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Community to Pitch in on the 'Pitch' for World Refugee Day

*Third-annual community celebration, Soft Landing Missoula soccer tournament to be held
June 16, 2019*

Missoula, Montana (June 4, 2019) - For the third year in a row, hundreds of long-established Missoulians and our new neighbors will come together for the 2019 World Refugee Day Community Celebration and Soccer Tournament. This event will take place on June 16 at the Fort Missoula Regional Park soccer fields and pavilion. It includes 7-on-7 play with the World Cup Match bringing all of our champions together for the final game and concludes with a community celebration for everyone to enjoy. The free dinner will include an increased sampling of dishes from local refugee families as well as performances with plenty of room for audience participation!

"Each year, Missoula continues to see 20-25 families resettling here," Soft Landing Executive Director, Mary Poole, said, "As a result, the 2019 celebration will bring in even more refugee players than in years past - and gives all of us more reason to celebrate!"

The day 'kicks off' with the first games beginning at 10 a.m. and the final match scheduled for 4 p.m. After goals have been counted, dinner and the celebration will be underway at 5 p.m. This will include a Futpong tournament, a performance by the Congolese Choir, and dancing all night! The free dinner will feature a sampling of dishes from local refugee families as well as traditional American BBQ fare. You do not have to play soccer to enjoy this special evening celebration.

Soft Landing estimates that more than 250 people participated and attended the celebration in 2018. As such, we hope to see even more neighbors come out to support our players on Sunday, June 16.

"I am excited for this year's tournament," Desbele Tekle from Eritrea, said. "There is food and music and dancing and it is good for refugees and Missoulians to be together and share culture and experiences."

World Refugee Day is celebrated every year on June 20. Soft Landing Missoula's event honors the courage, strength and determination of women, men and children who are forced to flee their homeland under threat of persecution, conflict, and violence. The Missoula community has stepped up to welcome more than 45 families and has made Missoula a welcoming place where refugees can integrate and thrive. Soft Landing Missoula is excited to celebrate the addition of these families to our community with a soccer tournament and community party.

Additionally, new this year there is a [peer-to-peer online campaign](#). This allows all those who want to support the event a simple way to do so. Anyone can easily spread the word and help raise money for serving refugees in Missoula. Proceeds from the event support Soft Landing's mission of helping Missoula, Montana, to be a welcoming, supportive and informed community that can assist refugees to integrate and thrive.

Additional information can be found online at <https://softlandingmissoula.org/soccer-tournament/>.

About Soft Landing's World Refugee Soccer Tournament and Community Celebration

The World Refugee Day Cup is the annual fundraiser for Soft Landing Missoula and its success relies on corporate and individual sponsorships. SLM is committed to providing community education, outreach, and connection to make this endeavor positive for Missoulians and the refugees joining our community.

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