



## Aljirani Madison

**Position summary:** Aljirani Madison (from the Swahili “jirani - neighbor” and Arabic “aljar - neighbor”) is a 6-month long volunteering program that pairs a companion or small group of companions with a refugee or refugee family to form an Aljirani Madison Group. Partner with a local refugee family to provide a warm welcome, companionship, and practical help. You will work with your partner to aid them in reaching their self-sufficiency goals agreed upon in advance by your new partner and their JSS case manager. Potential goals may include developing English or financial literacy skills, navigating public transportation, or getting to know the Madison community. You will play a key role in the successful resettlement of newly arrived refugees in the Madison community. Through your work and partnership in the Aljirani Madison program you will build a shared sense of community solidarity while ensuring that community newcomers are able to become self-sufficient.

### **Potential activities:**

- **Note:** As of 10/16/20, due to COVID-19, all activities and meetings will occur virtually to ensure social distancing.
- Aid in creating and developing understanding of a household budget
- Practice scheduling a doctor’s appointment and learning how to go to the doctor’s office
- Teach how to use Google Maps to view bus routes and times
- Cook virtually together and share recipes
- Take part in community events, activities, and other recreational opportunities

**Time Commitment:** At least two hours per week for a period of 6-months. **Note:** At the 6 month mark, the Refugee Mentorship Program Coordinator will inform you that the formal volunteer period has concluded. It will be your decision on how to end the relationship with your partner and/or how to transition into an informal relationship or friendship. Please note that after the formal period ends, JSS will no longer provide volunteer support.

**Location:** Since newcomers live all around Madison, you may not be able to count on being paired with someone who lives within walking distance of your residence. Take advantage of the Madison bus system and bike trails and introduce your companion to these transportation options too. When refugees first arrive most of them do not have a car or driver’s license. **Note:** As of 10/16/20, due to COVID-19, all meetings will occur virtually to ensure social distancing.

**Supervision:** The Aljirani Madison volunteer will provide basic weekly reports on meetings and have periodic check ins with the program coordinator to receive support and guidance.

### **Qualifications and requirements:**

- Must be at least 18 years of age or older.
- Skilled in navigating digital environments. Comfortable meeting digitally with partner, utilizing software such as Google Meet, Google Drive, and WhatsApp, and helping your partner utilize new software.
- Maintain confidentiality of all client related information.
- Willing and able to commit to a relationship at least 6 months.
- Comfortable working with a family who possibly does not speak English.
- Comfortable using Google Translate or other means of communication and translation.
- Comfortable with navigating health, benefits, education, and other systems and bureaucracies.
- Practices culture humility; able to work with diverse populations.
- Flexible and able to adjust original goals to family's needs.
- Able and willing to attend volunteer trainings.
- Language ability in French, Swahili, Kinyarwanda, Arabic, Dari, Vietnamese, or Pashto helpful but not required.

**Benefits to volunteering:**

- Develop your interpersonal and relationship building skills.
- Establish new community connections.
- Learn more about the global refugee crisis and what your community is doing to help.
- Be instrumental in the increased independence, social mobility, and opportunities for a new community member.
- Personal fulfillment through your support and solidarity with others!

Questions or concerns can be directed to the *Refugee Mentorship Program Coordinator*, Sam Van Akkeren, at [sam@jssmadison.org](mailto:sam@jssmadison.org)