



United States Region

Holy Cross Family Learning Center

***A Holy Cross foundation under the direction of
Sister Jacqueline Verville, CSC and collaborators,
Sister Diane Dupéré, CSC and Sister Pauline Maurier, CSC***

Mission:

The core mission of Holy Cross Family Learning Center is to provide English as a Second Language (ESL) to both immigrants and refugees living in the Manchester area, particularly on the City's West Side. The Center assists them to transition into American culture with a long-range goal of attaining US citizenship. In addition to this core mission, supplemental training programs in such areas as work, sewing, financial training, and so much more also assist in this transition.

Although the present site had not yet opened, the Trustees at West Side Library in Manchester, NH, provided a small classroom where approximately twenty-five Bhutanese refugees attended ESL classes. The official site of Holy Cross Family Learning Center opened its doors at 438 Dubuque Street, Manchester, New Hampshire, on October 4, 2010. Registration at that time totaled close to fifty refugees and immigrants and in June, 2010, a total of eighty-seven immigrants and refugees had registered.

When the Center opened for its second year in September, 2011, a total of eighty-seven immigrants and refugees registered on that day alone and in June, 2012 registrants which represent eighteen ethnic groups from Bhutan, Nepal, Iraq, Rwanda, Sudan, Mexico, Liberia, Russia, India, Dominican Republic, Albania, Korea, Haiti, Ivory Coast, South America, China, Morocco, and Germany.

Goals that have been attained:

- *the implementation of a citizenship / civics class to prepare the immigrants and refugees for their ultimate goal of attaining US citizenship;*
- *the opening of a sewing room to train for work and to find avenues for the sale of handmade products, alterations, and tailoring.*

Projected goals:

- *to purchase five computers to teach computer skills, job searches, skills in English as a Second Language, and driving simulation;*
- *to hire a sewing teacher to train the adults who come to the Center who, in turn, would become sewing teacher assistants to teach others;*
- *to hire an ESL teacher (English as a Second Language) in collaboration with another agency in order to meet City grant requirements.*

Statistics:

Manchester is a proud community whose foundation was built by people with diverse backgrounds. Over the past nine years, New Hampshire has taken in 3,500 refugees:

- *the City of Manchester is the largest area for resettlement, i.e., 2,148 or 61% of the total number of refugees;*
- *there are 1,177 adult ESL (English as a Second Language) learners in the City;*
Languages spoken in Manchester: 62 alone;
- *the basic literacy rate is 10.6%;*
- *high school graduation rate is 81.1% which is second in New England only to Vermont's 82.3%;*
- *90% of refugees have graduated from high school over the last three years and, of those, 93% attend college.*

June 2012

See photos on the next page.

