



Child Care Resource

**“We love taking care of children. It is part of our culture. This is how we were raised. We help so people can work.”
- Somali Bantu Refugee**

Spring 2013

Dear

Child Care Resource is behind the scenes making child care work for our community one program, one teacher, and one family at a time every day. Please consider a donation this spring to support this investment in our children and our future.

We help child care work in many different ways. Currently, we are mentoring ten refugee women from Africa, most of whom are Somali Bantu who want to develop their own family child care programs so that they can earn income for their families and provide child care for other refugee families.



Isho I. is one of them. She doesn't say much about her life in Somalia or her move to a Kenyan refugee camp when she was 12. She now lives with her husband and six children in South Burlington. As a new American, she appreciates electricity, plentiful food, prenatal care, and the education available to her children. She appreciates a brighter future for herself as a small business owner doing what she loves to support her family.

By developing family child care businesses, Isho and her friends will help other refugee women successfully enter the workforce outside the home because they will have child care consistent with their family's culture. Isho and her friends will offer child care on evenings and weekends, the times that many refugees are most likely to work.

Families from the broader community will have new child care options that meet our community's standards. They will learn about Somali Bantu culture and this will help build understanding and tolerance throughout the community.



These women come to us with the gift of strong community. Yet, there are significant barriers to overcome. We are working hard with our partners to break down these barriers. We are proud to say that with our training and support they are well on their way.

Sincerely,
Michele Campbell
Board President

P.S. Please support Child Care Resource in our mission – Leading our community in making early care and education work! Please use the enclosed envelope for your donation today! Thank you!

Once Upon A Time....



Once upon a time, the Somali Bantu in our community lived in Africa. They were a traditionally subjugated and oppressed cultural group. As descendants of slaves traded from Tanzania, Malawi, and northern Mozambique into Somalia through the Zanzibar slave trade network of the 19th century, they have been victims of persecution, prejudice, oppression and violence because of this ancestry. Due to their status, the Bantu were barred from political participation and land ownership, were prevented from intermarrying, had limited access to formal education and were relegated to service and labor intensive positions regardless of their training. Due to this many Somali Bantu are illiterate and have very limited job skills.

After the outbreak of civil war in Somalia in 1991 their plight worsened. Without the protection of the Somalian clan structure, the Somali Bantu became victims of increased violence against their communities, including the massive confiscation of properties, the burning of villages, murder and sexual assault. Many fled to Kenya, living in refugee camps for 12 years or more where violence against women and discrimination persisted.



In 1999, the US Government approved a plan for 12,000 Somali Bantu to be resettled in over 50 cities in 38 states. They began arriving in Chittenden County in 2003 as a part of this resettlement plan and had grown to over 600 individuals by 2009. (From <http://www.somalibantuvermont.org/about-us>)

When they first arrived the hardest things were learning how to use appliances and electric items and even the bathroom. They had to adapt to the climate, learn how to use the bus and most importantly, begin the difficult journey of learning the language. But even with all of that, if you ask, they'll tell you that life in America is so much easier. Over the ten years since the resettlement began, this community has maintained its strong identity and connections with one another. They support one another in overcoming barriers to employment, educational opportunities, or human services aid. They continue to learn English and job skills. They raise families and their children graduate from high school and college. They are truly new Americans, as some of us, our parents, grandparents, and great grandparents were once upon a time.