

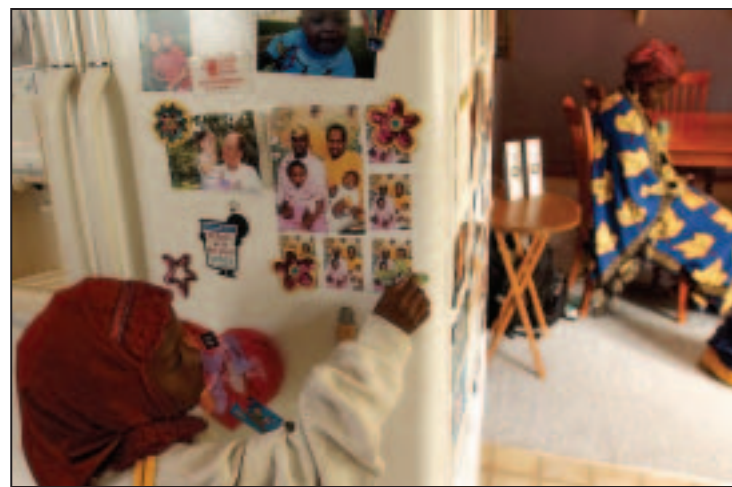
'For our family, the creation of this has really been an experience that has felt like our whole family together, including Bryan, has worked on.'

Rick Guzman, speaking of the efforts toward creating Bryan House



Desiree Guzman helps Dollar Musa get into a sweatshirt as evening comes at baby Rick's birthday party. The children and adult Somali-Bantu refugees get cold easily. Yanary Labrador, a refugee from Havana, Cuba laughs while Isnina Majeni, 7 (left) plays with a kazoo.

PETER HOFFMAN/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER



Dollar Musa, 6, looks at photos on the Guzmans' refrigerator while her mother Halima Mkonje rests inside. The grid of photos is of the first family of refugees that the Guzmans hosted for about a week's time, through World Relief. The family has since moved to New York.



Rick Guzman helps to serve a traditional Cuban dinner prepared by Yanary Labrador (right). Having come to the United States about 20 months earlier, Labrador worked hard doing laundry for months before getting certified and obtaining work as a nursing assistant.

HOUSE

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Idea of starting a foundation in her name — Tolbert Refugee Assistance Foundation (TRAF), a non-profit organization born out of their experience working with local refugee families.

In order to get the organization set up, Rick and Desiree were frugal in their wedding planning, and they made financial sacrifices of their own on many levels, as well as requesting donations in lieu of gifts.

Bryan was a student at North Central College when he drowned while walking his girlfriend's dog along Lake Michigan the morning of Dec. 9. At the time of his death, Bryan was involved with TRAF, and would even contribute to it, despite the fact he had very little money as a college student.

The couple decided there would be no better way to honor Bryan's memory than to create a house in his name, where refugees could live as they struggled to get on their feet. The idea for Bryan House came almost immediately after he died: Funeral donations for the cause were requested in lieu of flowers.

Seeing a need

When families are brought to this country through agencies such as World Relief, the move is costly, and resettlement agencies aren't geared toward providing long-term assistance. Families often incur traveling debts they are expected to pay off within three years, said Rick Guzman.

In addition to the difficulties that come with relocating to a new country, often entire families — in many cases, the fathers — are left behind, complicating the challenge of becoming financially independent.

"We've set our organization up to be an organization that can complement what World Relief is doing," Rick said.

TRAF has helped reunite 12 families — from countries such as Rwanda, Somalia and Sierra Leone — and has assisted more families with random costs such as car repairs. For the past 10 months, the Guzmans have been sharing their home with a family from Havana, Cuba — Rey Garrido and wife, Yanary Labrador, as well as their 6-year-old daughter, Amanda Garrido, who attends Todd Elementary School.

Most refugees from Cuba tend to go to Miami, and the

Garrido family had not even heard of Aurora — or Illinois, for that matter — before coming to the U.S. "When they say you're going to Aurora, we say OK ... that's our destiny," said Labrador, who works as a certified nursing assistant.

The first family TRAF helped reunite had to move six times in the six years they have been here, and stress can be seen in the increasing academic difficulties of one of the children, say the Guzmans.

The main goal behind Bryan House is to eventually help its tenants become homeowners themselves. Various studies, the Guzmans point out, show higher rates of home ownership produce better families with higher education rates, lower crime rates and lower delinquency.

Also, when people own their own homes, they are more likely to take pride in their living space and participate in the community.

Refugees who would potentially live in Bryan House are still expected to pay rent, but the payments will go toward a down payment on a home of their own.

Making it happen

Fundraising efforts have been strong. Dan Guzman, Bry-

an's and Rick's brother who was in the band "Hypnotist Collector" with Bryan and other friends, has played two benefit shows at North Central College. An entrepreneurship business class at North Central College also raised money for the cause.

"I want students to see that these skills (learned in class) can be used for a great social cause," said Gary Ernst, professor of international business and marketing, who taught the class that raised \$2,000.

The most recent fundraising event was the Inaugural Bryan's House Promise Fair, held a week ago at Community Christian Church in Naperville.

With the funds in place the Guzmans are now searching for a location and talking with the city about where the best location for the house will be. When the Guzmans get back from spending time in Africa this July, seeing their vision of Bryan House come to fruition will be one of their first priorities.

And when the location is secured, there will be a memorial garden for Bryan as well.

"Clearly we wouldn't be anywhere near where we are without the people who Bryan

brought together," said his brother Rick. "For our family, the creation of this has really been an experience that has felt like our whole family together, including Bryan, has worked on."

click to it

PHOTO GALLERY ON BRYAN HOUSE AT:
www.beaconnewsonline.com

BUCHENOT

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transform into Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. At 6:30 p.m., Harry Potter fans age 8 through adult will be invited in for an evening of Potter-mania.

Trivia challenges for youths and adults will test the knowledge of all who attend. There will be an opportunity to make a magic wand and several other crafts. The film *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* will be shown in one room while *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire* will be shown in another. A fortune teller will be on hand with her crystal ball and snacks will be served throughout the event, which ends at 9:30 p.m. The event is free but pre-registration is required. The sign-up sheets will be available beginning July 2 and the event is limited to the first 200 who register.

I asked Carolyn Hewitt, the children's librarian at Eola, if she has ever seen such excitement over a children's book in all her years as a librarian.

"Nothing has been as popular for as long as this," she says. "Most books are popular for a short time, but Harry Potter has lasted for several years. I think the big attraction is that Harry Potter is a kid who is a nobody but is actually special and doesn't know it. Then he becomes somebody."

The library will have about 50 copies of the book ready to loan on the release day of July 21. But don't rush to the library on July 21 thinking there will be a copy for you. There are already more than 100 names on a waiting list to check out the book.



Have a Safe and Happy 4th of July!

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Same Day Service

Hey, kids!

Be a part of the Cougars' family on Thursday, August 2



The Beacon News and the Kane County Cougars have again joined forces to give Fox Valley kids ages 8 to 13 the opportunity to be a part of the Cougars' family.

Deadline: Friday, July 20

By July 20, just fill out the application and, in 50 words or less, tell us why you want to be a CougarKid.

Beacon News staff members will choose the winners who will take their positions at a Cougars game on Thursday, August 2.

I want to be a: (check all that apply):

- Batboy/Batgirl
- Souvenir Seller
- Concession Worker
- Groundskeeper's Assistant
- Promotions Team Assistant (Must be 10 or older; Cougar Kid helps with on-field events)
- Public Address Assistant (Must be 10 or older for this position)
- Official Greeter
- Radio Announcer's Assistant (must be 10 or older)
- Assistant to Ozzie, the Cougars' mascot



Now, in 50 words or less, tell us why you want to be a CougarKid and why you selected the position(s) you did!

The Beacon News

Name: _____ Age: _____
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Phone: _____

Please mail to or drop off to the attention of: Janet Zohorsky. Questions? Email jzohorsky@scn1.com

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Use Middle Avenue entrance to drop off your entry.

Office Hours: Monday-Friday 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m.

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