

NEWS RELEASE



Ilene Shapiro—Summit County Executive
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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County observes Welcoming Week, celebrates immigrants and new citizens

SUMMIT COUNTY, OHIO—Summit County Executive Ilene Shapiro and County Council are celebrating Welcoming Week and highlighting the role of immigrants, refugees, and new citizens in building a vibrant and strong Summit County. Launched by Welcoming America in 2012, Welcoming Week is an annual campaign bridging language and culture to provide a sense of belonging to new residents and citizens across the country. Welcoming Week runs September 8-17, 2023.

In Summit County, the International Institute of Akron (IIA) has resettled approximately 500 refugees from countries such as the Democratic Republic of Congo, Myanmar (Burma), Iraq, and Afghanistan during this fiscal year. As refugees and immigrants move to Summit County, it is incumbent upon our leaders and residents to be welcoming, inclusive, and mindful of the barriers new residents may face when seeking an education, a job, healthcare, and more. As crises unfold in countries across the globe, from Sudan to Venezuela to Ukraine, the need for welcoming, supportive communities grows. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) estimate that there were 281 million migrants across the world in 2020 and 35.3 million refugees across the world in 2022.

While these are staggering numbers, each person and family seeking a new home has talents, skills, and ambitions to offer. Summit County is just one community, but by fostering a welcoming and inclusive atmosphere, the County can continue to grow and thrive as a home for people of all backgrounds.

“New residents bring with them new ideas, skills, and passion that leads to new businesses, careers, and families that make Summit County strong,” said Executive Shapiro. “Welcoming Week helps us move past our differences to build a connected community that supports each other in our times of need and prosperity.”

To learn about refugee resettlement in Summit County, check out IIA’s website at www.iiakron.org.

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