

## **2021 HUMAN RIGHTS AWARD NOMINATION FORM**

Email completed form to [sarah.encinias@normanok.gov](mailto:sarah.encinias@normanok.gov), or print and mail completed form to: Norman Human Rights Commission, City of Norman, PO Box 370, Norman, OK 73070. Nominations are due by January 14, 2022.

1. Person Being Nominated:

Name: The Norman Coalition for Refugee Support - Brent Smith, Chair

Address: 1801 W. Brooks, Norman, 73069

Phone: 405-615-8461 Email: bsmith103@cox.net

2. List volunteer, services, organizations, professional affiliations (if any) and describe how this person has demonstrated outstanding effort, achievement and/or leadership in the promotion of human rights and equality (such as successes, results, impact, personal risks taken, time expended, sacrifices made, years of service, inspiration or motivation given, cooperation fostered, organizations or programs created, example set and innovations undertaken):

(Attach additional pages if needed.)

It is my honor to nominate The Norman Coalition for Refugee Support for the Human Rights Commission Award. This group comprised of a number of local non-profit organizations that has been intergral in providing services and opportunities for asylum seekers. The paragraph below is a synopsis of their work on behalf of the Norman community. So many have given so much to make this organization work.

The Norman Coalition for Refugee Support (Coalition) formed in 2017 seeks to restore dignity to the refugees and asylum seekers (asylees) it resettles. The Coalition is an all-volunteer, non-profit, interfaith group of houses of worship, friends, and partners collaborating in its mission to resettle refugees/asylees in Norman. Beginning with 4 churches, the organization is now a Coalition of 10 houses of worship in Norman and other volunteers, consisting of 70+ volunteers. St. Stephen's United Methodist Church was initially the lead church and the Coalition continues to serve as a non-profit organization under the 501(c)3 status of St. Stephen's. Catholic Charities is the Coalition's primary partner in the Afghan resettlement. The Coalition resettled families from four other countries in previous years and recently resettled 7 Afghan families in Norman. Open to receiving Afghan families and refugees/asylees from the southern border, the Coalition expects to resettle 4-8 families annually. The Coalition provides "wrap-around" coordination of federal, state and local services and activities by volunteers and, when needed, by professional services referral. The Coalition achieves its objectives through 8 volunteer teams, each with separate but often overlapping objectives ranging from housing and family liaisons to employment and transportation. Most importantly, the Coalition puts the refugee/asylee families on a path to restore their dignity. They lost their dignity through intense vulnerability when, under threat, they all left homes in their country of origin to land in a new country with a strange language and culture. Dignity begins to restore as the Coalition welcomes the families and demonstrates respect for their culture, builds trust between the families and the Coalition, places the family in a safe and clean home, provides food and financial support and a path to self-reliance, enrolls children in Norman public schools and adults in ESL classes, and refers them to immigration services to gain eventual SIV, green card and U.S. citizenship status.

Thank you for accepting this nomination for the 2021 Human Rights Award.

Note: Brent Smith is currently the Chair of this Coalition.

3. Person completing form:

Name: Susan Arn

Address: 1716 Schooner Drive, Norman, OK 73072

Phone: 405-202-9457 Email: susanarn2000@yahoo.com