



**This is
what one
can do.**

**COMMUNITY
CONNECTORS**



It starts with one.

One person, far from home and making their way to our city.

One person in Columbus, who understands what it means to be human.

One community that sees the American in everyone, no matter who they are or where they're from. A community that acts as a beacon for the value of being open, true, and good.



We know what one can do.

It's the one idea at the heart of CRIS Community Connectors.

The idea connects our newest Americans with mentors who can share and illuminate the experience of living here: one moment, one conversation, one simple gesture at a time.



One mission.

The Community Connectors program, a part of the Community Refugee and Immigration services organization, understands the power of one.

By connecting mentors with middle- and high-school-age immigrant and refugee students, we provide emotional, behavioral, and educational support to help them meet their goals, enrich their lives, and develop deep relationships that can last a lifetime.

What we do goes far beyond borders, language barriers, or political divides. Our students and their families have overcome so many barriers to get here — and when we connect them with caring mentors to share experiences, opportunities, knowledge, and support, both mentors and mentees open doors to new experiences, open minds to new ideas, and open pathways to even greater potential.



**Meet
Jeremy
Hollon.**

Jeremy is the person behind the program. He facilitates experiences, cultivates relationships, and builds trust among people from all walks of life. With a strong background in public service and a long-held passion for helping youth, Jeremy has helped the program grow from 20 mentees to the more than 100 it now serves. You'll find him in schools across central Ohio, exchanging jokes, imparting knowledge, and acting as a conduit that connects mentors, mentees, parents, business, education, and community leaders to resources that will help them reach their goals.

**Students
from over
35
countries**

across Asia,
Africa, and
Central and
South America

130+
students
served
each year

6,400+
hours
of mentoring
annually

**Founded in
2016**

One city.

In the heart of the Midwest, Columbus opens its heart and its doors to new Americans from all over the world.



Columbus has made a name for itself as a city that's open to all—and that's evident in the fact that it currently welcomes the largest percentage of Ohio's immigrants. Businesses, colleges, and residents in Columbus understand that a thriving new American population means a stronger workforce and economy, a safer city, and a rich, vibrant culture that's both empathetic and understanding.

48.4%

of all refugees arriving in Ohio from 2002 to 2014 settled in Columbus

13,316

jobs created by refugee in Columbus

41.8%

of refugees age 18+ are enrolled in or have graduated from college

\$1.6 billion

contributed to the Columbus economy by refugees

One connection.

They bonded over soccer. Now, they're a lifelong team.

Biniam started playing soccer on the sandy streets of Sudan before he was old enough to remember. He didn't play with shoes, and he wasn't part of a formal team. But it was his passion: one that he's kept with him in his journey across continents and cultures.

Biniam and his family moved to the United States when he was 15. And while his life here is very different than it was in Sudan, he's found comfort in the familiarity of his favorite pasttime—and his mentor, Stefan, who happens to share his love of soccer.

Like Biniam, Stefan came to the U.S. with his parents, who left their home in Romania in search of a better life. And since the two first bonded over their shared backgrounds and common interest, they have experienced many new things together—including the Ohio History Center, visits to the Ohio State University, and even Biniam's driving test. Now, Stefan is guiding Biniam as he pursues his goals of going to college and playing professional soccer.

Biniam is in the process creating a new life in America. And thanks to his relationship with Stefan, he's even closer to realizing his own American dream.



One gift.

Every contribution adds up to so much more.

As a mentoring organization, our most valuable asset is time. But in today's busy world, we know that time is a lot to ask—so we partner with local businesses to give other things, too.

Both the #SavetheCrew organization and the Greater Columbus Golden Boys and Girls regularly donate tickets to Columbus Crew games, which gives mentors and mentees a way to connect while cheering on their hometown soccer team.

Other partners generously contribute places to meet, funds and supplies for events, and internships and pre-professional opportunities for our mentees.

There are so many ways to give, and so many people who benefit from these contributions. And the more support we receive, the more students we can serve.



From impromptu meetups to annual events, our mentors and mentees take part in countless activities together. These are just a few:

Professional Sports Games
College Visits
Business Tours
Mural Painting
Visits to COSI or the Ohio History Museum

5K Races
The Columbus Nations Cup Soccer Tournament
Back to School
Shopping Trips
Art Gallery Hop



One decision.

How will you get involved?

Whether you choose to give your time, your funds, or your talents, there are so many ways to help our students.

Sign up as a mentor. Spend one-on-one time with a student and form a bond that will better you both.

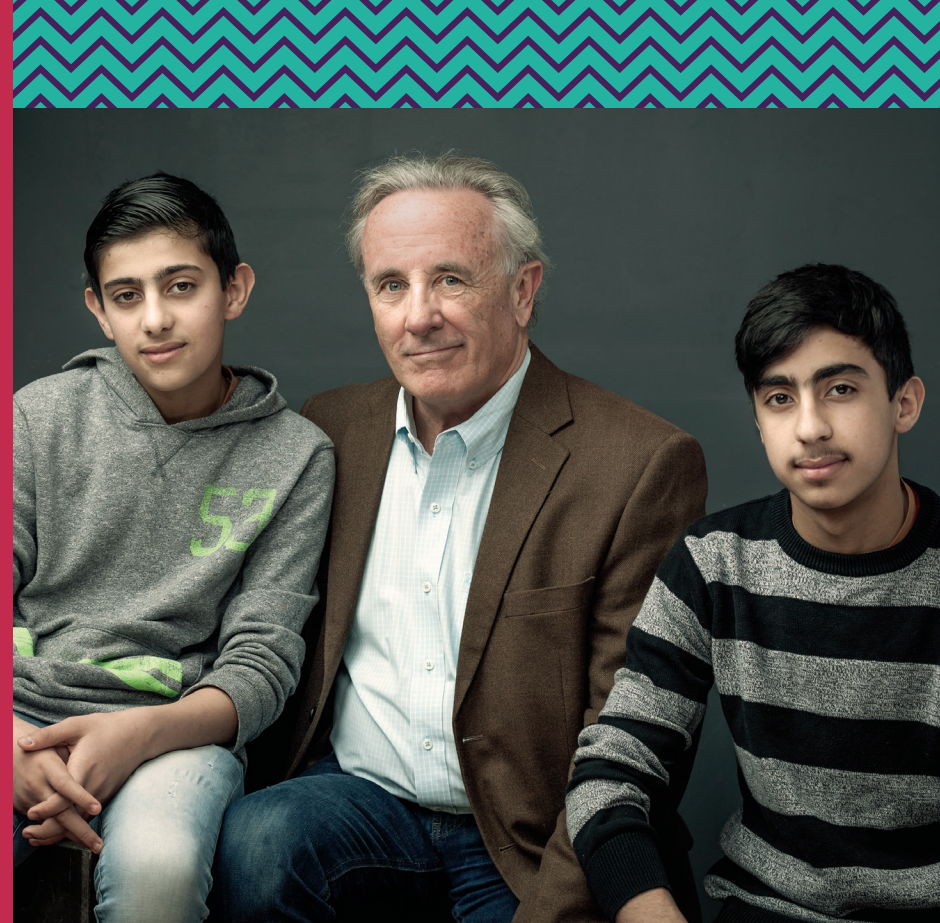
Refer a mentee. Connect your child or someone you know with our program, so we can pair them with a mentor.

Make a financial contribution. Every dollar we receive helps us provide better services and programming to the youth that we serve.

Make a tangible contribution. From book bags to bus passes, we're always open to collecting things that enrich our students' lives.

Plan an experience. If your business or organization can provide a unique learning experience, consider opening your doors to our students to give them valuable exposure to industry.

Organize a fundraiser. Harness the power of the collective to raise money for our organization.



As part of the Community Refugee and Immigration Services organization, the Community Connectors Program supports new American middle school and high school students within the Columbus and Westerville City Schools who are transitioning to our country. By pairing young people from all over the world with mentors from around our community, we give them guidance, opportunities, and a place to belong as they acclimate to life in their new home.

criscommunityconnectors.org

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**COMMUNITY
CONNECTORS**

A program from CRIS