

—Slug:.....COMM-0847.bratt.new_multiculti_ctr
—Contributor.....
—Contributor email.....
—For section.....Town and Village
—Format.....News - no byline
—Dateline.....Brattleboro
—Article Number:.....42849

Notes from editor (not for publication):

HEADLINE ELEMENTS:

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

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4 TEXT BODY:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Paul Gallagher, a member of St. Michael’s Refugee Ministry team, notes ed 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 continues^{sd}, “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 house⁷ and the new MCC⁷ are
56 to increase support of those who have resettled in the area since
57 January 2022^u with the arrival of the first refugees from
58 Afghanistan;^z 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^u 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.

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