

## Our Mission

Working to help build brighter futures for refugee women and children.

## Our Vision

We envision a community that respects & celebrates diversity, and provides equity of opportunity to all members.

## Our Values

### Compassion

We believe compassion is the key to creating communities where all people are respected, valued, and welcomed.

### Excellence

Excellence is the keystone to all of our operations at Elena's Light, and we expect it across all of our programs and at all levels: from our volunteers all the way to our staff and board members.

### Diversity

We work hard to create an equitable community and culture that celebrates and values diverse backgrounds, identities, and perspectives.

### Independence

At Elena's Light, we work hard to provide refugee and immigrant families with all the tools they need to cultivate and exercise their individual independence.

### Iktsuarpok

"Iktsuarpok" is an Inuit word with no English translation that means "the feeling of anticipation when you wait for someone to arrive, and you keep checking to see if they're there yet." This word represents the sentiment of what we envision for our community: a safe place where everyone feels a sense of friendship and belonging.

## Our Staff



### Fereshteh Ganjavi

Founder and Executive Director

### Henley Smith

Executive Assistant and  
Social Media Director

### Jillian Kopcik

Health and Wellness Coordinator

### Simone Curtin-Rugless

Fundraising Specialist

### Emily Gordon

Fundraising and Media Specialist

### Bushra Mahdi

Elena's Light Fellow

### Jeanne Ilano

Grant Specialist and  
Social Media Coordinator



women learning together

EMPOWERING  
WOMEN  
TOGETHER  
INCLUSION

# Our Programs

## ESL Program

Our one-on-one English as a second language (or ESL) tutoring program was purposefully designed with accessibility in mind: classes are 100% free to clients, offer flexible scheduling options, and are conveniently offered in the comfort of the client's home. Our ESL curriculum is customizable based on each client's individual needs and goals. We focus on "practical" and "working" ESL skills, preparing clients to embrace their independence and feel comfortable navigating their new home communities.

## Elena's Light Health Programs

Our EL Health program, conducted with Y-HEALAR, the Yale Health organization, is an interactive in-home health education program taught by licensed health professionals. Our health education program focuses on addressing the many barriers to healthcare for refugee and immigrant populations. Our goals are to increase health literacy, encourage patient autonomy, and help clients practice good health behavior. Interpreters are provided to ensure client understanding of the teachings, and as always, classes are 100% free of charge.



## CONTACT US

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**Visit us at**  
[www.elenaslight.org](http://www.elenaslight.org)

**Follow us on social media:**  
Twitter, IG: @elenaslight1  
Facebook: @elenaslight11

We have also recently launched our **EL Child Wellness Program**, a new program created specifically to address the needs of refugee elementary and middle school children resettled in Connecticut. Incorporating evidenced based, culturally and trauma informed educational exercises, the program employs wellness initiatives that support the social-emotional-cognitive well being of the children.

## Elena's Light Community

Inspired by the meaningful relationships we have built over the years, Elena's Light decided to introduce a new community initiative known as EL Community that is dedicated to creating a safe space for cultural exchange, exploration, and immersion for refugee and immigrant children and families.