

ABSTRACT

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Title: Understanding the Lived Experiences of Afghan Refugee Adolescents: A Community-Engaged Photovoice Collaboration

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In the Spring of 2022, Elena's Light partnered with a Refugee Literature class at Wesleyan University to conduct a photovoice project with refugee adolescents. The goal of this project was to give power to the refugee children to tell their own stories, as well as hope to understand from a community perspective what is important to refugee children. We wanted to use the findings to build new programming at Elena's Light, as well as help build skills among the refugee community in photography, storytelling, teamwork, and intercultural understanding. This study is a secondary qualitative analysis of the "Refugee Stories" project that was conducted between Elena's Light and Wesleyan University in 2022. The 12 participants provided 100 pieces of data that pointed towards many shared experiences of joy, family, academics, nature, and acculturation that are analyzed in this study, along with a detailed account of how the project was undertaken and the many nuances associated with working with the refugee population. This research can serve as a guide for future photovoice or art therapy projects with refugee children and families, as well as provide a closer look at the refugee experience in New Haven, Connecticut.