Caring Across Communities:
Addressing the Mental Health Needs of
Children of Immigrants and Refugees

School Outreach Program
Family Service Association
of Bucks County
Langhorne, PA

Problem:
Pennsylvania’s Bucks County has attracted a growing population of Liberian refugee students. During the Liberian civil war, many were denied the opportunity for schooling – a burden that adds to the trauma of years in refugee camps and the challenge of adjusting to American culture. As a result, some Liberian young people experience fear, anger, and depression as they attempt to fit into the county and its schools.

Solution:
Partner with the school district and other local organizations to build on existing behavioral health services to develop mental health programs specifically for Liberian middle school children.

Program:
A School Outreach Program has been launched at the Franklin D. Roosevelt Middle School (FDR) in Bristol Township that provides case management and mental health services tailored to the needs of Liberian students. School-based services include counseling for children, parents, and families. Also, home-visiting is an added component for the students and their families.

Impact:
The program has reduced stigma against mental health services and increased mental health care for Liberian students and their families. Students and families in the host school and neighborhood are more aware and understanding of challenges faced by the Liberian community.