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Greetings to all friends and supporters of StepForward!

Fall of 2024 finds StepForward celebrating both new clients and new partner agencies! We are also pleased to have a continued presence on the list of Virginia-recognized Charities for State employees as a part of the Commonwealth of Virginia Campaign 2024.

New Partners

As always, StepForward continues to rely on our partner agencies to vet and refer any clients who meet our criteria: having a strong motivation to reach a goal/purpose but held back by obstacles on their path. The following are the new partners since our last newsletter:



[International Neighbors](#) is an amazing boon to immigrants arriving here with a litany of challenges to start a new life where all is unfamiliar. It goes well beyond furniture, a TV, and pots and pans. They provide free classes for English, health and well-being, yoga and other skills. It is the personification of “Welcome!” with much guidance and connection.



[Cville Tulips](#) is also a very welcoming organization, reaching out specifically to Afghan and Syrian refugee women and children, bringing them into regular community gatherings, and fostering a sense of belonging. Beyond social connection they provide art education, various classes, fun activities for the children, and food, all bridging the two cultures in this new life.



We have also made connections with Christian Ignoumba of [African United Communities of Charlottesville](#) (AUCCville) and have established a partnership with them. AUCCville works with refugees, immigrants and people in need in Virginia and surrounding areas to improve their lives.

New Clients

One Afghan client who has recently arrived in Charlottesville aspires for more accounting and English skills needed for her current job at the University of Virginia, with her ultimate goal of getting an MBA. However, she was held back by the obstacles of child care and transportation, needing numerous daily Ubers for transportation to and from work, school, and daycare, etc. StepForward contributed toward a used vehicle which has made her schedule much more manageable.

Another is a young girl suffering from PTSD, who needs therapy that is not covered by her insurance. This is urgently needed in order for her to perform well in school and focus on her studies, as well as for her long term health. StepForward provided financial support for a series of hopeful specific therapies for her.



Another, also from Afghanistan, has already realized his life purpose as a highly experienced cardiac surgeon. But after having to leave Kabul and after much effort to practice in other Middle Eastern countries, is finally here in Charlottesville with his family of 5. However, in order to practice medicine in the US he needs to pass the US Medical Licensing Exams. There are Kaplan courses and coaching classes available to help individuals prepare for these exams, but he is not able to afford them. He also needs a home, is now living with 16 others, but the first goal is to be able to work. To help make that happen, StepForward covered the cost of Kaplan courses.

Another from Ghana has been taken in by a family here in Charlottesville, as his own immigrant family had moved away long ago. He has returned “home” with a goal of getting a degree from Piedmont Virginia Community College and becoming a teacher. His work as a personal trainer, a soccer coach and a camp counselor indicate his strong motivation. StepForward was able to provide funding to get his green card renewed so that he can also work toward his other goal of becoming a citizen.

There are, of course, a number of ongoing clients, described in previous newsletters, who are continuing progress toward their goals, taking more steps forward.

Team News

We reluctantly said goodbye to our partner, Dana Tornabene, who has had to move on to other needs, so we hereby give a shout-out and much gratitude to her for two great years of service. Then thankfully the Universe stepped in and brought us the amazing MaryLewis Meador, a renowned yoga teacher, long term leader and tutor for Literacy Volunteers, and a writer. Her story is on our [website](#) under “Our Team.”

Meanwhile we are grateful for your support and deeply appreciate all donations; StepForward is a 501©(3) charity with all donated funds going directly to our clients’ needs.

With Warm Regards,
Achla Marathe, Lynda Fanning and MaryLewis Meador

Remember, we all stumble, every one of us. That's why it's a comfort to go hand in hand. - Emily Kimbrough



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