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**Notes from editor (not for publication):**

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HEADLINE ELEMENTS:

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1 Brattleboro's new Multicultural Community Center  
2 (MCC) hosts open house Jan. 14

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5 TEXT BODY:

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6 St. Michael's Episcopal Church Refugee Ministry, which  
7 has been co-sponsoring families in the refugee resettlement  
8 program since 2022 when refugee resettlement it began in the  
9 Brattleboro area in 2022, is partnering with the Ethiopian  
10 Community Development Council (ECDC) on the launch of a  
new site for the Multicultural Community Center (MCC) and the

11 establishment of services that refugee Vermonters have reported  
12 they need and would use.

13 Sponsors invite the community to an open house for the  
14 MCC Wednesday, January 14. Visitors can register as early as 4  
15 p.m. that day for the event that includes tours of the facilities and  
16 samplings of food prepared by "New Vermonters," as organizers  
17 refer to the refugees to be served.

18 Since establishing Brattleboro's refugee resettlement  
19 program — the first in a rural U.S. community — in late 2021,  
20 ECDC has established ~~two~~their MCCs, ~~the~~ first on Birge Street;  
21 the ~~next~~on to the School for International Training (SIT) campus  
22 at Bliss House. For this ~~latest~~new location, the Brattleboro  
23 Museum & Art Center has offered its first-floor space in the  
24 former Marlboro Graduate Center building at 28 Vernon St. as a  
25 short-term site.

26 Sponsors invite the community to an open house for the  
27 MCC Wednesday, January 14. Visitors can register as early as 4  
28 p.m. for the evening that includes facilities tours and a sampling  
29 of food prepared by New Vermonters, as organizers call the  
30 refugees to be served.

31 Attendees will get an overview ~~and hands-on look at~~of  
32 the space and learn about the services to be offered through the  
33 MCC, including English as a second language (ESL) classes;  
34 sewing classes; childminding during MCC events and classes;  
35 housing searches and information; on completing  
36 forms and applications; health-related information and  
37 questions; including anticipated loss of Medicaid in October  
38 2026; school support, including meetings with teachers;  
39 conversation partners; and job and career support and growth.

40 A ~~5 p.m.~~ welcome at 5 p.m. will be followed by a few  
41 speakers — to be announced — and opportunities for volunteers  
42 and New Vermonters alike to sign up for specific services. Tours  
43 will resume from 5:30 to 7 p.m.

44 Paul Gallagher, a member of St. Michael's Refugee  
45 Ministry team, notes d in a news release that "with the sharp

46 reduction of refugees being resettled in the U.S. from over  
47 100,000 in 2024 to a presidential limit of 7,500 in the current  
48 fiscal year, so few refugees are expected to be resettled in  
49 southern Vermont that SIT will not be used for transitional  
50 housing."

51 | However, he continuessd, "the need for an MCC for  
52 | education is as great as ever as the result of actions by the Federal  
53 | government curtailing benefits and imposing new challenges for  
54 | all immigrants."

55 | The objectives of the open house,7 and the new MCC<sub>7</sub> are  
56 | to increase support of those who have resettled in the area since  
57 | January 2022,1 with the arrival of the first refugees from  
58 | Afghanistan<sub>2</sub> to create awareness of the MCC and the breadth of  
59 | its services for the entire family; to create ownership in the  
60 | services and facilities of the MCC; to create awareness of the  
61 | needs for support and the services that will be offered to New  
62 | Vermonters; and to offer opportunities to volunteer for specific  
63 | services.

64 | In addition to Gallagher, the Open House Planning Team  
65 | includes Jenn Mapescouture, Negina Azimi, and Linda Rice, a  
66 | member of St. Michael's Refugee Ministry. For more information  
67 | on the MCC open house, visit [ecdcvt.org](http://ecdcvt.org).

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