

By Bill Richards and Austin Scott Washington Post Staff Writers

Federal and private agency officials working on resettling Vietnamese refugees in the United States are alarmed over mounting problems between Vietnamese already released from refugee camps and their American sponsors.

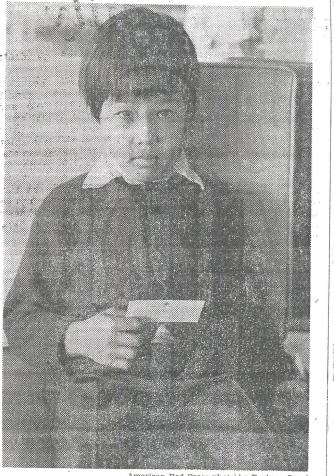
Increasingly, a number of officials said this week, refugees who have been released in the sponsorship of friends, relatives or others are turning up on the doorsteps of public and private relief agencies without jobs or money. "At this point," said Dale DeHaan, staff

"At this point," said Dale DeHaan, staff director for the Senate Subcommittee on Refugees and Escapees, "there appears to be a very alarming rate of breakdown. We're getting scores of phone calls from refugees and sponsors who have nowhere to turn... In all my 12 years in refugee placement I've never seen a breakdown rate like this."

Several private agency officials and other staff members of the Senate subcommittee said much of the blame for the problems — called "breakdowns" by the officials—rests with the "direct release" program run by the federal Interagency Refugee Task Force, which has been overseeing the operation of the entire refugee program.

As the numbers of refugees began building up in the four large holding camps scattered around the country, task force officials allowed refugees with contacts among friends and relatives—and more recently with people who have telephoned in their desire to sponsor refugees—to leave.

Resettlement officials now contend See REFUGEES, A12, Col. 1



American Red Cross photo by Barbara Isard

An unidentifed boy holds a card from the American Red Cross identifying him as a refugee from Southeast Asia unfamiliar with "our language, culture and customs," and asking for assistance.

## **REFUGEES.** From A1

many of these sponsors were refugee placement to use govnot prepared to handle the ernment money to pay the financial and emotional bur- cost of refugee families from dens of sponsoring refugee the direct release program families. Nearly one-quarter who have been abandoned by of the 45,000 refugees re- their sponsors. leased from the holding camps are in this "direct release" category, officials said.

Instances of breakdowns ----sometimes stranding Vietna. sored refugees. However, primese families with a dozen or vate agency officials said the more members — include:

ily of 15 showed up at the settlement program — already U.S. Catholic Conference and add unexpected evtra field office after their sponsor, a Vietnamese relative costs married to an American, found she could not afford to tain their sponsor program is feed them. The Catholic Con- going well. However, in recent ference split the family up in weeks the release goal of 1,000 order to find alternate hous- refugees per day has fallen ing, and got them food off sharply, fluctuating bestamps.

· A refugee family in Durham, N.C., called Catholic Conference officials at Eglin Air Force Base, Fla., this week is no indication that the break-to complain that they were proportions But she acid to complain that they were proportions. But, she said, locked up in one room by they would be reported to the relatives and let out only voluntary agencies first, and twice a day to be fed. Officials the task force would not said they were investigating necessarily hear about them at the case.

saulted in Tampa, Fla., by a more than two dozen, three male sponsor who told place dozen," she said. The volunment officials at Fort Chaffee, tary agencies are responsible Ark., that he was married and for checking to make sure needed someone to work in sponsors are equipped to his daughter's motel. Officials handle the burden of caring later discovered the man had for refugees, she said, and been separated from his wife the Task Force does not have for years, and had no plans the power to order them to to put the 27-year-old refugee check more thoroughly. to work. She told authorities Private placement agency she thought she was legally officials said they feared that committed to remain with him federal officials might shove because of his status as sponsor.

"They [the task force] just dumped some of these refugees on the goodwill of the American people," said De- geo Haan. The Senate subcommittee sharply criticized the task force in a June 9 report, and creasing number of breakplans to meet Thursday with of Vietnamese who eventually to discuss the breakdowns.

The situation has become so serious that the task force two

weeks ago authorized the nine private agencies involved in

Neither the task force nor the private agencies have been able to compile figures on breakdowns among the spontotal is rising rapidly and may • In Denver, a refugee fam now slow down the entire, resettlement program — already and add unexpected extra BYEL DU PC

Task force officials maintween 400 and 800 refugees daily, according to DeHaan.

Elinor Green, spokeswoman for the task force, says there is no indication that the break-'all.

• A woman refugee was as "I don't think I've heard of

additional refugees out of the camps without adequate sponsorship in order to improve the appearance of the program and clear out the refugees before cold weather sets

They also fear that the inwill seek public assistance where they settle.

More than 400 Indochina refugee families have applied

for public assistance in the Washington area and clusters of refugees have filed public relief applications in Southern California.

The refugee task force, in its request in May for federal funds for resettlement, estimated that as many as half of the refugees in the United States may need some form of public assistance, ranging from Medicaid to direct financial support.

The estimate projected that the number of refugees seeking aid would average out to just under 42,000 per month at any one time after all the Vietnamese leave the camps.

Donald Hall, associate director of Migration and Refugee Services for the U.S. Catholic Conference, the largest of the private placement agencies, said this week that when the names and return-numbers of prospective sponsors have been parcelled out to private agencies by the task force, less than 10 per cent have proven to be in a position to take on refugees.

Hall said his agency had received reports from offices in Dallas, Denver, Boston and other cities where refugees showed up at Catholic Conference offices seeking help.

Wells Klein, executive director of the American Council for Nationalities Service, another of the refugee placement agencies, said similar surges of calls for help had been coming in from his agency's 28 offices around the country. "To some extentbreakdowns were inevitable," said Klein.

"But I don't think anyone planed for this sort of problem. I'm afraid this is where you're going to get your local community backlash."