

Taking Action:

A Run for Refugees

By Class 5-209 at P.S. 154 Harriet Tubman School



Behind the Book / New York

Behind the Book's mission is to develop engaged readers and writers in underserved NYC public schools by designing and delivering programs that are multi-disciplinary, culturally responsive, and promote deeper connections to books and their authors.

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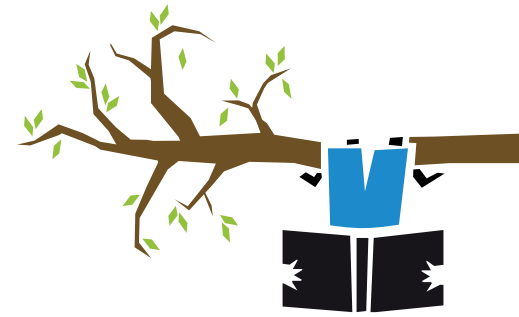
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In the interest of honoring student voice, Behind the Book presents students' work as received from the teacher.

We would like to thank two of our generous supporters: The Guru Krupa Foundation, whose contribution made this program possible, and The Korein Foundation, who supported the creation and publication of this class book.

TO ALL THE REFUGEES:

Our fight for your safety continues. To everyone who supported us as we studied the refugee crisis: Thank you!

About the Program

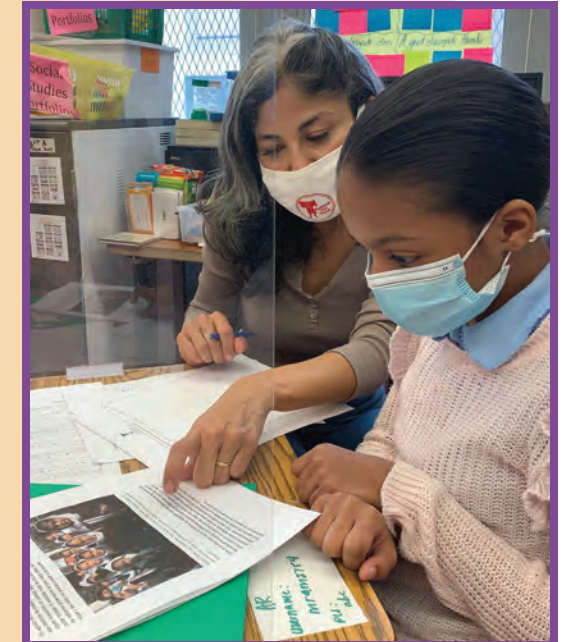
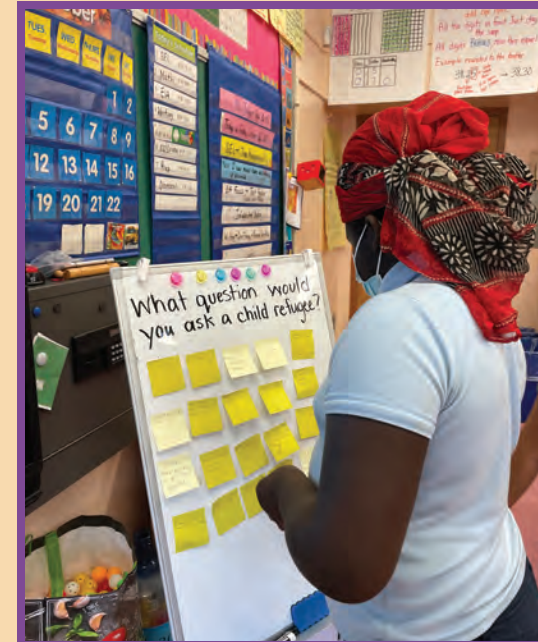
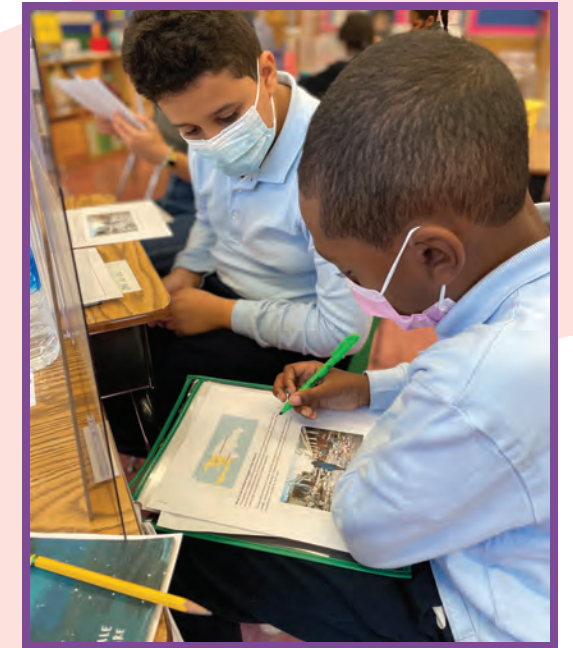
Why is it important to share the stories of others? The students in Ms. Fahy's Class 5-209 embarked on an in-depth project to understand the experiences of refugees. The class read the book *Stormy Seas: Stories of Young Boat Refugees* by Mary Beth Leatherdale which told five true tales of young people who left their homes, setting sail in search of asylum.

Students began by imagining what one item they would take with them if they had to leave their homes in an emergency. During two virtual visits to the class, author Mary Beth Leatherdale had students read the refugees' stories aloud. She described how she hoped the book would bring awareness to the very difficult circumstances refugees face. She used vivid details about their experiences to help the students empathize with the hardships of others around the world.

In small groups, students researched refugee crises in Haiti, Venezuela, and Afghanistan. They learned that refugees flee their home countries to escape a combination of war, natural disaster, hunger, and political unrest.

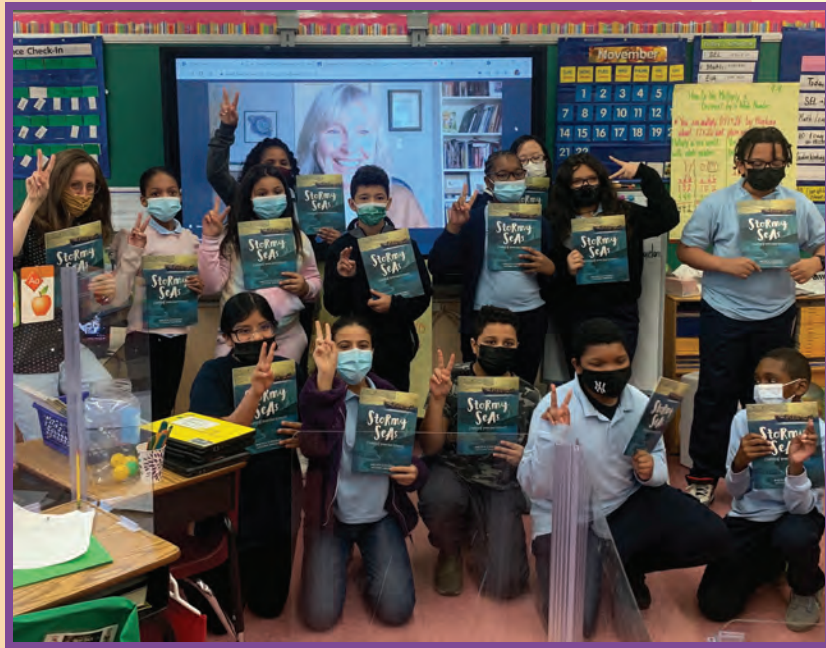
The class was visited by Hafza Girdap of Advocates of Silenced Turkey, a human rights organization working for persecuted people in Turkey and abroad. Hafza shared the challenges immigrants and refugees face adapting to their new host countries.

The class worked with Behind the Book writing coaches to craft their research notes into compelling essays on the refugee crisis in their chosen countries. With Behind the Book teaching artist Maria Tapia, students created a paper suitcase that they could fill with items most important to them.



Motivated by their new understanding of the refugee crisis, the students visited other classes to describe what they learned about the plight of refugees and to ask for donations. On their own initiative, they continued fundraising by staffing a table in the school lobby and visiting the middle-school students. They organized a run on the school track, soliciting donations for each lap completed. The class surpassed their goals and raised over \$1,300 for the International Rescue Committee (IRC) which helps people survive and rebuild their lives in crisis areas.

Their efforts were recognized by Milagros Cruz of the IRC who visited with the class to express the organization's appreciation and to describe their work. Sharing the stories of refugees all around the world through their reading, research, and art were powerful tools for Class 5-209, sparking a desire to help others through enthusiastic fundraising efforts and educating people about these humanitarian disasters.



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The Refugee Crisis

- Imaginate que el Talibán no te dejen trabajar o no ir a las escuelas a aprender solamente porque eres mujer. Es importante conocer lo que está pasando en Afganistán y ayudar a las mujeres y niñas. En este ensayo vas a leer lo que está pasando en Afghanistan con las niñas y mujeres. También vas a aprender cómo las mujeres huyeron de sus países. Y también aprenderás que ayudar es mejor. Ayudemos a las mujeres de Afganistán que vivieron huyendo hacia este país para que tengan una vida feliz con sus hijos. Algunos queremos que cambie la ley para que las mujeres tengan una vida feliz y que puedan trabajar y que las niñas puedan ir a las escuelas y que tengan una vida mejor.

Los que viven allí huyeron de su país por que ahí guerra pero ahí mujeres que están viviendo una vida miserable porque? Las mujeres con sus hijos y con sus hijos se van de su país por que los talibanes no dejan que las niñas y mujeres no vayan a las escuelas a estudiar solo los niños si pueden lo otro es que los talibanes no quiere que las mujeres trabajen y es por eso que huyen de sus países también por que Afganistán no hay agua los que viven ahí se van a Pakistán a Iran por que? Porque ellos quieren tener una vida feliz donde sus hijas puedan trabajar o estudiar y tener una vida mejor y puedan comer o para tener agua y cosas para que sus familias tengan una vida mejor.

Una mujer por fin se fue de ese país y se fue en un refugio para mujeres refugio secreto, a ella la castigaron en Afganistán por salir huyendo de su casa el cuñado la agarró y su esposo por castigo le cortó la nariz y las orejas algunas gentes han muertos algunos heridos se van a Pakistán por qué huyen tienen miedo en morir, también porque la bomba de las guerras destruyeron sus casas es mejor ayudar a las personas que no tienen hogares hay que donar aquellos que duermen en el suelo dona y deles comida se buena persona.

Bueno lo que yo se es que ellos pudieron salir porque también puede ser caminando paso a paso los talibanes no se dan cuenta y es por eso que huyeron de manera fácil pero no tan fácil también se les hace difícil huir por que caminan lejos en el desierto muy cansados y con hambre pero yo les doy suerte en que puedan huir en el lado donde no puedan vivir mejor es mejor que ellos se vayan a vivir en Pakistán para tener una vida feliz y que sus hijos puedan estudiar y trabajar pero lo que había dicho los hombres les están quitando el derecho a las niñas y las mujeres tenemos derecho en trabajar y estudiar a muchas mujeres la han castigado le cortan el brazo las piernas la nariz las orejas y las castigan peor así le paso a una mujer que ahora es feliz lejos de ellos.

Bueno lo importante es ayudar a aquellos sin hogares y sin comida si vemos a una persona que viene de Afganistán a otros países le daremos un refugio y también alimentos y bebidas y agua por que es importante apoyarlas y apoyarlos por que ellos son bienvenidos en cada país y ellos tendrán alimentos y tendrán una vida feliz y sus hijos les daremos también alimentos por que es importante ayudar y alimentar las personas en las calles y donar y que sus hijos sean felices tendrán camas baños y comida y mucho más para mantener a salvo a los hijos de dios, dios cuando ve que uno es bueno el se pondrá feliz y cuando ayudemos a otros dios nos ayuda también es por eso que es importante apoyar a las mujeres y también a los hombres que viven triste para ayudar a sus esposas ayuda y donale.

Ayudar es mejor por que cuando te dicen gracias muchas gracias te sientes agradecido y te sientes feliz por ayudar a personas de Afganistán y también ayudar a otros porque si ayudas tu vida será mejor y estarás feliz y agradecido ayuda y donale.



By: Aleska

The War Against the Taliban

Do you know why people have to flee their homes? It is really important for people to understand the stories of others. No one should live in fear of not being welcomed by other people. In this essay, I will discuss why refugees flee their homes, how they get out of their countries, and why it is important to support refugees.

A refugee is a person that has to leave his or her country. He or she is probably at risk of dying. This person has to leave everything behind. A refugee may leave his or her country because of war like the one caused by the Taliban in Afghanistan. They may also leave their country because of a natural disaster like a tornado, hurricane, or tsunami. One more cause is that there is not enough water or food for everyone. It is hard to be a refugee because people will look and treat you differently from everyone else. It is also difficult because you will have to learn how people act and live their lives. A refugee's only hope is that they are welcomed.

The main issue in Afghanistan that is causing people to flee is the actions and beliefs of a group called the Taliban. The Taliban is a Islamac group that does not let girls go to school

and women work. Many of the women and girls don't want to live that way. They are afraid that if they don't obey, they will be killed. Many of the men don't like the beliefs of the Taliban either. One of the ways refugees tried to get out was by hanging onto cargo planes that were sent by the USA. This shows how very desperate the situation is. Some of the lucky Afghans got into the plane but they had to hurry because the Taliban was coming. Another way they flee is by paying human traffickers to take them out of the country. They must have been very desperate to take such a risk.

We can help refugees feel welcome by becoming friends with them. We can also donate necessities such as food, water, and a first aid kit. It is important to support refugees because they are human. You don't know what they've been through. I'm not sure we can even imagine their suffering.

In conclusion, it is important to understand the stories of others because no one should live in fear of not being welcomed by other people. Sharing the stories will bring understanding and hopefully empathy.

By: Ares



The Refugee Crisis: Haiti

It took almost three months of travel by bus for him to get to safety. This is the story of just one refugee out of the millions that have had to leave their homes all over the world. Did you know that some people are forced to leave their countries? If you didn't, read this: "A rumble shook the earth as people screamed at falling buildings. Tears ran down people's cheeks as they ran away from everything they ever had known." Sad. People in this situation don't have a choice. They will have to leave their homes forever.

A refugee is someone who cannot stay in his home, where he loves to play. Something had to go terribly wrong for this to happen. The earth may roar with anger. The people stop singing their songs. Earthquakes are a common reason people have to leave their homes. Their homes become filled with danger. Refugees feel that the end is near. That is why they are on the run, looking for somewhere new that they can call home; hoping to be accepted and feel welcome.

Earthquakes and tropical storms are the main reason that Haitians have had to leave their homes. Their homes are destroyed, and they can't find food and water. Getting

water and food is nearly impossible. The Haitians have to wait in long lines for hours and often get turned away without anything. The harbors are a main source for food and trading. They are no longer able to use them because of the damage. So, by land and sea Haitian refugees are looking for new homes. They take buses, boats, or travel by foot. It doesn't really matter how they move, the trip is difficult. Sometimes the routes are so crowded that there isn't room for everyone to cross bridges or rivers. Also, you need passports to get into another country. Most Haitians don't have them and can only hope that they won't be denied entry.

We can help Haitian refugees by giving them food, water, and money. We can shelter them, and provide clothing. A refugee has risked everything to survive. Anything we can do to make them feel welcome and safe is helpful. The Haitian refugee crisis is far from over. It is not too late for us to help.



By: Elijah

The Refugee Crisis

Have you heard about the refugee crisis in Afghanistan? Millions have had to flee because of war and unrest. A group called the Taliban has taken over causing tens of thousands of Afghans to flee. Their sexist laws saying that women cannot go to school or work and must stay at home are unthinkable. The refugee crisis is real.

A refugee is someone who has to flee his or her home. People may force them to leave. Refugees flee their countries because of their government, natural disasters, starvation or maybe a civil war. A refugee is not someone who wants to leave. He or she is forced to leave.

As I mentioned earlier, a group called the Taliban has taken over causing tens of thousands of Afghans to flee for their own safety. The Taliban does not let girls go to school and women go to work. Women don't feel safe or free under their control; fleeing is dangerous but they have no choice.

They might even allow traffickers to smuggle them out the country, hoping for the best.

We can help refugees feel welcome by giving what we can. They need food, shelter, clean water and medicine because they are human like us. It is important to support them. They shouldn't get treated unfairly. They have to leave to survive. Imagine spending a day in their shoes. How can we look the other way?

In conclusion, I can understand why so many people feel forced to leave Afghanistan. It is dangerous there. So dangerous that people are willing to risk their lives by leaving. I think it is unfair for the girls that can't go to school and the women who can't go to work. I would leave too without hesitation. Life in Afghanistan is not a safe comfortable life. No one should be forced to live that way.



By: Fanta

The Refugee Crisis with a Focus on Haiti

Did you know that millions of refugees flee to find new homes? The reasons refugees leave their countries include war, famine and a lack of shelter. In this essay, I am going to elaborate on why refugees flee their home countries. I will talk about the crisis in Haiti. Finally, I will explain how we can help refugees feel welcome and why it is important to support them.

Refugees are people that have to leave their country. They might leave because it is dangerous. There might be no food or water. The government might be bad. Whatever the reason, it is no longer safe for them to stay home. They will likely die if they remain in their homes.

There are many reasons people have fled from Haiti. There were disasters like earthquakes and tropical storms. Also, the government is unfair. The country has become

dangerous to live in. To flee Haiti, many people travel by jam-packed boat. Many others walk for days by foot. The trip they take is dangerous but not as dangerous as staying would be.

It is important to support refugees so they can be safe. We can help them by giving food, water and shelter. In my opinion, we should always help our fellow human beings. We cannot imagine how much suffering they have been through. Their lives have as much value as our own. No one should be left behind in this world.

In conclusion, refugees leave their countries because they have experienced natural disasters like earthquakes or an unfair government. The people of Haiti are experiencing all of this at one time. Will you help us help them?

By: Hamza



The Refugee Crisis in Haiti

Do you know what a refugee is? A refugee is a person who leaves his or her country because of either the government, a natural disaster, or a lack of food and water. No one should go through this. In this essay, I will tell you about all of this.

Refugees are not people that want to leave their country; they are forced. To get out, they might use a boat, walk for long miles or swim across dangerous waters. It is important to support them because they are human beings and should feel safe on this planet.

Haiti is a country that has experienced many storms. There have been multiple earthquakes and other natural disasters that have made the country unlivable.

People have managed to get away by running or using cars if possible. All of these people have no choice but to leave. They did not choose this, it just happened.

We can help refugees feel welcome by giving them shelter, food, water and cars. It is important to support them because they should feel safe. Kids can help by asking their parents to donate what they can. We can also plan our own fundraisers.

In summary, refugees have left their countries because of tropical storms, and earthquakes. Haiti, for example, has been hit hard. I feel like the refugee crisis in this world is horrible. It is important for us to give what we can even if it is just a kind word or a smile.

By: Kaiden



The Haitian Refugee Crisis

Do you know why people leave/flee their country? We have been studying the refugee crisis in our classroom. In this essay I will discuss the reason why refugees leave their country and the current crisis in Haiti. I will also explain how we can help refugees feel welcome and why it's important to support them.

Refugees are people that have left their country. Not because they want to but because they have to or else they'll die. Refugees may flee their home country because of the government, natural disasters, civil war, or starvation. They are usually forced to leave their home country. Some natural disasters that countries suffer from are cyclones, hurricanes, tropical storms, torrential rains, floods, and earthquakes. Some other issues can be poverty, political unrest, and gang violence (or violence in general).

Haitians are currently in crisis. They are living in fear because of a rise in violence. The things that are happening in the country of Haiti are natural disasters (like tropical storms, floods, and especially earthquakes), political instability, food insecurity, and overpopulation. The two earthquakes that caused major damage to the country are the one in January 2010 and the one on August 14, 2021. If you were in Haiti you would see trash and broken buildings. Haiti was finally recovering from the 2010 earthquake when suddenly another earthquake happened in 2021, which

pretty much pushed them back to where they started in 2010. Haitians manage to leave their country by taking a bus or any other vehicles. Other than taking a vehicle, they walk by foot on both land and through water. When Haitians leave their country some places they go are Florida, New York, Massachusetts, New Jersey, California, and Texas.

We can help refugees feel welcome by getting them settled in their new homes and countries. We can help refugees feel welcome by assisting them in gaining asylum, if they aren't offered it. It is important to support refugees because they can help create new things and contribute greatly to the economy of an adoptive country.

Refugees shouldn't suffer and not be welcomed by people. Refugees like Haitians should be welcome since they have gone through hardships, leaving their country and adjusting to a new one. Even though we can't see what will happen in the future, WE can help the refugees now by donating to them and offering any other support. We are all in this together.

By: Kathy



The Refugee Crisis in Afghanistan

Imagine you're a woman at home doing your homework for graduate school, cooking some food for your family when you see on the news that the Taliban is back after so many years. You remember that when they were here all those years ago, you couldn't leave your home, go to school or even choose what you wanted to wear. Your life was basically in the hands of a man you were forced to marry. You did not even love this man but you had to do what he said or you would be killed.

You're scared, shaking in your room. The Taliban says they will not bring back their sexist laws but all you can think is, "I don't want to go through that again." You lock yourself in your room along with your children. You always tell them about how horrible the Taliban is. After relaxing your daughter, convincing her that it will be okay, you take yourself and your kids out the small window in your room.

You were saving up money for the rest of your education but you have to use that to escape. You hire a smuggler to take you to another country. There are hundreds of refugees waiting when you get to the secret location. You think about how you will have to leave everyone you ever loved and everything you ever loved. The Taliban says they are not going to bring the rules back but you don't believe what they say. You get on a boat and sail to Australia. You and your kids are hungry. All you have are crumbs and the will to survive.

A refugee is someone who has to leave her country not because she wants to but because she has to. Refugees have to flee because their lives are in danger. They

might have to leave because of war, hunger or a corrupt government or many other reasons. For example, in Afghanistan the Taliban has taken over twice. First, in the 1990's. They are doing it again. This leads to war between Afghans and the Taliban. This also leads to starvation because the Taliban cannot feed the people while war is raging. Because of this, people leave their country to live better lives. The lives they want to live.

As I mentioned before, In Afghanistan the Taliban has taken over. They enforce sexist laws that demand that women cannot go to school, leave their homes without a man with them and they can't even choose who they want to marry. They have to do whatever their husband tells them or they will be killed. They can't choose what they want to wear. They have to be covered from head to toe in cloth. Because of this people want to find better lives. They hire smugglers to take them out of the country or they make the trek by foot. Some take boats to different continents just to be safe.

We can help refugees feel welcome by donating to them. We can help them by giving food, shelter and safety. Instead of sending them away we can comfort them. This is important because we can all imagine how it would feel to come out of a situation like that and be turned away.

In short, a refugee is someone who has to leave a country not because she wants to but because she has to. Some leave because of war, starvation or natural disasters. We should help refugees because of their troubles. Troubles we would not wish on our worst enemies.



By: Lissette

The Venezuelan Refugee Crisis

Refugees are people that are forced out of their country by someone that doesn't respect them or doesn't like the way they look or act. Some of the reasons refugees flee are because they are not treated equally, the country is at war, natural disasters have occurred, safety is being threatened, people are hungry, or there is a lack of shelter. There are really too many reasons to name.

I think being a refugee would be scary. Most of the time you'd be on a boat or walking. You would be trying to find safety. There would be a danger of dying. You might be sent to a detention center where you have no family, or friends. This wouldn't make sense to you because you have done nothing wrong. Also, the fact that you'll have no food or water is alarming. If I was a refugee, I would feel confused, scared, sad, and I wouldn't have a clue as to what to do.

Venezuela is a country suffering from a severe refugee crisis. Most Venezuelans have no shelter and have to flee to find a different home that is better and safer. The government treats the people differently and not equally. A small group has all the power. Most of the Venezuelan

people feel unrepresented. They are left to starve and fend for themselves. The whole country is low on supplies; mostly basic things like food, water, shelter, and medicine. The Venezuelans flee on foot, by swimming, wading through filthy rivers, or riding on a packed boat. The Venezuelans walk across rivers, roads, mud paths, bridges, and other places just to escape. They often do not feel welcome when they make it to another country.

It is important to make refugees feel welcome. We can help them by donating things like food, water, medicine, and money. We can treat them equally. They should not be treated unfairly because they act or look different. It's important to support them because they have a difficult past. Also, they are the same as us, just in a unique way. We would want people to treat us well if we were in a similar situation.

In conclusion, it is important that we recognize that there is a refugee crisis in Venezuela and other countries too. We need to offer our support.



By: Malak

Venezuela's Refugee Crisis

It would be really hard to be forced to leave your country. Unfortunately, this is what is happening to the Venezuelan refugees. In this essay, I will be talking about the refugee crisis. I will explain what a refugee is. I will talk about why people flee their home countries. My focus will be on Venezuela. I will discuss what is happening in Venezuela, and what is causing people to flee this country. Finally, I will describe things we can do to help them feel welcome.

First, a refugee is someone who has to leave the country because of government issues or other things like difficulty getting a job or finding food, shelter and medicine. All of those things force Venezuelans to leave their country and become refugees.

Many countries have been welcoming the Venezuelan refugees such as Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Mexico, Panama, Peru and parts of the Caribbean. Over 5 million Venezuelans have already left their homeland. Traveling is hard, especially now, because of Covid. Borders have been closed. The refugees want to get out so badly that they have been making dangerous escapes through water. They have to worry about catching Covid, or drowning as they wade through the deep river waters.

"We left everything in Venezuela. We don't have a place to live or sleep and have nothing to eat."

-Nayebis, Venezuelan refugee

"We had nothing to eat when we fled Venezuela. We tried to spare all our food for our son, but he went over 24 hours without a bite. He is only 3 years old."

-Gerardo, Venezuelan father

These are the actual words of refugees. How do you think you would feel if you were forced to leave your country?



The International Refugee Committee (IRC) is an organization that helps refugees around the world by raising awareness about the crisis. They donate the money they raise to the refugees. They are also partnering with Behind The Book. Behind the Book goes into schools and introduces authors to kids. The books they choose often have to do with important issues like this. We read a book called Stormy Seas and met the author, Mary Beth Leatherdale. She wrote about the experiences of refugees around the world. We decided that we wanted to help these people out. We made our school community aware of the crisis and raised over \$1,000 that we are donating to the IRC.

One way we can help refugees is by telling them all about their new country. We can show them where to find food, shelter and clothing. We can help them find jobs, and learn how to use the money of this country. Another way to help a refugee is to NOT ask painful questions. They might not want to talk about their experience. Once you become friends, then you should ask if they are comfortable sharing their experiences. A refugee may simply just want your company, so try to be supportive. A smile and a kind word go a long way.

By: Marcella



Venezuela: A Refugee Crisis

Do you know how many refugees have left Venezuela? Over 4 million and counting. No one should have to flee their home. All refugees are going through something horrible and they are forced to leave everything behind. The refugees need our help and it is up to us to do our part. Refugees leave for many reasons, such as a lack of jobs, supplies, or because they have been displaced by natural disasters or even war.

As I mentioned before, refugees are people that leave their country because they are forced out. Refugees may have to flee their homes because of civil war or starvation. Maybe the government took all their goods. A refugee may be going through something challenging like a natural disaster. It isn't always the government's fault. There could be other reasons such as not being able to find a job, the color of their skin, or their religion. Whatever the cause, they have no choice but to leave.

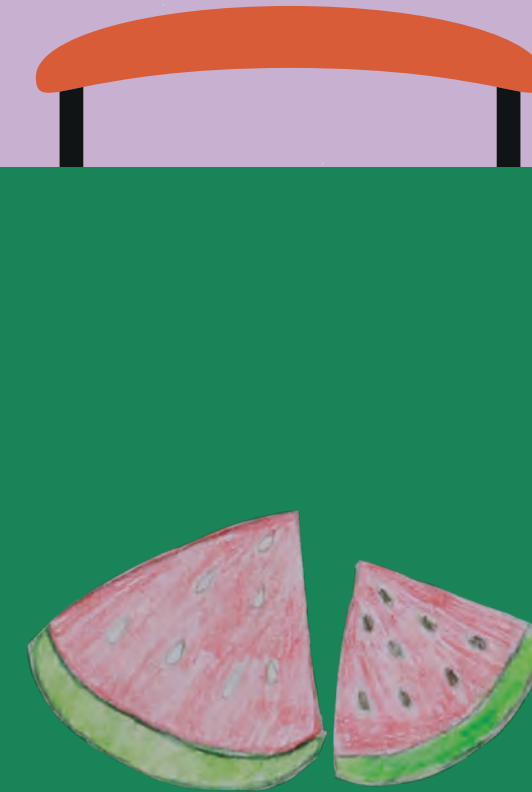
In Venezuela, over 4 million people have left because of widespread violence and poverty. There are economic issues concerning food supply and inflation. Things just cost too much for the people to buy. They are forced to leave and search for a better life. Venezuelans manage to get out by

crossing the border by walking long distances. Many of them go to the neighboring country of Columbia. Refugees may also take boats to go to a safer place. It is very risky. Usually, the boats are tiny and filled with too many people. Some people fall off the boat and drown. Once the refugees make it to another country, they still face problems. They aren't always welcomed. Often, they are treated poorly. The other countries claim that they don't have the room for so many new people.

We can help refugees feel welcome by giving them food because they are probably hungry. We can also say nice things or ask if they are ok. It's important to support them because they are going through a lot. We want to make sure they are ok, and that they feel welcome in their new place. They don't need to think people are going to treat them the way they were treated in their home country.

As you can see, refugees experience extreme hardships. Life in Venezuela has become unlivable. People have no choice but to leave their homes. It is important to support refugees. It is hard to imagine what they have been through. We should welcome them and help them to begin again.

By: Melia



Venezuela and the Refugee Crisis

Did you know that millions of refugees risk their lives to find new homes? They risk their lives taking dangerous journeys by small boats out in treacherous oceans. They really have no choice if they want to survive.

A refugee is a person who is forced to leave his or her home. Refugees flee their countries because they are forced to leave home – there is no food, no clothes or medicine. They are forced to do things that they do not want to do. Sometimes they risk their lives to make sure their families stay alive.

A lot of issues are happening in Venezuela that are causing a refugee crisis. Some examples: the government doesn't treat everyone equally, there is not enough food or clean water, and the living conditions are terrible. It is hard for them and they try to make the best of it. Unfortunately,

if they stay, they will die. The Venezuelans flee by walking long distances or they take crowded boats. They will take chances and make difficult decisions. It is not easy. People in other countries are unwelcoming and may discriminate against them. So even a fresh start is tough.

It is important to make sure that refugees feel welcome. You can't imagine what happened in their lives. A kind word is a great way to start. It will make them feel safe. To help, you can provide refugees with food and shelter. You can also have a fundraiser. My class is donating money to the International Refugee Committee (IRC).

In conclusion, refugees have been through a lot. We should all do our part to educate people about this crisis. We should offer support where we can. Everyone should know what it is like to be safe and have the things they need.

By: Olivia



Haiti: A Refugee Crisis

Do you know what a refugee is? A refugee is a person who has to be forced to leave his or her country. I find this really upsetting. In this essay, I will talk about why refugees flee their countries. I will also tell you what happened in Haiti that caused people to flee. Finally, I'll explain ways we can help refugees feel welcome.

As I mentioned, a refugee is a person who is forced to leave a country. One reason is that there might be a war in the home country. Another reason people might leave is because of natural disasters such as storms or earthquakes. A third reason is that the country may be low on supplies. For example, there might not be enough food to support life.

Haiti is an example of a country that is suffering with a refugee crisis now. There is a lot going on in this country that is causing people to leave. It seems like there is one crisis after another. Last summer there was an earthquake and a tropical storm. Haitians were still recovering from

the 2010 earthquake. These events on top of the 2010 event made the country unlivable. Recently, they have also experienced problems with the government making the country dangerous. The government is unstable. They are desperate for food, supplies and need to get away from the violence. The country has become uninhabitable.

How can we support refugees? We can help them feel welcome by being kind. We can support them by donating whatever we can to help. We can sponsor them. It is important to welcome refugees into their adoptive country and make them comfortable. It is always good to put your feet in other people's shoes. What would you want people to do if you were in their situation?

In conclusion, the refugee crisis in Haiti is real. I can't imagine what it would be like to find myself in the situation of a refugee. What would you want others to do?

By: Trinity



Refugees in Afghanistan

Refugees from all over the world have had to flee their homes. For example, six million Afghans have had to flee because of hunger, and serious conflict. In this essay, I will break down the refugee crisis for you with a focus on the current issues caused by the Taliban in Afghanistan. I will also discuss ways that we can be supportive of refugees.

A refugee is a person who has to flee a country because of war, natural disasters or hunger. In Afghanistan, a refugee crisis is ongoing as a result of the actions of a fundamentalist group known as the Taliban. The members are a group of terrorists that don't allow women to work or learn anything. The Taliban monitors people all over Afghanistan. If people want to go to school on the bus the Taliban rides with them. There is a chance the Taliban may look in their houses to see if women are reading or learning. The women fear that the Taliban will shoot them if they are caught. Even young girls have to worry. Many people from Afghanistan are trying their best to get away from the group, even if it means leaving their country behind.

When the Taliban took over Afghanistan this year, conflicts started to erupt. People started dying because they were so desperate to get out. They fled their homes by boat so that they could transfer onto a cargo plane. Some people held on to the outside of the cargo planes hoping to survive the flight out. They didn't make it. Images on the news

show this happening over and over again. As planes took off, the Taliban could be seen in trucks trying to catch up. Some people paid smugglers to smuggle them. This was a dangerous option, but one that is still taking place. As I mentioned before, over six million Afghans have fled their homes as a result of the current crisis.

It is important for us to find ways to support the refugees. They've been through hard times in their lives because of conflict and starvation. We can help out in lots of ways. For instance, let's say that your family moves out of a house and leaves it empty. At least one refugee could stay in that house for free. Other ways we can help and support refugees include being nice to them and making them feel welcome in their adopted countries. Also we could give them some money if we have it available. Anything we do should really come from the heart. Another way we could embrace refugees is to show them around the place, and help them get jobs. Finally, we could donate to groups that focus on helping refugees, like the International Rescue Committee (IRC).

Therefore, you can see that the refugee crisis in Afghanistan is no joke. These people need help immediately. They need places to live, jobs to do, and access to the lives that they want to live.

By: Zaire



About the Visiting Author



Mary Beth Leatherdale is an award-winning author of books for children and youth. Her book *Stormy Seas: Stories of Boat Refugees* received three starred reviews and more than twenty awards and honors, including being selected for the White Raven Collection and Booklist Editors' Choice List.

Mary Beth is a member of the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators (SCBWI); IBBY Canada; the Writer's Union of Canada; the Canadian Society of Children's Authors, Illustrators and Performers (CANSCAIP); and the Canadian Children's Book Centre. Mary Beth has a degree in Visual Arts from the University of Western Ontario and a Masters of Education from the Ontario Institute of Studies in Education (OISE). Mary Beth lives in Toronto with her family and her dog Champ.

About Behind the Book



Behind the Book brings authors and their books into classrooms to build literacy skills and foster a community of lifelong readers and writers. Working with classes from Pre-K through 12th grade, our series of workshops is designed to bring books to life and inspire students to reach their full potential. Behind the Book is embedded in the class curriculum, nurtures critical thinking, creativity, and self-confidence in New York City public school students. All programs meet the Next Generation Learning Standards.

About the Student Authors

We are a group of 5th graders determined to support refugees around the world. We understand the importance of getting the word out about this crisis. It is our hope that our book will convince others to join us as we tackle the issues facing today's refugees.

Next Generation Learning Standards Addressed

5R1: Locate and refer to relevant details and evidence when explaining what a text says explicitly/implicitly and make logical inferences. (RI&RL)

5R2: Determine a theme or central idea and explain how it is supported by key details; summarize a text. (RI&RL)

5R3: In literary texts, compare and contrast two or more characters, settings, and events, drawing on specific details in the text. (RL)

In informational texts, explain the relationships or interactions between two or more individuals, events, ideas, or concepts based on specific evidence from the text. (RI)

5W2: Write informative/explanatory texts to explore a topic and convey ideas and information relevant to the subject.

5W6: Conduct research to answer questions, including self-generated questions, and to build knowledge through investigation of multiple aspects of a topic using multiple sources.



Behind the Book