

## The Hallowell Multicultural Center is a Hub of Activity

CANMP hosts a variety of events at our Hallowell Multicultural Center, including speakers, rehearsals, the International Kids Festival each summer, and an annual Thanksgiving dinner for new refugee families. This Fall, we began the long process of repainting the aging facade (bottom right).



## Volunteer Spotlight: STEVE KNIGHT

Volunteers are the lifeblood of CANMP. They work on Family Mentor Teams; teach refugees how to speak English and drive cars; ferry new families to the grocery store and appointments; and share in families' celebrations and disappointments. **Steve Knight** of Waterville is one of CANMP's most active volunteers. A professor of history at Kennebec Valley Community College, Steve has worked with families from the Congo, Syria, and Afghanistan.



"My spirits have been lifted by just how many people there are in our communities who want to support the New Mainers," Steve says. "Through volunteering at CANMP, my wife Mary and I have met many new friends, and all volunteers learn that these new families also become permanent friends."

**Thanks for all you do, Steve!**

**You may send a check or donate online: [www.newmainersproject.org/donate](http://www.newmainersproject.org/donate)**

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*The Capital Area New Mainers Project is a cross-cultural organization that welcomes refugees and works to build a thriving, integrated community in central Maine.*

Dear CANMP friends,

There are many remarkable books and movies detailing the modern refugee experience, from the touching picture book *Stepping Stones* to the powerful film "The Swimmers." Most of them end with the refugees making it, despite overwhelming odds, to a new home. We cry and cheer along with them.

**But arriving in a new land is just the beginning of the story.** Fully integrating into a new community takes many years of patient work. Progress often is slow and hard to measure. Much to the surprise of many Americans, the U.S. government's refugee program provides only 3 months of resettlement assistance (in the 1980s, it was 3 years) — not nearly enough time to help families get on their feet.

**CANMP knows that there are no shortcuts.** We are here for the patient, unpredictable work of long-term community integration. Thank you for your ongoing support.

Thank you,

*Chris Myers Asch, Executive Director*

**P.S. — In a small organization such as ours, every donation makes an outsized impact!**

## New staff at CANMP



**Osama Oudeh** joined our staff this Fall as our Refugee Support Coordinator. Osama was an Arabic teacher and an accountant in his native Syria. He and his family arrived in Augusta in April 2023. "I like working with new families because I know how hard it is to be new," Osama says. We are thrilled to have him aboard!

# Community Partnerships Extend CANMP's Impact

**CANMP believes in the power of partnerships.** We work closely with institutions and organizations throughout central Maine to welcome newcomers and connect them to helpful people and resources. These partnerships help us meet the needs of more than 100 refugee families.



CANMP works with refugee resettlement agencies such as the **Jewish Community Alliance of Southern Maine** and **Catholic Charities Maine** to help new arrivals find appropriate housing and adjust to life in Maine. At “house-raising” (above), volunteers help get homes ready for new families.



In November, we partnered with **Window Dressers** on a “Community Build.” Volunteers spent a week building window insulation inserts to help make homes more energy efficient. All the families in our Better Housing Program received inserts to help them save hundreds of dollars.



CANMP is a proud partner agency of the United Way of Kennebec Valley. We work with UWKV partners such as **Project Fresh Start**, which runs a warehouse for donated furniture, kitchen items, and other essentials. CANMP brings refugee families to the warehouse so they can get the things they need for their new homes.



CANMP is expanding its presence in Waterville to help new refugee families who have settled there. We are working with **Mid-Maine Regional Adult Community Education** and other local institutions to connect refugees to English classes and other opportunities. We helped the **Center for Small Town Jewish Life** at Colby College launch Yad B'Yad (Hand in Hand), a teen mentoring program for refugees.

**\$14,000+!**

After earthquakes devastated northern Syria, CANMP partnered with the **New England Arab American Organization** and the **University of Maine - Augusta** to host an Eid celebration and fundraiser. With a match from a local foundation, our supporters raised more than \$14,000 for Partners for World Health, which sent much-needed medical supplies to victims.

# CANMP Programs Build Relationships

## Connecting People



We believe that a strong community is built on the foundation of strong personal relationships. Through our Family Mentor Teams, CANMP connects refugee families with American volunteers who can help them learn about American culture. We have formed more than 45 teams in six years.

## Meeting Critical Needs

CANMP works to meet the needs of refugee families, particularly in housing, language, and employment. We offer free English classes and connect new arrivals to employment services. Through our Better Housing Program, we provide 11 families (more than 70 people) with safe, affordable homes.



## Supporting Young People

Our Activity Fund helps pay for extracurricular activities such as summer camp, swimming lessons, sports, and driving school. We also offer **\$1,000 scholarships** to graduating seniors to help them pursue higher education. Shatha Al Hoshan (left) was one of five Kennebec New Mainer Scholarship winners in 2023. She currently attends the University of Maine - Augusta.



## Educating the Broader Community

CANMP strives to build an integrated community where people from all cultures feel equally welcomed and respected. We host volunteer trainings, educational events, and speakers to help educate the broader community about the variety of cultures represented in central Maine. We want long-time Americans to understand the challenges that refugees face and the benefits they bring to our community.

