

The Welcoming the Stranger Mentoring Project

The Welcoming the Stranger Mentoring Project helps asylum seekers adjust to life in the greater Portland, Maine area. We match recent immigrants with mentors who can help them learn about a new country and a new culture. The project is entirely run by volunteers.

What is a mentor?

A mentor is a friend. He or she can help you and your family get settled in the U.S. Your mentor can help you improve your English, adapt to Maine's climate and learn about the school system and other agencies that provide services you need. Mentors want to meet you, get to know you and your culture and make you feel welcome here.

Welcoming the Stranger is not a formal organization. We have no paid staff. We are simply your neighbors; people who live in the greater Portland area and who want to make it a welcoming place for immigrants. Mentors are not trained professionals. However, we can help you find resources to solve problems or answer questions.

What is expected of me if I sign up for the program?

You and your mentor agree to a cross-cultural friendship. It is largely up to both of you to decide how much time you will spend together and the type of activities that you will do together. Please understand that while mentors want to help, like you they have full lives. You and your mentor will want to talk about what is possible for mentors to help with and what is not. Both of you are expected to be respectful and sensitive to each other's culture, religion, values, boundaries and time.

If you choose to have a mentor, please be patient as we try to find someone who would be a good match for you. That can take a few weeks or longer. Also, please be patient as you get to know your mentor. Sometimes it takes a little while to feel comfortable with each other.

If you have questions about Welcoming the Stranger or encounter issues with your mentor that you would like to discuss please contact:

(referral source)

or

Jill Epstein at 207-232-7805 or welcomingthestrangerportland@gmail.com