EMBARC staff and Public Allies AmeriCorps members joined LSI for Lutheran Day on the Hill on Monday, March 9th. Refugee newcomers, and staff shared real-life experiences and stories of challenge and strength in support of the Refugee Support Services Bill. This Bill will provide critically needed support for Refugee Adult ESL classes and Community Navigator projects that build capacity within the refugee community. Many thanks to the members of the House and Senate who took time to talk with us, and learn more about empowering the refugee community. You can support the bill by contacting your Iowa State Representative or Senator. Find your legislator here!
Hunger Hike Funds to Provide Rice and Cooking Oil!

EMBARC received $1,425 from the Des Moines Area Hunger Hike to purchase traditional dietary staples such as jasmine rice and vegetable oil for our refugee community. These items help ease the difficult transition between cultures that refugee newcomers often experience. Many thanks to the Des Moines Area Hunger Hike for your generosity and support! You can help us provide other critical services for refugees. You can help us provide other critical services for refugees.

Spotlight

Iowa Legal Aid AmeriCorps All-Stars: Emily & James

40 refugee community members were able to obtain professional attire this past weekend, thanks to Iowa Legal Aid AmeriCorps members, Emily Ehlers and James Adams! They coordinated a business clothing drive in honor of AmeriCorps Week in March so refugees would be “dressed for success.”
Many thanks to all the donors and volunteers who helped with the clothing drive. A SPECIAL THANK YOU to Emily and James for your initiative and service!

Family Advocate Abigail Sui

Abigail Sui, a Chin refugee from Burma, is one of two EMBARC Family Advocates. She escaped Burma in 2009 and struggled to survive in Malaysia with her younger brother. Although she has lived in Iowa for only a year and a half, she has become a critical lifeline to refugee families in need. For example, when a refugee father suffered a major stroke within two weeks of arriving to Iowa, Abigail was there. The father was debilitated, and now desperate about how he and his teenage son would survive. The father’s nurse took compassion on them and searched for resources. She found EMBARC and Abigail. Abigail has been by their side for nearly a year, helping them access resources from housing, and food, to fellowship. When asked about her work, she responded, “When my clients are happy, I am happy.”

What Are They up to Now?

College Bound Youth Navigators

During Spring Break EMBARC’s Youth Navigators embraced their college-readiness training through campus tours at Iowa State University, Drake University and the DMACC Urban Campus.

They learned about every aspect of college life—some fears were quelled, and questions answered, enabling them to envision themselves improving their lives through higher
Community Fabric Trunk Show

On March 11, 2015 four of EMBARC’s Community Fabric Sewing Project students sold their first FIRST PRODUCTS!

Congratulations, Thla Sui, Eh Khai, Pa Meh, Phrae Mo, and Tu Meh! Julia LoVan, founder and CEO of J.LoVan, mentored our students through every step of the entrepreneurial process to create beautiful hand embroidered t-shirts. Stitch, an urban craft room in Des Moines’s East Village generously supported the event with space to showcase the work of our students, J. LoVan and Just Made Market.

Everyone involved is looking forward to future projects, which will bring together people from Burma and Iowa to support refugee women and nurture their entrepreneurial spirit.

For more information on Just Made Market and t-shirt orders, contact dianne@embarciowa.org or go to http://www.justmademarket.com.
We're Hiring Community Navigators!

Community Navigators work closely with specific Program Managers on project including Community based ESL, Health, Parenting, Youth, Financial Literacy and more. Community Navigators will be responsible for providing support to their peers, and strengthening community self-sufficiency, stability and community integration. They will provide support by coordinating trainings and community workshops and providing direct services. The Community Navigator will also assist EMBARC staff with outreach, advocacy and cultural workshops. Time commitments vary. If interested in one of these positions please contact Jeanna Bauer at jeanna@embarciowa.org or at 515-286-3787.

Community Resources

The Food Pantry will now stock more ethnic foods!
How to Ride Dart Training

DART staff provides small group training to help individuals learn to ride the bus in Greater Des Moines. Training will demonstrate how to plan a trip, read maps and schedules, recognize bus stops, pay fares, practice rider safety and more. How to Ride Training sessions are free and open to public.

The next "How to Ride" Training sessions are scheduled for:
Tuesday, April 14 from 10 A.M. to Noon
* Other trainings held monthly.
All How to Ride sessions will be held in the Multimodal Room at DART Central Station (620 Cherry Street, Des Moines).

For questions or to reserve your seat, please call DART Customer Service at 515-283-8100 or email dart@ridedart.com.