



OUR NEIGHBOR'S HOUSE

St. John's Episcopal Church



TOOLKIT

FURNISHING APARTMENTS FOR RESETTLED REFUGEE FAMILIES

OUR HISTORY



Fall of 2017, St. John's Church took steps to develop an outreach ministry to serve refugee families. Working in partnership with the International Rescue Committee (IRC) the ministry decided to furnish apartments for families being resettled in the Washington DC region, most of whom had spent years in refugee camps and were arriving in the US with almost no possessions. 2017-2018, over a 12 month period, a small team of parishioners coordinated efforts to furnish apartments for four families or households approved for resettlement by the US State Department. The St. John's community opened its collective heart to this effort, contributing vast numbers of items as well as financial and physical support to equip 4 apartments with all that these families would need to start a new life.

MOVING FORWARD



As we move beyond the first year of ministry, we want to renew our commitment to furnishing four apartments a year, expanding the human effort of St. John's by engaging four small teams (of six or more people) to shepherd the furnishings. The current ONH core team will coordinate the yearlong effort which will include facilitating ongoing collection of items and general communication with the IRC and other faith organizations for collaboration. The goal is to have teams tackle the specifics of each of the four moves. We have developed a toolkit to guide teams by breaking down the approach into a 6-step process.



OUR NEIGHBOR'S HOUSE CORE TEAM



- Tim Wittig - IRC Point of Contact
- Mary McQueen - Donation & Staging Advisor
- Roberta & Hans Feldhausen - Inventory Management Advisors
- Jerry and Bree Bruemmer - Community Outreach Advisors
- Nancy Eichacker - Logistics Advisor
- Kay Drew - Set up Advisor
- Shelley Spencer - Parish Engagement Advisor

**Please consider becoming a part of this ministry and part of a team...
Contact Shelley Spencer @ spencer38@gmail.com for more information.**

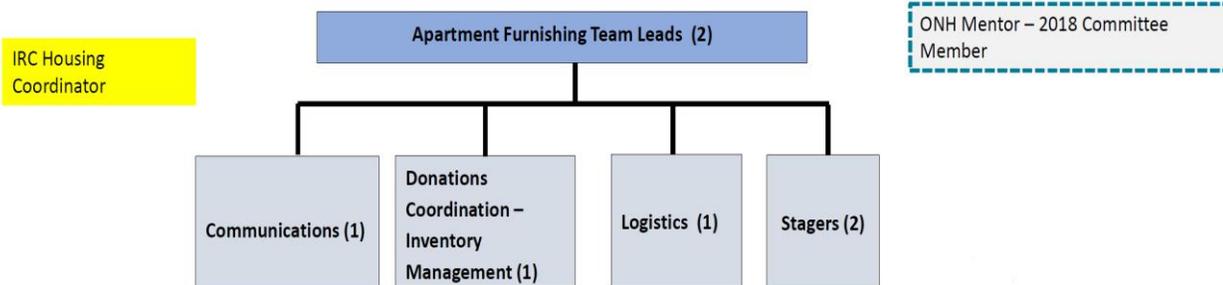
1.

Drafting your All-Star Team



Assemble a cohesive and joyful team of **at least 6** to assume clear roles and responsibilities

We suggest a team with a minimum of 6 each assigned a clear role



Team Leaders (2): Furnishing an apartment requires close team coordination through the process and designating two members of your team as the designated leaders can help with the work flow and ensures overall visibility into all the moving parts.



Communications Lead (1): While your team is providing leadership and management, Our Neighbor’s House is a parish wide ministry and you should seek to engage the Parish in supporting your work through ongoing communication on your members. The Communications lead should handle communications with the parish, your team and serve as the IRC housing coordinator.



Donation Coordination -Inventory management (1): Through the generosity of the parish, we can fully furnish the apartments with donations from the Parish in kind and financially. This saved money goes directly to the refugees and can be put towards other living expenses. Often there are questions about whether a donation is appropriate or needed. Designate one team member to manage donations and keep your rolling inventory of items.



Logistics (1): Logistics need to be managed throughout the collection and moving process. Designate one team member to manage the logistics to arrange for pick-up of larger items, get them to the storage facility, and manage transport of items on moving day from St. John’s to the apartment. Nice bonus if the person loves to drive a U-Haul.



Staging (2-3): Those with a sense of style can transform the items in storage into a welcoming home by applying their talents in staging the apartment. It is nice to have a team of 2 to 3 or more to select and tag the items for moving day, arrange furniture and household items in the apartment before the family's arrival, and purchase food for the first meals.



2.

Defining and Communicating the Needs

St. John's furnishes the apartments in support of the resettlement work of the International Rescue Committee an approved resettlement agency who is assigned families in our area by the U.S. State Department. <https://engage.rescue.org/donate/us-silver-spring> We have a designated contact, Corey Rheingrover, Corey.Rheingrover@rescue.org

Defining the Need: *IRC has a minimum list of items* required to furnish an apartment for a family of the size being resettled. The size of the family can vary but we recommend the committee assume the family will be a family of nine. In our work, we have also added items to the list we think are useful to furnish the apartment. A list for a family of six is included in the Annexes of this toolkit. Please note there are some items that cannot be donated and must be provided new, including beds and mattresses. We also recommend that you not collect large items given the apartments are small. We would exclude entertainment centers, armoires, heavy furniture that may be hard to move.

Communication Strategies: We recommend you work with the Core ONH team to communicate your furnishings list in multiple ways and repeatedly for 6-8 weeks:

- Announce in the Sunday service bulletin. Samples of an announcement include:
[Pull text from past bulletin if we have something better]

Thanks to the generosity of our church family we have been able to fully furnish 2 apartments for refugees and are on track for 2 more this year. We have an updated registry of items you can find here: www.sokindregistry.org/16023

We are almost set in the furniture department (just in need of a sofa) so remaining items fall more in the categories of accessories, kitchen and bathroom items.

- Announce in The Bell Tower
- Announce at the Sunday services
- Staff a table at coffee hour with your list

- Post the list on the outreach bulletin board
- Creating an online registry. Here is a registry we created for free:
www.sokindregistry.org/16023

The communications should include information on how to see the list of what you need, who to contact about donations and the deadline for donations.

3.

Collecting Furnishings without becoming a thrift store



Donations are likely to ebb and flow throughout your team’s engagement. Someone’s downsizing can bring a windfall of furniture, while growing kids can produce highchairs and comforters. While people are generous you also want to restrict donations to exactly what is needed and avoid becoming a thrift store or drop spot for emptying “Grandma’s Attic”. To facilitate the collection, you need to make donation easy and keep a rolling inventory. We recommend:

- Taking an inventory of existing items in the current ONH storage area and checking in with the ONH Core Team and last apartment furnishing team.
- Designating a specific area for small item drop off and creating a plan for moving those items to the storage area
- Asking people clearly label on boxes of donations with what is inside
 - Vetting larger items before they are accepted and evaluate the logistics of collecting and storing the items prior to move day
 - Regularly updating your inventory list that identify coverage and shortage areas
 - Scouting for missing items or opportunities to get key items (coffee tables, chairs, etc.) on resale lists such as Craigslist, Facebook, thrift stores
 - Consider purchasing missing items that must be new using funds from the ONH budget funds (particularly helpful for small items like lightbulbs, pillows, etc.)
 - Create a logical process for furniture pickups and deliveries by coordinating with the logistics teams if items need to be picked up. (What is that perfect couch needs to be picked up soon - can you do it, how, or do you need to pass?) You may want to set a regular pick up time (i.e. the first and last Saturday of every month) to make it easier to manage.

There is a designated room in the undercroft that can be used to store donated items organized into sections. Explore all physical storage and transport options that may be available within the congregation. The storeroom is not big; we could really use a room or two in a house, or a garage to address storage crunches. If you receive an abundance of items evaluate if the storage area is adequate or if there

are alternatives. With our commitment to furnish four apartments, items not needed by your team can be used by the next or we can offer the excess to other faith communities supporting IRC.

4.

STEP 4: Moving Day



IRC has designated apartments they rent for refugees being resettled. The apartments are in Prince George's County and close to Lanham (a 40-50-minute drive from St. John's). IRC typically receives only 2 weeks' notice before a family's arrival and the apartment may be available for furnishing the week before. IRC has been willing to give us access to the apartment over multiple days before the family's arrival, so the move can happen over several days or in a single day. ONH has a budget that can be used to fund rental of a U-Haul truck which we have found can easily hold all the furnishing and make one delivery.

- Decide what vehicles you will use transport the furnishings from St. John's to the apartment.
- Consider the size of team you need to move the items with able bodies noting you may need to navigate stairs.
- Explore new options for logistics support, by perhaps paying contract helpers by the hour or enlisting the Boy Scouts or other able-bodied youth groups for furniture moving days.
- Before moving day ask the staging team to tag items to be moved as slated for this apartment and check it against the inventory providing the moving team with a list.
- Set a meet time for moving team and time frame for the work to be completed.
- Make sure you have access to the apartment.
- Arrange the larger pieces of furniture in the apartment for or in coordination with the stagers.

5.

Staging the Home



Working with the inventory, the staging team should tag the items to go the apartment one day during the week before the move and consider how the items will create a comfortable and welcoming home for the family. The apartments vary in size from 1-3 bedrooms and are selected to meet the family needs. An apartment schematic is typically available online once we know from IRC the name of the apartment complex. By reviewing this you can evaluate how items will fit in the apartment, such as rug size. When furniture is showing its use, we try to improve the appearance through slipcovers, chair covers or tablecloths. In addition, most of the apartments do not have overhead lighting (other than in the kitchen) so you need to consider lighting.

The stagers should:

- Select and tag the items to be moved to the apartment and designated delivery spot (i.e. bedroom #1, bathroom, etc.).
- Accompany the moving team or come on a subsequent day to stage the apartment.
- Wash the dishware before storing in the cabinets. (Note most apartments don't have a dishwasher so time handwashing may be required.)
- Set the design aesthetic for the apartment and doing the final touches like making the beds, ensuring there are bulbs in lamps, enough extension cords, hangers, good furniture placement, etc.
- Shop for and deliver the initial food items designated by IRC (see the inventory list) for the families first meals in their new home.
- Consider leaving a welcome note of thanks for their arrival and blessings as they make their lives here.
- Take pictures!

6.

Giving Thanks



Providing a welcoming home to refugees is a key outreach ministry of St. John's. As you complete the process it is important to reflect on how your teams has shown love for your neighbor and welcomed the traveler and the generosity and commitment of the St. John's community to furnishing these apartments. Take time to give thanks for the blessing of being able to offer your time, talents and service as a demonstration of our acts of service in the name of others. Share your experience with the congregation through a message in the Bell Tower or

announcements and consider sending thank you notes to those that contributed to your team's success.

ANNEXES

IRC Sample list for 6 - need to add our additions and go with 9?

Sample announcements

Sample pictures of furnished apartments

SAMPLE IRC LIST

	<u>Apt. Information</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Date of Setup</u>
	Family Size - 6		
	Supply List	# of items	Notes
KITCHEN ITEMS			
1	Set of forks, knife, spoon	12	Can put it all in the kitchen
2	Regular plate	12	Can put it all in the kitchen
3	Bowl	12	Can put it all in the kitchen
4	Cup	12	Can put it all in the kitchen
5	Glass	12	Can put it all in the kitchen
6	Sauce pan	3 (the more the better since they are unrelated singles mostly)	Can put it all in the kitchen
7	Cooking pot	3 (the more the better since they are unrelated singles mostly)	Can put it all in the kitchen
8	Frying pan	3 (the more the better since they are unrelated singles mostly)	Can put it all in the kitchen
9	Baking dish	3 (the more the better since they are unrelated singles mostly)	Can put it all in the kitchen
10	Mixing spoons	3 (the more the better since they are unrelated singles mostly)	Can put it all in the kitchen
11	Ladle	3 (the more the better since they are unrelated singles mostly)	Can put it all in the kitchen
12	Turner	3 (the more the better since they are unrelated singles mostly)	Can put it all in the kitchen

13	Mixing bowl	3 (the more the better since they are unrelated singles mostly)	Can put it all in the kitchen
14	Can opener	3 (the more the better since they are unrelated singles mostly)	Can put it all in the kitchen
15	Cutting knife	3 (the more the better since they are unrelated singles mostly)	Can put it all in the kitchen
16	Cutting board	3 (the more the better since they are unrelated singles mostly)	Can put it all in the kitchen
LINENS & OTHER ITEMS			
17	Bath towel	6	Put 2/3rds for the later arriving singles in the right-hand bedroom
18	Kitchen towel	3	Can put it all in the kitchen
19	Set of sheets and pillowcase	6 twin sets (if you only have larger, those also are fine to fit on twin beds)	Put 2/3rds for the later arriving singles in the right-hand bedroom
20	Twin comforter	6 twin sets (if you only have larger, those also are fine to fit on twin beds)	Put 2/3rds for the later arriving singles in the right-hand bedroom
22	Pillow	6	Put 2/3rds for the later arriving singles in the right-hand bedroom
23	Notebook	6	Put 2/3rds for the later arriving singles in the right-hand bedroom
24	Pen	6	Put 2/3rds for the later arriving singles in the right-hand bedroom
25	Hangers	approx 60	Put 2/3rds for the later arriving singles in the right-hand bedroom
26	Lightbulb	1	Can put it all in the living room
27	Floor lamp	1	Can put it all in the living room
CLEANING SUPPLIES			
28	Dish soap	2	Can put it all in the kitchen
29	Sponge	4	Can put it all in the kitchen
30	Multipurpose cleaner	2	Can put it all in the kitchen
31	Paper towels roll	4	Can put it all in the kitchen
32	Bucket and mop	1	Can put it all in the kitchen
33	Broom with dustpan	1	Can put it all in the kitchen
34	Trash bin	1	Can put it all in the kitchen
35	Trash bags	20	Can put it all in the kitchen
36	Bathroom bin	2	Can put in the bathrooms

37	Laundry detergent	3 (the more the better since they are unrelated singles mostly)	Put 2/3rds for the later arriving singles in the right-hand bedroom
38	Toilet brush	2	Can put in the bathrooms
TOILETRIES			
39	Shampoo	3	Put 2/3rds for the later arriving singles in the right-hand bedroom
40	Bar of soap	6	Put 2/3rds for the later arriving singles in the right-hand bedroom
41	Toothbrush	6	Put 2/3rds for the later arriving singles in the right-hand bedroom
42	Toothpaste	6	Put 2/3rds for the later arriving singles in the right-hand bedroom
43	Deodorant	6 female	Put 2/3rds for the later arriving singles in the right-hand bedroom
44	Razors pack	3	Put 2/3rds for the later arriving singles in the right-hand bedroom
45	Shaving cream	3	Put 2/3rds for the later arriving singles in the right-hand bedroom
46	Sanitary pads pack	3	Put 2/3rds for the later arriving singles in the right-hand bedroom
47	Toilet paper roll	16	Put 2/3rds for the later arriving singles in the right-hand bedroom
FURNITURE LIST			Notes
1	Twin bed	6 (IRC will provide via donation)	Put 2/3rds for the later arriving singles in the right-hand bedroom
3	couch/seating for 6	1	Can put it all in the living room
4	dresser/clothes storage	3	Put 2/3rds for the later arriving singles in the right-hand bedroom
5	Table w/ 6 dining Chairs	1	Can put it all in the living room
FOOD			Notes
1	Loaf of bread	2	

2	Gallon of whole milk, carton of eggs	2	
3	Bag of potatoes, bag of onions, bag of carrots	1	
4	Box of black tea, jar of jelly, pourable sugar, iodized salt, pepper, cooking oil	1	
5	10LB rice, bag of apples, bunch of bananas	1	
6	Can of tomato paste	4	
8	Can of beans	4	
9	Cooked food - Protein, e.g., 3LB rotisserie chicken	1	
10	Cooked food - Carbs, e.g., 3LB rice	1	
11	Additional food	Any amount	
NOT REQUIRED BUT SUGGESTED			Notes
1	Microwave	1	Can put it all in the kitchen
2	Tea pot/cups set	Any Amount	Can put it all in the kitchen
3	Area rug	Unit is wood (maybe 2 for living area, 1 for each bedroom)	Spread around as you see fit
4	Coffee table	1	Spread around as you see fit
5	Side tables, table lamps w/ bulbs	2 or 4 probably (2 for living room, 1 for each bedroom)	Spread around as you see fit
6	Television, laptop, bicycle	Any Amount	Spread around as you see fit
7	Miscellaneous decorations	Any Amount	Spread around as you see fit
8	Miscellaneous household goods	Any Amount	Spread around as you see fit

Additional Suggested Items by St. John's ONH Core Team:

- Drying Rack for Dishes and Mat
- Drain Stopper
- Kitchen Utensil Crock (for on the counter)
- Utensil Drawer Divider
- Hand Towels for the bathrooms (note the bathrooms typically have shower doors and do not require shower curtains)
- Extension Cords
- Table Cloth
- Basket of Fruit on the Table
- Welcome Note from St. John's