



REFUGEE STORIES

Seven stories that inspired us in 2022

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TOPICS

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UNITED STATES

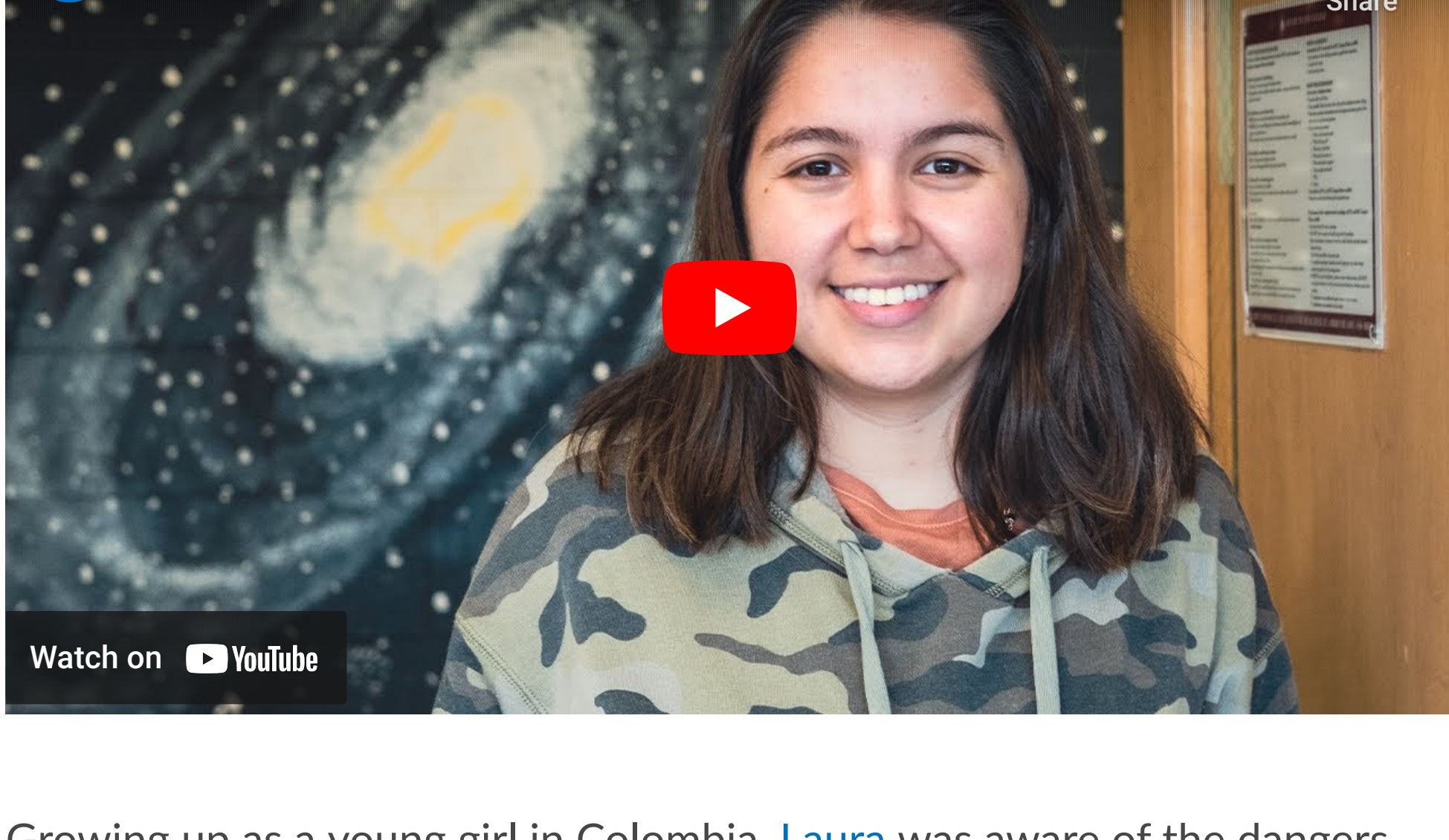
JUMP TO ACTION

HOW TO HELP

While we were faced with devastating new conflicts and continued barriers for refugees in 2022, this year was also filled with stories of perseverance and hope. We introduced you to inspiring refugee women, youth and advocates across the country who have overcome the odds to build bright futures.

Take a look back at seven of our most inspiring stories from 2022.

Laura Londono



Growing up as a young girl in Colombia, [Laura](#) was aware of the dangers that she and her family faced every day. She was forced to flee her home, but she never stopped dreaming of reaching the stars. Though she faced many challenges along the way, Laura was able to find safety in Ecuador, resettle in the United States, graduate from college with a degree in engineering and is now well on her way to achieving her dream of becoming a NASA astronaut.

Night-Jean



For [Night-Jean](#), growing up in a refugee camp was not easy, but his determination, love for education and passion for poetry helped him cope with challenging times. After 15 years of living in a refugee camp, Night-Jean resettled in the United States. Now, the college graduate is serving as a Youth Coordinator at the Refugee Dream Center, where he is using his passion for poetry and education to advocate, empower and inspire other refugee youth in his community.

Haya and Ghena



[Haya and Ghena's](#) family was forced to flee their home in Iraq because of threats of persecution and kidnappings. The twins were born as refugees in Jordan. When they were just three years old, their family was selected for resettlement in the U.S. and given a chance at a safer, brighter, more peaceful life. Today, the twins are thriving as high school seniors and making a difference in their community as members of their school's "Trash Club," a student group working to reduce waste and preserve the environment.

Maggie, Rashika and Hadia



[Maggie, Rashika and Hadia](#) are using their passion for helping others to create a warm and inclusive environment for newcomers and refugees in their Minneapolis community. The three healthcare professionals work with the University of Minnesota Mobile Health Initiative — which strives to tear down economic, social and cultural barriers to accessing healthcare while engaging historically marginalized communities like indigenous people, immigrants and refugees throughout Minnesota.

Nery Santaella



USA for UNHCR's 2022 Gene Dewey Refugee Award went to [Nery Santaella](#), a former refugee and founder of Voices of Venezuela. Five years ago, Nery fled violence in Venezuela. On her journey, she noticed that there was a severe lack of credible information for refugees making the dangerous journey from Venezuela to Colombia. That's why she decided to create Voices of Venezuela, a non-profit organization helping people fleeing Venezuela build self-reliance and integrate more easily into their new communities in Colombia. The organization educates refugees about their rights and combats xenophobia and misinformation.

Eric Hoffert



[Eric](#) is a marathon runner and fundraiser for USA for UNHCR. When he first heard about the millions of people who were being forced to flee Ukraine in February, he was reminded of his family's own history of displacement and his great-grandparents, who were forced to flee Ukraine in the 1920s due to persecution. Eric felt compelled to take action and decided to fundraise for USA for UNHCR for the New York City Marathon.

Ferzan and Manal



"A good candle, with a good cause" is at the heart of everything [Kin & Care](#) does. The candle company's owner, Ferzan Jaegar, has a deep empathy for the challenges refugee women face when they arrive in the United States. For Ferzan, meaningful employment and compassionate support are the keys to helping newly arrived refugees build a new life in Maryland — and that's exactly what Kin & Care provides for refugees like Manal. When she first fled Syria, Manal never imagined the path her life would take. But working at Kin & Care has given her both economic opportunities and the chance to build a community for herself in Maryland.

Discover more inspiring stories!

Refugees are our friends, neighbors, colleagues and leaders in our communities. Get to know some of the amazing refugees and refugee advocates in your community and around the world — [listen to their voices](#) and [read their incredible stories](#) using [USA for UNHCR's story map](#).