life and humanity. I've learned that life circumstances can change overnight, and every one of us can find ourselves in a new and unfamiliar world in the blink of an eye. I've learned that every human being seeks human kindness and sometimes it takes only one word to make or destroy someone's day or life.

The experience of forcible displacement, the uncertainty of the future, loss of loved ones, separation from everything you love and know, and often torture and persecution would impact anyone. Everyone has their way of coping and

dealing with these hardships, but it takes time and courage to start talking about it. This is especially important when we are talking about people who came from cultures where the stigma surrounding mental health is so extreme that seeking help is seen as a sign of weakness or that an individual is "crazy."

Therefore, it is critical to provide culturally responsive services and understand the cultural, religious, and social barriers newcomers face when accessing mental health services. Mosaic provides culturally and linguistically competent case management services to newcomers. Our multicultural staff understands refugees' barriers and helps them overcome those barriers. They give the newcomers appropriate resources and help them access them in their native language.

The best practices are to think creatively and find alternative ways to address this crucial topic.

One example of an alternative way to address mental wellness is Mosaic's Espresso Yourself coffee chat group. This group allows refugees to talk about

their feelings and learn how to cope in an amazingly comfortable setting where they feel safe to share their stories, worries, and tears. They realize that they are not alone and that after everything they went through, feeling hopeless, alone, sad, or depressed is nothing to be ashamed of – it is okay not to be okay. As a result of these groups, more newcomers became comfortable with counseling and behavioral health services.

To help other mental health practitioners communicate effectively with refugee populations and understand the stigma associated with mental health in their cultures, I started the Refugee Mental Health Coalition in 2022. The coalition aims to create partnerships, raise awareness about the importance of culturally and linguistically appropriate services, and invite other agencies to join our coalition and learn about the challenges newcomers face regarding mental health services.

I would like to end this blog with my favorite quote – "Everyone you meet is fighting a battle you know nothing about. Be kind. Always."

Refugee Awareness Raffle

Celebrate World Refugee Awareness Month by participating in Mosaic's annual Refugee Awareness Raffle!

Each year, thousands of refugees from all over the world make North Texas their new home. Most refugees arrive in our community not knowing the language, without their support network, and after experiencing extreme physical and psychological hardship and trauma.

You can help refugees become thriving members of the community by purchasing

a raffle ticket before June 28!

Here's what you need to know:

- Each gift basket is valued at \$250 and loaded with delicious goodies and a \$100 gift card to Central Market!
- Raffle tickets are \$25 each or 5 tickets for \$100.
- You get two free tickets by joining Mosaic's monthly giving program, starting at just \$5 a month!

The four basket winners will be announced on June 28, so be sure to hurry and get

your tickets before it's too late!

Scan the QR code to purchase your tickets today!

