**The First Friend Program:**

As a First Friend volunteers are assigned to a refugee family. The goal of the First Friend Program is for refugees and volunteers to build relationships and participate in cultural exchange as the refugee families resettle.

As a First Friend, volunteers can:

- Help the family learn about and adjust to their new culture and environment.
- Provide encouragement and support where needed.
- Assist clients in connecting with community resources.
- Help families understand public transportation, food shopping and financial literacy.
- Practice reading, writing and speaking English.
- Be a friend; not a case manager.

**Volunteering requirements:**

To volunteer with HACN it is necessary to have a working with children police check certificate, fill out a volunteer application and attend a volunteer orientation.

Once these are completed, volunteers are contacted by the Resources and Development Coordinator.

**Affiliated agencies:**

HACN have promoted partnerships and have attracted support from a variety of Government and non-government service providers, including:

- Catholic Care,
- AMES (Adult Multicultural English Services),
- Victoria University,
- Werribee Community Garden,
- City Councils of Wyndham, Brimbank, Hobsons Bay and Maribyrnong
- Victoria Police.
- Western English Language School
- Western Region Health Centre

**To learn about Volunteering**

To learn more about Volunteering opportunities at HACN, please contact our office during business hours. We warmly welcome assistance from the broader community as we work to help our new migrants to settle in to their new adopted communities.
**Our Services:**
HACN is working with local councils, Victoria Police and other community and government organizations to divert young people at risk from offending against the law.

HACN partners with a range of local social service providers, schools and volunteers to promote culturally and linguistically responsive support services, structured English language and computer lessons, life skills development as well as immigration and citizenship assistance.

**Our Programs**
- Case Management & Advocacy Services.
- Elders Planned Activities Group.
- Women’s Social Support Groups
- Problem Gambling Prevention and Intervention Program
- Work for the Dole Program
- Financial Literacy Education
- Preparation for Citizenship Exams
- English Language Conversation and Basic Computer and Internet skills
- Gardening and Excursions for Seniors
- Community Kitchen & Healthy Eating

**Volunteering Opportunities:**
Volunteers are most welcome to provide assistance in many different areas:

- Help with locating affordable housing and furnishing with necessary household items.
- Assistance with transportation and accompanying clients to various appointments
- Assistance with filling out forms such as those for social security, banking, school registrations and utilities.
- Assistance in connecting with community resources.

**Volunteering Expertise:**
Volunteers can also assist HACN by giving their time and expertise for:

- Raising funds for HACN’s programs e.g. at our Bunnings BBQ fundraisers.
- Contributing to the homework and youth programs.
- Contributing to English conversation groups.
- Mentoring Volunteers and workers
- Contributing to life skills development programs.

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**Our Story:**
The Horn of Africa Communities Network Inc is a small non-profit, community organization run by dedicated staff and enthusiastic volunteers which commenced in 2000 with the aim of helping new arrivals and individuals from refugee and humanitarian backgrounds to resettle and build new lives in Australia. The main nationalities currently accessing HACN’s services include Somali, Southern Sudanese, Ethiopians, Chin and Karen from Myanmar, and other African groups. All are welcome.

**Our Mission:**
To empower newly arrived African Australians to have equal access to the opportunities and resources available in our wonderful country; thereby enabling them to become productive, inclusive members of the Australian community.

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