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By:

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Following recent news of refugee children separated from their parents, two local people decided they needed to do something to help.

One is local business owner Meg Croft, the other is Luci Hylen, a recent graduate of the fourth grade at Marble Elementary School. Both have created events aimed at providing practical and financial aid to children who are far from home and family.

This Sunday, June 24, from 11:15 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., Luci's idea will come to life as a Bake Sale and Lemonade Stand ^[2] at Edgewood United Church to raise money for Refugee and Immigrant Center for Education and Legal Services ^[3] (or Raices?), a nonprofit organization that provides low-cost legal defense services to immigrant and refugee families in Texas. Raices currently has approximately 50 lawyers on staff and will use donations to hire more attorneys and fund training for volunteer lawyers willing to travel to Texas to assist refugee families.

?When I think about kids being taken away from their parents, I can?t imagine how I would feel. My mom asked me what she thought we could do to help and I said ?how about a bake sale!??

says Luci Hylen, who is a member of Edgewood United Church. Lucy's mother, Tali Faris-Hylen ran the idea past Edgewood's Pastor Liz Miller.

"I know that so many of us feel helpless, enraged, saddened and so much more by what's happening in our country right now and I feel like this is a perfect solution for our community to come together and do something. I always stress to my kids that even the smallest efforts can make a big impact and I'm certain this Bake Sale will be a testament to that," says Faris-Hylen.

As for Luci's goals? "I hope that we can help kids be reunited with their families and have a better life," she says.

Across Town, Meg Croft, owner of Woven Art, also felt the need to help. She will be holding a Diaper Drive ^[4] starting today, Thursday, June 21, through next Friday, June 29, to collect diapers, diaper wipes, and diaper rash cream for separated children who are headed to Lansing and Grand Rapids.

According to the event's Facebook page, "Donations will first go to Samaritas in Lansing, then to Grand Rapids. If donations exceed demand, supplies will be passed on to the Mid-Michigan Diaper Bank, Volunteers of America Shelter, Refuge Development Center, and Haven House." Donations will be accepted during the store's business hours, available here ^[5].

This week's Diaper Drive is not an unusual thing for Croft. "Over the years," she explains, "Woven Art has contributed relief and aid to demonstrated need within our community. If customers do not take a paper bag when they make a purchase, they are given a token for 5 cents to contribute towards Capital Area Humane Society or Greater Lansing Food Bank, and a check is sent to these organizations at the end of the year. More recently we have organized drives for most needed supplies at Haven House, and done donation-driven knitting events that benefited the Refugee Development Center, and the Women's Center of Lansing. In the past we have done drives of knitted hats, mittens, scarves and cowls for the Black Child & Family Institute, and knit and crochet teddy bears for the Lansing Police Department."

The Diaper Drive, she adds, "is in response to what could be an acute need in our community. I cannot bear feeling helpless in the face of suffering in our community, and I will do my best to alleviate it in whatever way that I can."

Edgewood United Church is located at 469 N. Hagadorn Road, at the southwest corner of Hagadorn Road and Beech Street. Sunday's Bake Sale and Lemonade Stand will take place on the Beech Street side of the church, and parking is available.

Woven Art is located at 325 Grove Street, across from the Grove Street parking ramp. Although a sign indicates that Grove Street is closed at Abbot Road, Woven Art and the Grove Street ramp can be accessed by turning from Abbot Road onto Linden Street (the street on the south side of City Hall) and then following the curve of Linden Street to Grove Street.

Know about East Lansing fundraisers ? or fundraisers for East Lansing-based service organizations ? that we should be covering? Contact us. [6]

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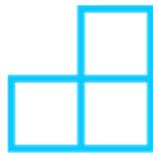
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[3] <https://actionnetwork.org/groups/raices-refugee-and-immigrant-center-for-education-and-legal-services>

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