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**MEDIA CONTACT**  
Amanda Strittmatter | (512) 463-5424  
Marketing@TheStoryOfTexas.com

## World Refugee Day celebration returns to the Bullock Museum on June 24

Free event recognizes refugees and celebrates new American citizens with food, music and activities

**JUNE 20, 2023 (AUSTIN, TX)** — The Bullock Texas State History Museum and Austin Refugee Roundtable will host Austin's annual celebration of the United Nations' World Refugee Day on Saturday, June 24 from 11 am to 2:30 pm. The free event will be held at the Museum and will feature a naturalization ceremony, live music and dance performances, samples of world cuisine, and family activities.

Currently, there are more than 100 million people who have been forcibly displaced from their homes throughout the world. Established by the United Nations in 2000 and first celebrated on June 20, 2001, World Refugee Day raises awareness of the plight of these refugees and recognizes the courage and resilience of people forced to flee their home country. This year's World Refugee Day celebration at the Bullock Museum is made possible through support from Gregg Philipson and Michelle Warech-Philipson.

“Now a long-standing Bullock Museum tradition, the citizenship ceremony during World Refugee Day connects our historic past with the present by commemorating and celebrating the significant community investments that immigrants from all corners of the world have made and continue to make by establishing a home in Texas,” said Margaret Koch, Director of the Bullock Museum.

Starting at 11 am, visitors can take part in interactive activities, including a step-by-step learning game that allows participants to experience the journey of a refugee. Visitors will learn what causes people to flee, what it is like in a refugee camp, the process for applying for resettlement, and the experience of refugees coming to the United States. Visitors can also have a portrait made with a photographer and register to vote at an onsite registration table.



At noon, the public is invited to witness refugees completing the final step in the journey — taking the oath that will complete their process of becoming a United States citizen at an official naturalization ceremony in the Museum's second-floor Texas Spirit Theater. Seating is limited and available on a first-come, first-served basis.

Following the ceremony, visitors can celebrate in the Museum's Grand Lobby with samples of world cuisine, live music from Afghan singer Wahab Rasooli, and dance performances by Austin based Ukrainian folk dance group Sonyashnyk and traditional Afghan dance group Jarajo.

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“When we honor refugees, we are paying tribute to the strength of the human spirit,” said Lubna Zeidan, Refugee Program Co-Director at Interfaith Action of Central Texas. “Refugees are forced out of their country by violence. They are survivors who live in the hope of a better life. World Refugee Day celebrates their strength and perseverance.”

The World Refugee Day celebration will take place at the Bullock Museum on Saturday, June 24 from 11 am to 2:30 pm. For more information, visit [TheStoryofTexas.com](http://TheStoryofTexas.com).

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This program made possible through the generosity of Gregg Philipson and Michelle Warech-Philipson.

The Bullock Museum, a division of the Texas State Preservation Board, is funded by Museum members, donors, and patrons, the Texas State History Museum Foundation, and the State of Texas.

### **ABOUT THE BULLOCK MUSEUM**

The Bullock Texas State History Museum, a division of the State Preservation Board and an accredited institution of the American Alliance of Museums, illuminates and celebrates Texas history, people, and culture. With dynamic, award-winning exhibitions, educational programming for all ages, and an IMAX® theater with the largest screen in Texas, the Museum collaborates with more than 700 museums, libraries, archives and individuals across the world to bring the Story of Texas to life.

1800 N. CONGRESS AVE. | AUSTIN, TEXAS 78701 | (512) 936-8746 | [THESTORYOFTEXAS.COM](http://THESTORYOFTEXAS.COM)