

Loom is a community of Refugee Women Artisans who create handmade objects and unique functional art. These are women who have fled war and violence from around the globe and have resettled in Chicago; at Loom they get the opportunity to form a supportive community, learn from each other and from local artists, earn an income and empower themselves in their readjustment in a new country and culture different from the ones they come from. Currently we have women from Nepal, Bhutan, Afghanistan, Bosnia, Syria, Iraq and Uganda. They meet weekly to work on ongoing projects, or do workshops to learn new skills. To learn more you can visit our website www.loomchicago.com or follow us on Facebook and Instagram @loomchicago.

We asked a few of our artisans to present themselves by telling us a little about their past and present lives, where they come from and why, and to share why it is that they come to Loom. These were some of their responses along with a picture of a recent piece they created:

Loom Artisan 1

“I am from Bosnia. I am a refugee. I came to America in 1995 because there was a big war in my country. My daughter needed medical help, and a doctor from Columbus, Ohio, said that he would help her. So my son, my two daughters and I traveled to America and the doctor helped my daughter. Then I got a job in Columbus, but later my family moved to Chicago and I got a job here. My husband came here after one and a half years, and now I am retired and living at home. I have been coming to LOOM for a few months and I like everything about LOOM, because it helps people.”



Close-Up of knit baby blanket

Loom Artisan 2

“I am from Baghdad, Iraq. I came to the United States as a refugee in 2004, because there are a lot of problems in my country. In the United States, I have traveled to California, Arizona, and Las Vegas, but I like Chicago better. Chicago is very, very nice, and I really like LOOM. LOOM is my family, my friend, my daughter, everything to me.”



Embroidery on hand-bound notebook

Loom Artisan 3

“I am from Nepal. I am a refugee. I came to Chicago in 2015, and I really like it here. I have not traveled outside of Chicago yet, but someday I want to. I like LOOM, because it helped me to meet new friends.”



Close-up of crochet shoulder cover

Loom Artisan 4

“I am from Afghanistan. I came to the United States as a refugee in 2010, because my husband was here. My life here is very different from my life in Afghanistan. My husband and I have two kids, but the rest of my family is back in Afghanistan. I worry a lot about them, because my country is not safe. I finished high school in my country and became a teacher, and now I am going to school here to keep learning. During the summer I stay home with my kids, and I come to LOOM. I like LOOM because my mother always used to do things like this, like making us scarves, jackets, socks, and hats.”



Close-up of Knit shawl

To find more about some of our artisans please go to our website www.loomchicago.com.