



**MEDIA ALERT**

January 30, 2017

**Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County Welcomes  
New Unaccompanied Refugee Minor This Evening**

**What:** Young refugee arriving tonight from Kenya will be welcomed by Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County. Catholic Charities will become the legal guardian of the 17 year old, who will be placed with a foster care family through their Refugee Foster Care program.

**Who:** - Gregory R. Kepferle, CEO, Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County  
- Father Jon Pedigo, Diocese of San Jose (also speaks Spanish)  
- Angela Albright, Division Director, Refugee Foster Care, Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County

**Why:** Catholic Charities' Refugee Foster Care program is the only program in Northern California that serves refugee children fleeing terror, poverty, and oppression. The recent Executive Order will limit or halt the resettlement of refugees, including children, who seek safe haven in the U.S.

**When:** Monday, January 30, 2017, approximately 9:00 pm

**Where:** San Jose Airport, American Airlines arrivals area, Flight # AA6048, arrival 9:01 pm

**Visuals:** Catholic Charities staff "welcome party"; media can videotape the back of the refugee and can show the International Organization for Migration (IOM) bag that will identify the refugee

**Note-** to protect the privacy of the refugee, who is a minor, his image and voice cannot be recorded, though media can show his back. There will also be another Congolese youth present to welcome the refugee, please do not record his image or voice, as well.

**Background**

Since 1979 Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County has served over 7,000 refugees, from unaccompanied minors to individuals and families, who seek a safe haven from violence of war and terror, poverty, and oppression. We continue this 38-year tradition through our Refugee Foster Care program, the only program in Northern California that serves refugee children fleeing terror, poverty, and oppression.



Originally from the Congo, the young man will join a foster family from Campbell through our Refugee Foster Care program. He will enter high school as a Junior. His family was murdered in the Congo and he was under high persecution before being approved to enter the U.S. after years of vetting through the United Nations.

Catholic Charities currently serves 102 active unaccompanied refugee minors (URM), 22 of them are Muslim and 10 came from countries that are now banned. The average unaccompanied refugee minor is vetted for four years before being able to come to the U.S.

Every year, thousands of children and youths around the world are separated from their families because of war, persecution, and trafficking. These refugee and trafficked children and youth have nowhere to go, are left unaccompanied, and in need of protection, support, and a family. Our Refugee Foster Care is the *only* program in Northern California that places these unaccompanied refugee minors into long-term foster care homes all over the Bay Area.

“Our newest refugee foster child will arrive just in the nick of time. He will be turning 18 in a few days and if he arrived any later, he wouldn’t be able to come to the U.S. at all,” said Gregory R. Kepferle, CEO of Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County. “This is his one chance for migration.”

“Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County wants to show the world that we stand in solidarity with refugees and immigrants,” continues Kepferle. “We are deeply saddened by and strongly reject the recent Executive Order against refugees, which excludes refugees fleeing terror in their home countries, which cuts the number of refugees permitted to seek safety in the U.S., and which seeks to build walls rather than bridges.”

### **About Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County**

Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County has worked to strengthen families and build economic self-reliance for the poor and vulnerable in the county for more than 60 years. Each year, more than 500 employees and 1,000 volunteers serve more than 40,000 individuals of all cultures and beliefs through 40+ programs at more than 80 sites. Program areas include behavioral health, youth and family services, economic development, employment, financial education, supportive housing, immigration legal services, in-home and long-term care, older adult services, refugee resettlement, refugee foster care, and more. Catholic Charities is working to reduce poverty with social change goals that target the alleviation, prevention, and reduction of poverty in our communities. Learn more at [www.catholiccharitiesscc.org](http://www.catholiccharitiesscc.org).



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