



PROFESSIONAL PROFILE



~ Shirin Behrouz-Cambin ~

A through-line in Shirin's life is her dedication to learning. She started her career as an educator at Jackson College and continues to serve as Associate Professor of Political Science today.

Along the way, she found herself in the corners and streets of Lansing, meeting newcomers as they began new lives in the city.

Shirin started volunteering at Catholic Charities of Ingham, Eaton, and Clinton Counties (formerly St. Vincent Catholic Charities/Refugee Services) in 2001. She was a family mentor to newly arriving Afghan women fleeing the Taliban. Her volunteering at STVCC went on for the following 17 years.

Meanwhile, she also served as the Executive Director of the Refugee Development Center from 2007 to 2014. Having observed the power of a community to harness its resources in support of its residents, Shirin moved from the RDC to the Immigrant and Refugee Resource Collaborative (IRRC) in 2014. There she volunteered her time for 9 years to help community organizations build the current IRRC structure. The IRRC is guided by an Advisory Council of 15 people representing 13 different nations, 50+ community partners, workgroups, and coalitions committed to strengthening services in our city.

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In 2023, the IRRC received funding from the Office of Global Michigan, elevating it from a community collaborative to a regional force within the state's infrastructure. This model of regional community collaboration has since been replicated across Michigan.

Today, the IRRC is led by first and second-generation Americans who are committed to a Lansing that welcomes all who live here. IRRC partners do the hard work of identifying needs and working to meet them everyday. And then, when the day is over, they create spaces where a shared book, a shared meal, a moment, affirms each of us who call Lansing home. The IRRC lives and works where welcoming happens.

Reflecting on her journey, Shirin humbly says, “All I ever did was keep learning from those around me.” Quoting one of her favorite authors, Gregory Boyle, she adds, “I owe everything to other people.”

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