

PROVIDING A CHANCE FOR A BRIGHT FUTURE

Agency: Adult Basic Education

Program: Lincoln Logs Early Learning Center

Service: Provides a safe, stimulating, nurturing environment for the children of refugee, teen and other at-risk parents, as well as early childhood instruction and parent education

Need: Without access to quality, on-site early childhood learning, many of these children of at-risk families wouldn't have the opportunity to build the skills they need to prepare them for kindergarten

Impact: Last year, Lincoln Logs provided over 42,500 hours of early childhood instruction to 61 children of teen, refugee, and other at-risk families, as well as over 8,900 hours of parent education to these families. As a result, the parents of these families are on the path to self-sufficiency and their children are gaining the skills they need to help prepare them for kindergarten and life ahead.

This is the true story of one woman's personal journey to Mankato. After all the suffering and heartache, our community and its support of United Way, is helping to provide the safety and hope for a bright future for this family.

This is the story of a young mother, "Sarah". When Sarah was 15 years old living in Somalia, the world she knew was shattered by violence. As her mother was working on the farm a bomb exploded and she was killed. Halima was an only child so she and her father fled their home. On their journey to the refugee camp in Kenya, Sarah got separated from her father. She kept walking with thousands of other fleeing Somalis until she arrived at a refugee camp where she would live for the next 19 years. We cannot truly know what it was like for this young girl, alone without her family, to experience the hard life in a refugee camp. After many years, Sarah got married and had children. Life with children in a refugee camp was extremely hard. Many times there was no food or water available. Sarah dreamed of the day that she could take her children to a better place where they would be safe and well fed. When she was finally approved for entry, Sarah brought her son and baby daughter to the United States, not knowing when, or if, her husband would be able to join them. A month after her arrival in the U.S., Sarah moved into her first apartment in Mankato, thrilled to have a safe place of their own with a roof over their heads. Within a few months and with the assistance of ABE outreach, Sarah began to learn the basics of life in America.

That September, Sarah began English classes and signed her children up for childcare at Lincoln Logs and transportation through VINE. Her son was very excited when he walked into his new classroom full of books, toys and children, something he had never seen before. Now 4, her son has gone from speaking no English to speaking full sentences, spelling and identifying the letters in his first name, knowing his colors, and counting to 10. He loves books, doing art projects and interacting with other children.



When asked how she feels about living in America, Sarah smiles and says, "I love it, it is good." She is so happy to have the opportunity to go to school and for her children to go to school. She loves watching her children learn and grow. Without Lincoln Logs Learning Center, it would not be possible for her to attend English classes and her children would not be getting the early learning they need to be ready for kindergarten.

Your support of Greater Mankato Area United Way makes it possible for programs like Lincoln Logs Early Learning Center to make this community a better place, where people with hopes and dreams have the opportunity to build their lives and their children can have a brighter future.

Greater Mankato Area
United Way

