

## The Benevolist Bulletin

### Heartwarming Headlines



#### From Ukraine to Tennessee: A Family Finds Hope, Home, and Heartfelt Support in Sevierville

In the summer of 2023 Svitlana and Illia Bielun and their family arrived in the United States from Ukraine and made a new home in Sevierville, a small city southeast of Knoxville, TN. Svitlana and Illia rented an apartment for themselves and their two young children.

"For a long time, we tried to make it by ourselves," said Svitlana, who is 36. But, after their third child was born last fall, the family was struggling. Svitlana heard about **Bridge Refugee Services** and decided to ask for help.

Calling Bridge, Svitlana said, was her "best decision." Since 2022, Bridge has served approximately 600 Ukrainian clients, many of whom are here through the **Uniting for Ukraine** humanitarian parolee/asylee program.

Bridge has provided the Bielun family with food, clothing, diapers, home supplies and kitchenware, and helped with financial aid for rent and car repairs. "It's support," she said. "It's [a] good feeling that you're not alone. Open hearts. It means a lot."

Illia, who is 40, found a job right away, as a warehouse loader for Amazon in Knoxville. "We really appreciate the United States for this opportunity, that we can be legal here, that we have opportunity to work, we have this work authorization that allows us to work from the first day," Svitlana said.

They still have family and friends in Ukraine. "We worry about them every day," Svitlana said. She hopes to return to Ukraine once it's safe. While they wait, they are grateful to be in Sevierville. "We really appreciate that we have the opportunity to stay in a safe place," she said. "Every day I wake up. Every day I see the clear sky. I am grateful that my kids can just grow up in a normal world."



### Running an item collection drive?

**Benevolist.org has all the tools you need to turn your drive digital, because donating to the causes people care about should be easy.**

Learn how to start your first drive here:

[Watch Our Organizer Walkthrough Video](#)



[Click Here to Create Your Drive Today!](#)

### Benevolist Buzz

#### Why Limit Your Collection Drive List to Items from Just One Merchant?

**Benevolist.org gives you the ability to include items from ALL FOUR of our merchant partners!**

[Check out our Media Kit here!](#)

amazon

Walmart

THE HOME DEPOT

TARGET

### CEO REFLECTIONS

With so much need in our world today, we oftentimes don't pay attention to an issue or cause until it directly affects us or someone we care about. It's easy to pay attention to those things that are "in the headlines", but what about causes that are ongoing or just simply aren't dramatic enough to make it into the daily news machine? One of these causes is refugee resettlement. By saying this I don't intend to make any sort of political statement. I only wish to point out that through Benevolist.org, I've learned that there are people in our communities that are just like you and me who are trying to survive and thrive in a strange land. Thankfully there are wonderful nonprofit organizations who are helping them navigate the many challenges, but for these nonprofits to be able to do their great work, they need YOUR help. If you were trying to survive and thrive in a strange land, would you appreciate kindness and support of local neighbors to help you feel comfortable and welcome? Something to ponder.

*Together we can make a difference!*  
Cari Newton, Founder & CEO

**"Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly."**

Martin Luther King Jr.

### Meet

## PETER GREEN

Volunteer & Co-Sponsorship Manager at *Bridge Refugee Services*

Changemaker Spotlight



Peter Green

Peter relocated from Memphis to Knoxville to join Bridge in July 2021. Growing up the son of an Army officer and living overseas in Germany and Japan, he began to understand the struggles that can arise from living in a new country that does not share your native language or culture. Peter holds a Master's degree in Missions and Intercultural Studies and his Doctorate in Missions. His doctoral dissertation examined Diaspora Missiology, and focused specifically on how the local church can come alongside refugees in their communities to make an impact in their lives. During this time, he also taught a Bible study for African refugee children, building many lasting friendships in the Memphis South Sudanese refugee community. Peter brings this experience to his work at Bridge Refugee Services, and is excited to wed his passion for welcoming refugees with his love for the faith community to build a support network for Knoxville's refugee families.

### ABOUT BRIDGE REFUGEE SERVICES

BRIDGE  
REFUGEE SERVICES, INC.

[DONATE ITEMS TO BRIDGE HERE](#)

### Thank You to Our Partners!

NoiseMakers

ANGEL OAK  
CREATIVE  
marketing for nonprofits

givefinity