

Dear Friends:

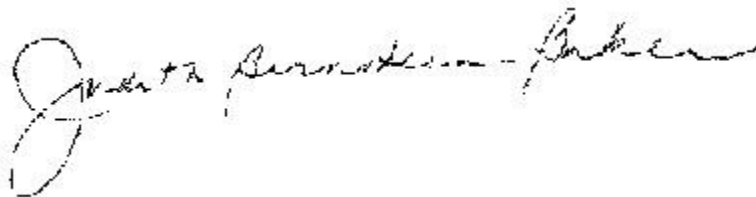
Seven years ago we were honored when Ruth Messinger, head of Jewish World Service, gave our keynote address at the HIAS Pennsylvania annual luncheon. She spoke about ethnic cleansing in Dafur, an area of Sudan. Most of us were puzzled; we were unaware of the situation. Today, it would be difficult to find someone in the Jewish or faith community who is not aware of Dafur. And as 2012 approaches, HIAS Pennsylvania will be resettling Dafurian refugees referred to us by our colleagues at national HIAS.

In any one week, we see the full range of the human experience at HIAS Pennsylvania. A family of seven, mother, father and 5 children, ethnic minorities who fled Burma/Myanmar were recently resettled by HIAS Pennsylvania. They had lived a marginal existence in a refugee camp in Thailand. After arrival, it was discovered that father has a terminal illness. Mother works 5 days a week to maintain financial stability. We have opened up the future for these children, but the road will be difficult. The tragedy of the father's situation is offset by the kindness of a HIAS Pennsylvania volunteer, Avi. Avi, himself an immigrant from Israel, provides critical mentoring and support during this crucial time.

In any one week, our staff experiences immigrants' pain of family separation and these families strong desire for reunification. M.S. had been separated from his wife for two years due to paperwork delay in their home country. A HIAS Pennsylvania immigration specialist worked with him to obtain the proper documentations and the family was joyfully reunited.

It is an honor to work with such a dedicated staff and board as we continue our work in 2012 to represent immigrants, resettle refugees and reunite families. I can't think of a better way to spend the next year. I wish everyone a happy New Year.

Judith Bernstein-Baker, Esq.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Judith Bernstein-Baker". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with some loops and flourishes.