

OUR VISION

That the greater Mount Pleasant community would be an inclusive and hospitable community that welcomes people from across the world looking for a new home.

In order to achieve that vision, the MISSION OF IowaWINS is to:

- *Identify the issues that newcomers face here, to provide solutions and help integrate them with the community at large.*
- *Build relationships among the diverse members of our community.*
- *Build and maintain the infrastructures and sustainable programs that improve opportunity and services now and for future generations of immigrants.*
- *Provide educational and cultural outlets to the community to learn more about the people (and their needs) who come to Mount Pleasant.*

For those of you who want to be ready in case an ICE raid occurs, our advice is:

- Build relationships now in your community and across the state
- Establish online giving methods
- Establish a social media presence

All this so you are ready for “such a time as this.”

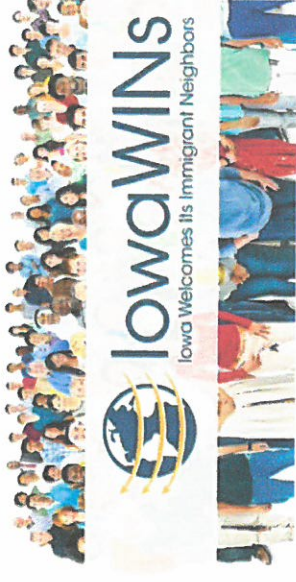


IowaWins currently runs a food pantry, offers transportation, has ESL classes, and provides financial support for living expenses and legal fees as funds permit.

To help the families affected by the ICE raid, online donations can be made by clicking the DONATE button on our Facebook page. It will link you to

<http://www.firstpresbyonline.org/>. Click the GIVE NOW button and include

“**IowaWins**” in the comment/notes section. Checks can be sent to the First Presbyterian Church, putting “**IowaWins**” on the memo line.



We believe Iowa is enriched when we welcome and assist refugees and immigrants. Our goal is to help newcomers as well as those suffering abroad.

IowaWINS

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Like us on Facebook at
<https://www.facebook.com/IowaWINS/>

HISTORY

IowaWINS (Iowa Welcomes Immigrant Neighbors) was originally established in the fall of 2015 in response to the Global Refugee crisis. We were hoping to sponsor a Syrian family in our community like we had sponsored refugee families after the Vietnam War. We soon learned that resettlement has changed since the 80's and refugees are now settled in cities where there are more resources and a larger population of similar nationalities. In addition, despite the skyrocketing number of refugees worldwide, the number admitted to the US has dropped from 80,000 in 2016 to 57,000 in 2017 and only 20,000 this year. The likelihood of settling Syrian families in Mt. Pleasant was very low.

So IowaWINS expanded the Vision and Mission to include immigrants living in our community. We focused on educational events to share information on the refugee vetting and resettlement process, and the immigration system with speakers from the Catholic Diocese, Columbus Junction, and Lutheran Services.

We showed films about refugees at the local theatre. We held international potlucks to build relationships in our community.

We built a communication network of interested people in our community. We helped the local LULAC members with meeting space as they became an official LULAC chapter.

We reached out to similar organizations across the state that were working with immigrants and refugees.

The Presbyterian Church reached out to the school district to expand the designation of the church building as a safe place for families to gather in case of a natural disaster to a safe place for families to gather in case of an ICE Raid. But we worried that we were singing to the choir. Were we really making a difference? But like the story from Esther in the Bible says, "And who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this."

May 9th, 2018 was "such a time as this."

The Mount Pleasant ICE Raid May 9, 2018

We received a call from an Iowa WINS Commission member, that he heard there was an ICE Raid and then he went to the plant and provided updates about the helicopter and numerous police vehicles from state, local, and county departments.

We reached out to our contact at AFSC (American Friends Service Committee) to alert her to the raid. She jumped into action contacting people in organizations from across the state who had committed to helping should such a raid happen.

We reached out to the school system to remind them that we were a safe place for families to gather after the raid. And we reached out to bilingual volunteers to be on hand at the end of the school day to help the families.

The leaders in the immigrant community reached out to IowaWINS to provide meeting space that night. We brought together the immigrant families and the organizations and volunteers committed to helping in this time of crisis.

As of today, 24 of the men have been reunited with their families.