

SHALOM SHUK



Ever busy, the Shalom Shuk is preparing to welcome our New Americans from Afghanistan. Expected in November, they will have many needs to furnish their new abodes and get ready for Vermont's winter. Karen Robair, the Shuk's Manager, says the Shuk has already collected blankets, beautiful area rugs, clothes, bedding and art to hang on the walls of their first homes. You may have donations they can use. Please consider donating such items in very good or new condition to the Shuk.

Of course, this is not the first home for these New Americans—they are fleeing the dangers in Afghanistan. This makes it all the more important that they know we welcome them and want to help them settle safely in their new country. Not only does giving help them settle successfully, it lets them know that they are truly welcome by the Jews of Ohavi Zedek.

I remember when I was talking through a translator to a group of New Americans from Somalia and I told them that Ohavi Zedek was a Jewish synagogue. A man jumped up—he was scared and said, "Jews, we cannot stay here." He really had never experienced being with Jews. I replied, "let us help you in any way we can to be successful here in your new home. We know you are of another religion, the Muslim religion, and we Jews welcome your religion and your opportunity to practice your religion here in your new home community."

By the time we finished talking they felt safe, secure and were smiling happily. And so with the Shuk, we continued our long tradition of welcoming new immigrants, all the time knowing and remembering our history throughout the ages that we ourselves were immigrants and new arrivals in many lands.

Please consider donating to the Shuk to give our new neighbors a good start as they begin their lives all over again here in Vermont.

~ Kay Stambler

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