



City of Grand Junction, State of Colorado

Proclamation

Whereas, it is with great appreciation that we recognize the dedication and unwavering commitment of Joint Development Associates International (JDA) and the Grand Valley Resettlement Program and its many volunteers and partners; and

Whereas, Robert Hedlund, the visionary founder of JDA, devoted over three decades of his life in service to the people of northern Afghanistan, providing essential support and aid to countless communities until August 2021 when JDA suspended its operations in northern Afghanistan due to the Taliban takeover, leaving many Afghans lives at risk due to their association with Americans; and

Whereas, Robert Hedlund returned to his hometown of Grand Junction, and through his resilience and leadership, conceived the Grand Valley Resettlement Program, with a mission to provide refuge, solace, and opportunities to Afghan families in dire need; and

Whereas, in collaboration with numerous community organizations, governmental entities, 15 church congregations, and an army of over 350 volunteers, the Grand Valley Resettlement Program successfully resettled more than 70 Afghan immigrants, fostering cultural exchange and mutual enrichment; and

Whereas, the collective spirit of Grand Junction residents has shone brightly as they provided invaluable assistance exemplifying true compassion and solidarity; as the Afghan families embraced their newfound community with zeal, striving to become esteemed and cherished members of the Grand Junction and Mesa County societies; and

Whereas, the Grand Valley Resettlement Program stands as a testament to the profound benevolence of the people of Grand Junction, whose innate humanity transcends borders, reaching out to alleviate suffering and champion the cause of those in need, thereby elevating the entire community.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Anna Stout, by the power vested in me as Mayor of the City of Grand Junction, do proclaim that the City of Grand Junction, on this day, recognizes and commends the Grand Valley Resettlement Program and Joint Development Associates International for their dedication in bringing hope, renewal, and unity to the lives of Afghan refugees and to the entire Grand Valley community.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused to be affixed the official Seal of the City of Grand Junction this 5th day of September 2023.

Mayor

