

BY: M. of A. Buttenschon

COMMENDING the Mohawk Valley Resource Center for Refugees upon the occasion of hosting its Annual World Refugee Day Celebration on June 22, 2019

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body to recognize that the quality and character of life in the communities across New York State are reflective of the concerned and dedicated efforts of those organizations and individuals who would devote themselves to the welfare of the community and its citizenry; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, it is the sense of this Legislative Body to commend the Mohawk Valley Resource Center for Refugees upon the occasion of hosting its Annual World Refugee Day Celebration on Saturday, June 22, 2019, at Hanna Park, Utica, New York; and

WHEREAS, This auspicious occasion will be comprised of a myriad of events to celebrate World Refugee Day including music and dance performances, a Bike Raffle and Giveaway, and a Puppet Show, as well as a Citizenship Ceremony where refugees from the community will be proudly naturalized to the United States; in addition, people can buy food from vendors, and view traditional crafts and educational displays about refugees and forced migration; and

WHEREAS, It is also a time to recognize the contributions of refugees in Utica, and observe the plight of 60 million individuals, 1 in 22 persons, globally that are refugees or in refugee-like situations; to date, close to 16,000 refugees have resettled and come to call the Mohawk Valley their home; and

WHEREAS, Under the able leadership of Executive Director Shelly Callahan, the Mohawk Valley Resource Center for Refugees strives to assist refugees, immigrants and Limited English Proficient (LEP) individuals throughout the integration process, and helps them achieve independence and self-sufficiency by developing products and services; and

WHEREAS, The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is mandated by the United Nations General Assembly to lead and coordinate international action to protect refugees and find solutions to refugee problems worldwide; and

WHEREAS, It is important to recognize that the United States has a long history of helping and protecting refugees, and is signatory to the 1951 United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol; and

WHEREAS, The United Nations General Assembly unanimously adopted a resolution on December 4, 2000, naming June 20th of every year as World Refugee Day, bringing attention to the plight of the world's refugees

and to extend to them encouragement, support and respect; and

WHEREAS, World Refugee Day 2019 is dedicated to protecting refugees and providing them with opportunities to rebuild their lives safely and with dignity; this year, World Refugee Day also marks a key moment for the public to show support for families and individuals forced to flee; and

WHEREAS, The communities of the Mohawk Valley, Oneida County and the City of Utica continue to both welcome refugees and make resources available to them and their families to lead dignified lives, and achieve security in personhood and to follow life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commend the Mohawk Valley Resource Center for Refugees upon the occasion of hosting its Annual World Refugee Day Celebration on June 22, 2019; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Shelly Callahan, Executive Producer, Mohawk Valley Center for Refugees.