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Partnership with Local Bank Brings Economic Opportunities for Refugee & Immigrant Women

Refugee Women's Network has developed a financial partnership with Decatur First Bank, tripling loan availability for its participants. Refugee Women's Network (RWN) is a national non-profit organization, based in Decatur, GA that enhances refugee and immigrant women's strength and skills by providing trainings in microenterprise development. In this partnership, RWN is the point of contact for refugee and immigrant women seeking business loans. Eligible borrowers will be selected by RWN and referred to Decatur First Bank for loans. Since 2005, RWN has been providing microloans to refugee and immigrant women in amounts ranging from \$250 to \$15,000. With partnership with Decatur First Bank, RWN will be able to provide up to \$30,000 in individual loans.

Decatur First Bank is a full service community bank locally owned and managed, dedicated to the needs of area residents and businesses. All Bank decisions are made locally and funds reinvested in the community.

Refugee Women's Network, through its Microenterprise Program, has been providing refugee and immigrant women with business plan training, marketing and other services to entrepreneurs who are starting, strengthening or expanding their businesses. Typically, the first time borrowers of RWN loans are refugee and immigrant women who have been in the country for a few years, do not have a credit history in this country and thus are not able to receive loans from traditional sources. RWN makes loans based on character of the person and to date has a zero percent loan default rate. Many refugees and immigrants reside in DeKalb County and as a result have opened up businesses in the Decatur-DeKalb area. Some of the businesses that have sprung up include restaurants and catering services, retail shops, event halls, child care, beauty salon and more. Partnerships like RWN and Decatur First Bank are not only important for helping newcomers to Georgia find firm footing, but also to boost the local economy.

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About RWN

Refugee Women's Network is a national non-profit organization created by women, for women, that focus on enhancing refugee and immigrant women's strength, skills, and courage, through leadership training, education and advocacy to promote independence, self-sufficiency, and networking among its participants since 1995. Its programs include leadership development, microenterprise, health promoters and advocacy. Refugee Women's Network is governed and staffed by refugee and immigrant women from Africa, Asia, Europe, the Middle East, and the Americas. For more information on RWN, log onto www.riwn.org