Update on refugee family

While the Sponsor Circle was officially disbanded after the 90 days of resettlement, several members of Robeson Lutheran and community members continued to assist the family with many things.  At the start of November the family informed us they had decided to relocate.  Reading was not the ideal location for them and they had made some trips to visit family and friends an a few areas.

They have expressed sincere gratitude for the support they have received from the Sponsor Circle, volunteers and those who have donated monetarily and with necessary household and personal items! The recent car fundraising effort brought in $3,100. And since a vehicle was not purchased the funds have been put toward moving expenses.

They have decided to move across country to Modesto, CA!  They have a bit of family there and an old friend from Afghanistan who has a business there with an Afghan community! This friend has offered the family employment, use of a vehicle and other assistance.  They feel this is a good opportunity for them in a place that will have more familiarity in terms of cultural community, walkability, and weather!

Those of us who are involved are happy and excited for them to have found a location they feel good about! The father and head of the family is already out there seeking housing and making preparations while the rest of the family has been doing the things that need to be done here. They will be flying out on Thursday, 12/15.   The effort to sponsor and resettle an Afghan family has been achieved and very successful.  Being able to bring 8 adults and one youth to the US for safety and a new start was an amazing achievement and one we will never forget!

We hope you will join in wishing them well and lifting them up in prayer as they begin this new phase of their journey.  For them, it will be liking starting over but now on their terms !!

Finding a place to live, furnishing it, new school and jobs, new location to learn, filing with a different state for benefits and case workers, seeking medical care (including prenatal and maternity care!) to continue their treatments for a variety of maladies and integrating into a new community! Exciting stuff, but scary and difficult too.

Thank you for joining in this journey. In this season of Advent and Christmas, I am mindful of Mary and Joseph and their journey before, during and after the birth of Jesus. None of it was expected but became accepted, none of it was planned but it was guided, none of it was easy but it was worth it. Much like the journey of the Arefi family and our own at times. Through it all, we need hope and faith, and the kindness and love of others to see us through.

May we all strive to welcome the stranger and live generously!

Bonnie Lauer