COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Office of the Governor

Timothy M. Kaine
Governor

June 19, 2008

Dear Friends:

On behalf of the Commonwealth of Virginia, I would like to extend warm greetings to everyone attending the First Annual World Refugee Day (WRD) Celebration Program in Richmond.

Virginia ranks among the top fifteen states across the nation in refugee resettlement, and truly has a population representative of the entire global community. Refugees from Africa, Central Asia, and Latin America encompass the Commonwealth's newest citizens, with many seeking a safe haven from a looming regional war or genocide in their home countries. Despite these unimaginably difficult circumstances, Virginia is blessed to have this population enrich us all and promote cultural diversity while maintaining our own individual identities.

I commend the Virginia Department of Health and the State Newcomer Health Program (NHP) for their efforts to protect the public's health by empowering local health districts to provide thorough initial health screenings and case management services to all new refugees entering the Commonwealth. Today's WRD celebration reinforces Virginia's reputation as a truly welcoming and safe place for the global community, and I wish you all the best in these admirable efforts.

Sincerely,

Timothy M. Kaine

Patrick Henry Building • 1111 East Broad Street • Richmond, Virginia 23219
(804) 786-2211 • TTY (800) 828-1120
www.governor.virginia.gov