

*When you know someone by name, everything changes.*



— Etni, Reinaldo and their three girls

### Etni & Reinaldo, Batavia (originally from Venezuela)

The economic collapse of Venezuela made it too difficult to stay. The family of 5 walked for 2 months to Ecuador, a place they intended to temporarily stay, but God needed them to remain longer. For nine years, the family provided shelter, food, and medical assistance to any refugee who needed it. They even cared for people’s pets. Finally, in August of 2023 they arrived in the United States and settled in Batavia, IL. Their family motto is “The key to success is to be grateful to God, during the good times and the bad times.” Their work of helping others continues. They travel to Chicago and work in our community helping other refugees with finding shelter, sharing meals, providing rides, and praying with and for anyone who needs it. The family became involved with Radical Love in October 2023 and they have brought many new neighbors with them.

**VOLUNTEERS NEEDED**

**Summer  
Friendship & English  
Learning Program**

*Tutors, childcare, leaders for kids and  
student programming, greeters, food helpers,  
set-up and take-down*

**Come for one or many sessions. Kids of all ages included.**

Fridays, 9:30am - Noon  
June 14, June 21, June 28,  
July 12, July 19, July 26



### Maria, Aurora (originally from Congo)

Gunmen stormed her village while 8-year-old Maria was in school. Maria ran in one direction, and her family, who was at home, ran in another. She walked alone to Zambia to a refugee camp. She never saw her parents again. Maria met her husband, Andre, in the camp, and they welcomed three children. In 2014 they were selected for resettlement to the United States and settled in Aurora, IL. Maria and her husband had 3 more children, and all eight family members share a small apartment. The family has worked hard and saved over the years. This year, they plan to purchase their first home, and their oldest will be going to college! Maria and her children travel by bus to Radical Love programs, always with great joy. “I trust God in everything. He is so good,” shares Maria.



### JuJu, Aurora (born in a refugee camp in Thailand)

The longest civil war in world history began in 1949, in Burma, JuJu’s home country, and is still taking place. His parents fled while genocide ripped through Burma, and JuJu, who is of the Karen ethnicity, was born in a refugee camp in Thailand. When he was one year old, his family was selected for resettlement to the United States. His parents struggled to speak English, but they were determined to pursue a better life for their children. JuJu is now in 8th grade, on the high honor roll, and plays for his school’s volleyball team (they won the conference last year!). JuJu and his family helped start Radical Love. He comes to each event to help set-up, greet people, and learn more about making a future in America. “I pray for God’s peace in Burma and around the world,” JuJu says.



### Celebration of Community & Fundraiser

August 9, 2024 - Acquaviva Winery, Maple Park, IL

TICKETS ON SALE NOW

We SOLD OUT our 2023 event!

Scan for Tickets:



## Radical Love

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### Nazareth, Aurora (originally from Venezuela)

She was an electrical engineer in her home country of Venezuela, but conditions had become too unsafe for her family of six to stay. They fled to Chile in 2017. In 2022, Nazareth, her sister, and young niece came to the United States, securing an apartment and working 6-7 days a week in factories and cleaning toilets to begin a new life in America. A generous sponsor helped reunite Nazareth's parents and brother with the rest of the family in 2023. They give thanks to God for reuniting them. Through Radical Love's connections, the family furnished their apartment, received bicycles, and began to learn English.



### Caiden, Geneva

Caiden is in 10th grade and helps with technology and childcare at Radical Love programs. He began learning Spanish in 8th grade and was able to hold a conversation with neighbors from Venezuela at our December event. Caiden will serve as a tutor at our summer program, helping a Spanish-speaking neighbor learn English.



### Kate, Geneva

Kate has been an educator for 23 years. She served as a lead teacher at our summer program and then started our Writers' Workshop for refugee neighbors who are proficient in English but needed help with writing the language. Kate and other lead teachers help guide our tutors.



### Ehrina, Aurora (family from Burma)

Ehrina came to Radical Love during our first summer in 2021 and joined the kids' programming. By the second summer, she wanted to help with the children in the nursery. "I love working with small children, and now I want to be a preschool teacher when I grow up," shares Ehrina.



### Karina, Geneva (family from Guatemala)

Her parents fled poverty-stricken Guatemala as teenagers, seeking a safer place to live. Karina was born in the United States and witnessed her parents working tirelessly day and night in a factory to provide for her family. Sometimes there was barely enough money for food, but the family pressed on. Even though

they struggled with learning English, the family always helped others in need. Karina is using all of this insight, along with her Spanish-speaking abilities, to serve as Radical Love's Outreach Coordinator and help others in our community.

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*The God of the universe - who hung the stars  
and made the sea - knows you by name.  
And He loves you!*

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### Maryna, St Charles (originally from Ukraine)

She fled Ukraine in 2022 as a single mom with her young son. Maryna watched from the train in horror as many families stood helpless on the platform because there was no room on the train. Coming to the U.S. was difficult. Maryna could not speak English, but she needed work to support her family. She taught violin

lessons, and after securing a car through Radical Love, she could work two more jobs to pay her rent. She came to Radical Love in the Summer of 2022 and continued English classes. She is now an assistant teacher in St Charles.

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## Where in the World?



**Countries represented at Radical Love:**  
Congo, South Sudan, Zimbabwe, Malawi, Iran, Burma, Thailand, Vietnam, Ukraine, Russia, Hungary, South Africa, Venezuela, Ecuador, Columbia, Guatemala, and the Central America region





### Natalie, Batavia (originally from Ukraine)

Growing up in communist-held Ukraine, Natalie learned Russian in school. Food, jobs, and education were scarce. She was bullied for her faith in Jesus. When she was 15, Natalie and her family arrived in the United States, where she finished school and began college. She fell in love with and married a Ukrainian man and returned to her home country, where they had 6 children. When war broke out in 2022, the family needed to leave. They settled in Batavia, where Natalie’s extended family resides. Natalie, who now works for Radical Love, is trilingual. She speaks English, Russian and Ukrainian, and she understands the culture both here and in Ukraine. She loves sharing about Jesus with new refugees, who because of suppression have never known about Him and His great love for us.



### Chi, Batavia (originally from Vietnam)

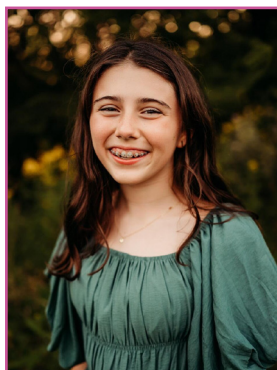
Life was very difficult in Vietnam following years of war. In 1994, thirteen-year-old Chi left the country with his mother to begin a new life in the United States. “I knew six words in English when we arrived,” shares Chi. Both Chi and his mother travel to Radical Love by bus to learn English and make new friends. “Coming to America is better than winning the lottery!” says Chi.



Maryana and her daughters during their last day in Ukraine

### Maryana, Geneva (originally from Ukraine)

Fleeing war in Ukraine, Maryana, her husband, and three young daughters came to the U.S. in November 2022. They rent a home in Geneva, where the girls attend school. The family has one car that is mainly used to transport her husband to work. Maryana and the girls walk or bike most places, but she’s learning to drive. “It’s amazing how friendly people are at Radical Love,” shares Maryana, “My kids loved going to the zoo, the quarry, and the farm with Radical Love.”



### Zoe, Geneva

As an 8th grader, Zoe loves working with people and helping others. Zoe and her mom helped to organize the food distribution at our summer program. The program now feeds breakfast to 250+ adults and children each week. Zoe can be found leading the other volunteers and delivering carts of food with a big smile.



### ChiChi, Aurora (originally from Burma)

War and genocide of the Karen people forced ChiChi’s family to leave Burma. They lived in the jungle, where ChiChi’s father died when she was only nine years old. Her mother sent her five children to a refugee camp in Thailand for their safety and so they could receive an education. ChiChi worked hard to finish high school and then became a teacher at the camp. She met her husband there and they had their first child. In 2011 the family was selected for resettlement to the United States. ChiChi spoke no English when she arrived in the U.S. The family worked hard, bought a house, had two more children, and helped start Radical Love. ChiChi now works as Outreach Coordinator for Radical Love.

*“God defends the orphan and the widow and loves the foreigner.”  
- Deuteronomy 10:18*

### RESOURCE SHEET:

*We work alongside many amazing organizations - each providing valuable resources to our community. If you have ITEMS to donate, please consider these organizations:*

CLOTHING	Batavia Clothing Closet (attached to Food Pantry)
FURNATURE HOME GOODS	Wayside Cross, St. Vincent de Paul, Salvation Army
BIKES	Bikes for Batavia (find them on Facebook)
SHOES	SneakerHertz (find them on Facebook)
CARS	3Keys (they will come pick up any car that is working/fixable)
KIDS BUILDING ITEMS	(Legos, Magnetic Tiles, Cards) Nicholson Elementary School in Montgomery
FOOD	Shepherd’s Heart (Geneva), Batavia Food Pantry, Aurora Interfaith Food Pantry

**Our Mission:**  
To reflect the radical love of Jesus through our work with refugee families, senior citizens, and children.



**Follow Us:**  
Facebook @theradicallove  
Instagram @theradicalloveproject

# Radical Love

## Updates:

### BRINGING 12 SOULS TO THE U.S.

Radical Love is partnering with Welcome Corps and World Relief (via the U.S. State Department) to bring 12 souls (2 families of 6 each) out of Mae La Oon refugee camp in Thailand. Teams were formed and funding of \$30,000 was raised. The portal for applications opened in January, and applications for both families were submitted. We wait in hopeful anticipation!

### COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS RECAP



More than 500 people came together to make this event possible. Refugee families from around the world were partnered with local neighbors to meet, share a meal, hear a symphony together, and share gifts. Winter coats, hats, gloves, socks, toiletries and feminine products, and Bibles in several languages were provided. We gave 2024 Radical Love calendars (listing our dates for the year) and Radical Love hoodies to each international neighbor.

## Our Team

### Board of Directors:



Ellie Lebron  
Founder



Katie Feagans  
Secretary



Jason Lebron  
Treasurer



Abby Baldwin



Austin Newcomb

### Advisory Council:



Jen Bernal



Kate Derrico



Cheryl Pacilio



Josh Schwede



Kim Thompson

### Staff:



Ellie Lebron  
Founder & Executive Director



Courtney Wilkison  
Director of Operations



Keri Bush  
Director of Programming



Karina DiOrio  
Outreach Coordinator  
Speaks Spanish



ChiChi Htoo  
Outreach Coordinator  
Speaks Karen



Natalie Potepenکو  
Outreach Coordinator  
Speaks Russian & Ukrainian

## AN OFFICE FOR RADICAL LOVE!



We have our first office space, located in Geneva! We meet here for staff meetings and retreats, connect with refugee neighbors and community partners, and give grant presentations for funding. It's a true gathering space!

### WINTER MEET-UP RECAP



Over 200 resettled refugee neighbors and friends gathered in February for Game and Dance Day. We opened with a prayer in Spanish, followed by dances from around the world.



We shared over 100 American board games with our international neighbors – playing and learning the games first, then sending games home for families to enjoy

together. We shared a meal together, and every child left with a bag of books to enjoy!

## Ways to Get Involved

- 1) **Pray** for Radical Love and all of the people involved with our movement.
- 2) **Volunteer** with Radical Love. All opportunities are shared via email (register via our website).
- 3) **Give** to Radical Love and help us continue to GROW!
- 4) **Attend** our August 9th Fundraising event.

## Radical Love Merch



New colors for Spring and Summer! Apparel – kids and adults sizes – and more! Radical Love receives 40% of all proceeds.

Visit our website or Scan to see our store:

