

Orsid and The Refugee Employment Partnership

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The American Dream is one that inspires people with hope and the promise of freedom. Tens of thousands come to New York City each year hoping to create a future of safety and fulfillment for themselves and their families. Sadly, once they arrive, things can change if they aren't able to secure jobs and don't know where to turn. That's when an organization like the Refugee Employment Partnership (REP) saves the day.

REP is a group of volunteers focused on helping recently arrived refugees and asylees find suitable employment as they begin new lives in the New York Metropolitan Area. REP was formed in 2017 by members of B'nai Jeshurun, is co-sponsored by Rutgers Presbyterian Church, and includes other members of the local community. Founder & Executive Director Richard Fields based the program on one-on-one career mentorship where volunteers interact on a personal level with the refugee job-seekers, sharing advice, opening doors, and giving constant encouragement. The group works closely with local employers, presenting candidates who are carefully vetted, speak English, are authorized to work, and don't require visa sponsorship. REP contacts hiring managers and arranges interviews. In time, they help bring about job placements that companies find genuinely helpful.

Companies like Orsid...

Orsid proudly partners with REP and offers to give special consideration to refugee candidates. Senior VP of Orsid, Aaron Davidowitz, serves as the point of contact and keeps REP Program Director, David Coleman, updated on any new opportunities. Orsid goes out of its way to look out for its employees and taking part in this program is an extension of its belief in investing in people, regardless of their background.

Two such success stories are:

Shakeel Samuel

Shakeel arrived in the USA from Pakistan. He was a Christian fleeing religious persecution in his country. He met REP's founder Richard who contacted Orsid's management. Before long, Shakeel had secured a job in Payroll. However Shakeel didn't just find a job at Orsid - he found his home. The match has been so successful that Shakeel says he has never been happier. "Orsid's core value is mutual respect," he said, "all the employees are welcomed like a community regardless of race or religion. They are my family."

Laureano Olivarez

Laureano was a host of a late-night show in his home country Venezuela and made a few remarks critical of the government that caused him to be hunted down by the regime. He fled to Atlanta and requested political asylum. An actor by profession, Laureano found it hard to break into the industry and he urgently needed work to support himself and his young daughter. He realized he needed help. That's when REP's David Coleman arranged for mentoring support. Laureano, who considers David a good friend, said REP connected him to a temp job with Orsid which led to a permanent job at Gregory Towers as a doorman. Laureano says he is in his element there. "I consider myself very lucky and I like talking to people every day and they like me." The fit seemed to be a good one.

At Orsid, we believe in investing in our employees and our partnership with the REP is just another step in that direction. We are proud to be able to continue to offer job opportunities to deserving refugee men and women and we can't wait to help nurture their talent.