



Supporting Refugee and Immigrant Youth

Refugees Northwest Foster Care
a program of Lutheran
Community Services NW

Refugees Northwest Foster Care - Overview

- Long term foster care program for Unaccompanied Refugee Minors (URMs)
- ~80 “URM” youth currently in care
- All youth under our guardianship
- 50/50 refugees from overseas, and others entering the US from Central America/Mexico
- They are *not* youth who recently been separated from their parents at the border

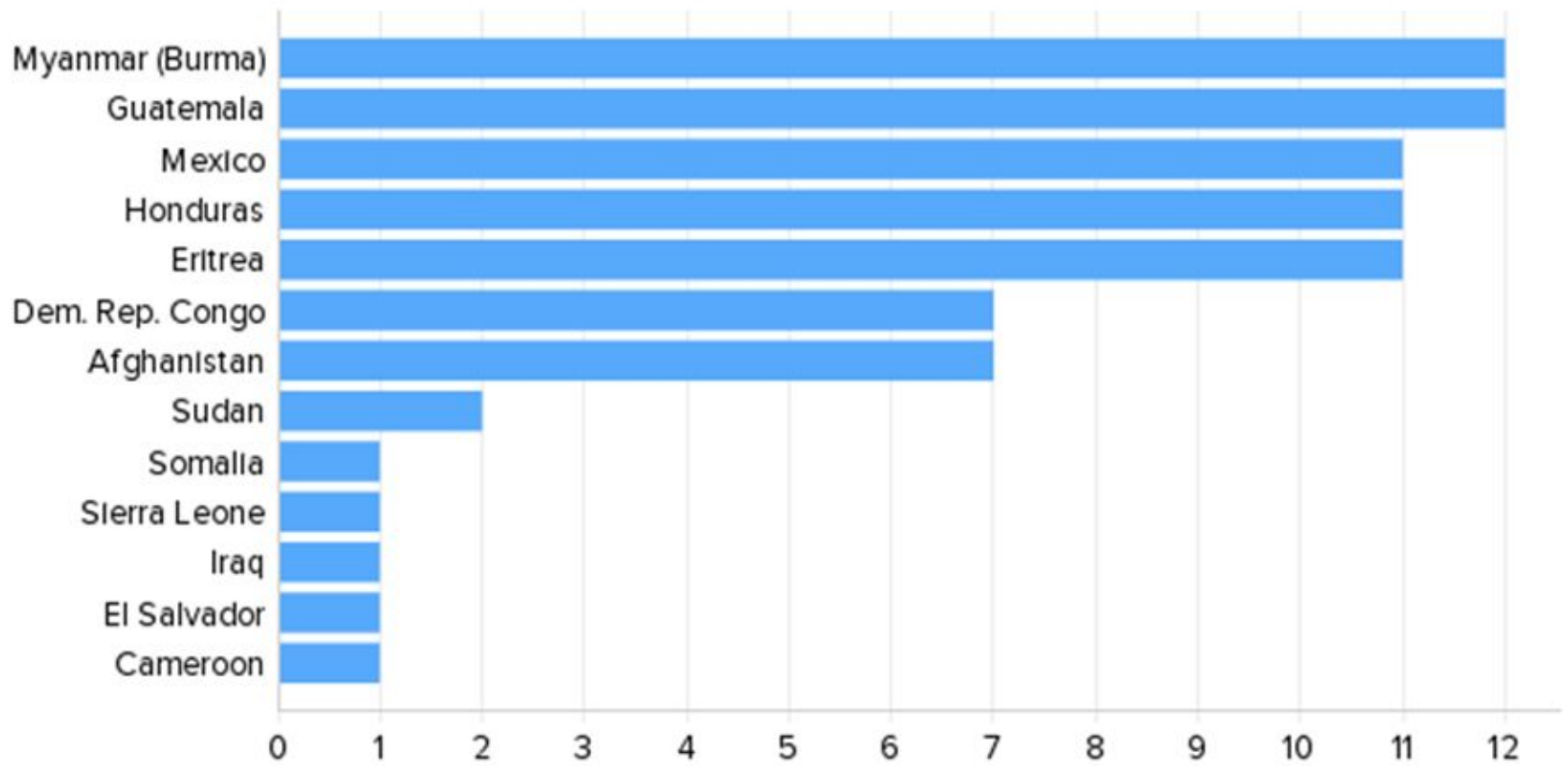
Refugees Northwest Foster Care - Overview

- LCS provides holistic care and support services through team of 7 social workers, 4 IL case managers, recruiter, licenser mental health support staff
- Intensive wrap-around case management focused on eventual transition to independence

Refugees Northwest Foster Care - Overview

- Most youth are older male teenagers
- Must enter care before turning 18 and can remain in care until turning 21
- High occurrence/levels of trauma
- Most live in/near King County
- 45% with foster homes
- 35% in independent living
- 20% in residential programs/other

Countries of Origin

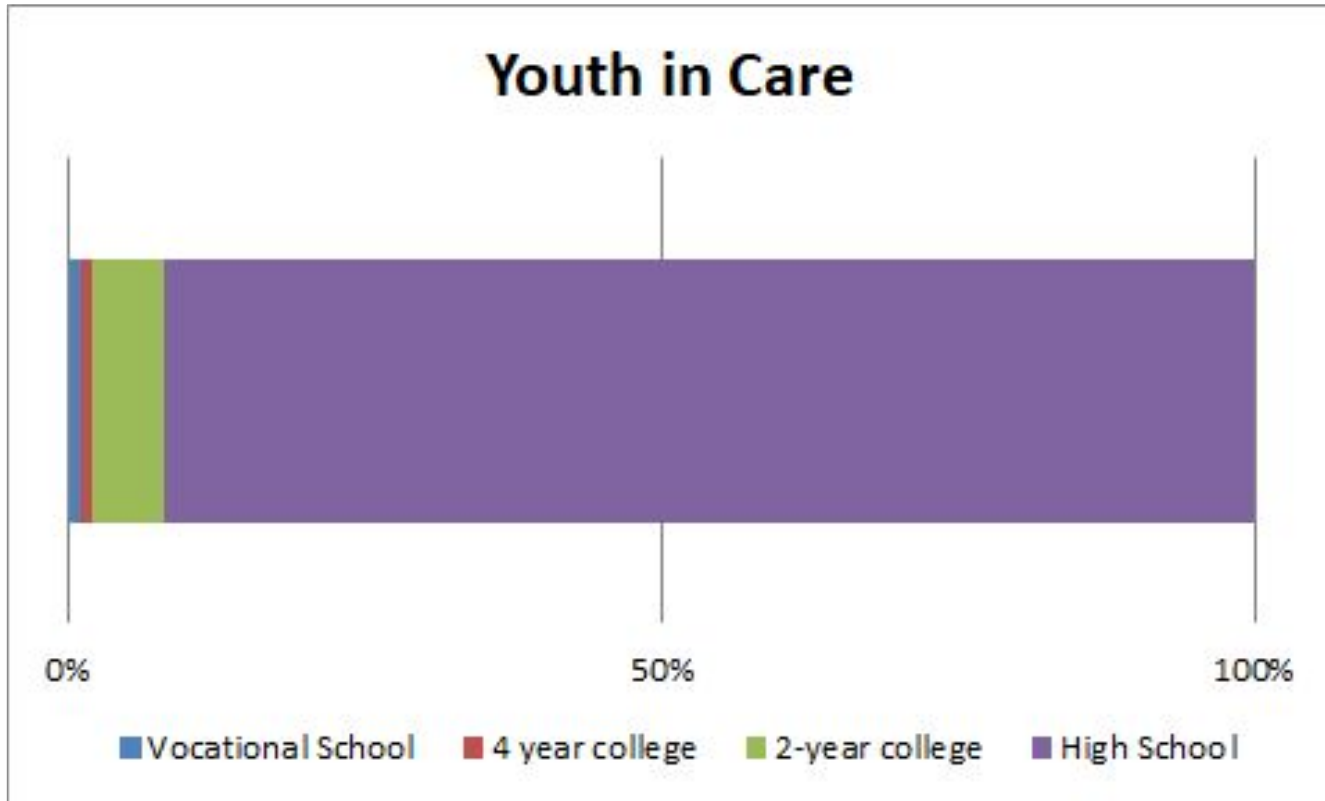




Education Basics

- Starting high school at average age of 18
- Behind in basic education
- Youth 18-21 in Extended Foster Care are often juggling full time job and school
- Most start first year in college at 21

Education level



80% of emancipated youth are pursuing higher education and enrolled in ETV via LCSNW



Educational Supports

- Provide exposure to post secondary education via college tours and access to other programs
- Provide support and advocacy on campus and with educators for pathways to graduation

22 high schools and 3 HS completion programs

East	South	North	Seattle
CEO at Bellevue College	Foster High School	Shorewood HS	Roosevelt High School
Mercer Island HS	Mount Rainier HS	Lynnwood HS	Seattle World School
Sammamish High School	Kentridge HS	Glacier Peak HS	South Lake High School
The Overlake School	Auburn Riverside HS	Stanwood HS	Franklin High School
Inglemoor High School	Renton High School	EdCAP Edmonds	Seattle Vocational Prog
Juanita High School	Skyline High School		
Open Doors Lake Wa Tech	Hazen High School		
	Lindbergh HS		
	Lincoln High School		

Colleges

Current Colleges			Past Colleges
Everett CC	Seattle Central	UW Seattle	UW Bothell
Edmonds CC	Green River	UW Tacoma	Whitworth U
Shoreline CC	Highline CC	Seattle Pacific Uni	CWU
Renton Tech	South Seattle	Seattle Uni	WSU
Bellevue College		Western WA Uni	Wenatchee Valley CC

- Youth in local colleges usually start with ESL 4 or higher and Math 89
- Most youth are in STEM programs
- Psychology is another top pick for major of study

Scholarships

- WA Governor's scholarship - 90% receive
- Leadership 1000 - 80% receive
- WSOS - 80% receive
- Sheng Yen Lu Foundation Lotus scholarship - 100% of LCSNW youth who apply receive
- Fostering Scholars at SU - 100% who apply receive
- PTA and school Alumni scholarships - 100% who apply receive



Challenges for URM Youth

- Age
 - Maturity and experience gap with peers
 - Starting college late limits maximum use of funds support
- Citizenship status
 - Limits access to scholarships, post secondary pathways



Challenges for URM Youth

- Language acquisition
- Academic Performance/Success
- Accessing support services
- Social adjustment
- Employment & Financial Independence
- Sense of belonging in local community

Challenges for URM Youth

- Lack of common experiences
 - With peers
 - With educators, faculty and staff
- Lack of “common” knowledge, and “common” sense
- Lack of “common” references
- Lack of information on support services and educational opportunities

Challenges for URM Youth

- Relative Importance of Education
 - Cultural differences
 - Difference priorities/stresses/life demands
 - Different perception of need for education
- Stress of school can trigger / exacerbate mental health issues

Recommendations

- Take extra time with the youth to make sure that they understand the system
 - Face to face meetings with financial aid
 - Regular quarterly meetings with academic advisors
- Provide tutoring services
 - Writing, reading comprehension
 - Focused help on analytical/critical thinking
 - Basic math, logic skills
- Mandatory study skills class

Recommendations

- Take extra time in orientation teaching the student about the educator's role and responsibilities
- Facilitate introductions to educators and encourage youth to make an initial effort to get to know their professors
- Accompany students to “office hours”
- Pair youth with a student who could help facilitate communication with educators

Recommendations

- **Keep communication simple.**
 - Break email down into simple steps, bullet points
 - Separate emails, if possible, for separate steps
- Communicate by other means than email. If you must use email: KEEP IT SIMPLE!



Recommendations

- Familiarize youth with student clubs/activities where they might find youth with cultural commonalities and/or shared interests
- Set up a club or support group for refugee and immigrant youth on campus
- Provide and connect youth with mental health supports on campus



Contact Us/Learn More

- refugeesnw.org
- Max Savishinsky
 - Program Director
 - msavishinsky@refugeesnw.org
- Dawa Sherpa
 - Independent Living Supervisor
 - dsherpa@refugeesnw.org