

CHALLENGE

As the largest refugee resettlement agency in the state of Michigan and the fourth largest in the nation, Samaritas works to help those who are fleeing war and persecution find safe harbor in America, and to make sure refugees have the chance for a brighter future and the opportunities offered by American citizenship.

Prior to and after President Trump's January 27, 2017, Executive Order halting refugee resettlement for 120 days and thereafter, limiting volume and national origin of the people admitted to our country, Your People worked with Samaritas to develop and implement efficient and effective messaging that conveyed Samaritas' goals and provided the public important information about refugee resettlement and the potential effects of the E.O. Media outlets flooded Samaritas with inquiries to speak to refugees as a way of understanding the human side of this proposal, and community partners, clients, representatives of local and central power and politicians, along with the general public, wanted to know what this would mean to them.

OPPORTUNITY & RESULTS

Your People fielded media calls around-the-clock for a week before proposing a press conference that would include several refugees sharing their stories and perspectives and key organizational leadership from Samaritas. Additionally, Your People provided media training to Samaritas leadership before responding to media outlets, coordinated interviews with refugees, developed a Samaritas Statement on the E.O., developed a media advisory, planned the press conference, created talking points for participating Samaritas leadership and refugees, reached out to media to gather a crowd of more than two dozen reporters along with community partners, and facilitated the press conference, held on February 2, 2017, to discuss the Presidential Executive Order while sharing Samaritas perspectives, stories, and fears.

It was of the utmost importance to protect refugees' privacy while also providing a window into a world many Americans never see. Rather than create individual interview opportunities, Your People created an event to share information. Prior to the event, Your People provided an early scoop to the Associated Press, honoring a long and trusted relationship, and achieving national exposure on this issue and for Samaritas' expert voice and brand awareness.

The February 2nd press conference attracted media outlets from across Michigan and from across the country, including TV, print, online and radio. Your People convened a panel of six refugees along with the Samaritas Vice President who oversees refugee resettlement and New American Services, Sean de Four. Media and community partners engaged in focused conversation about the effects of the E.O. locally, nationally and globally. This effort resulted in 50 articles and news segments, in local, regional, and national venues.