



January 2021 Plate Share – ICNAW

This month our plate is shared with the Interfaith Council for New Americans in Westchester (ICNAW). CUUC is one of four faith communities that formed ICNAW about four years ago. During this time, we have provided financial and logistical support to three families from Afghanistan that have resettled in White Plains and New Rochelle. We have also provided financial support for a fourth family upstate.

Refugee Resettlement SJT members have given generously of their time. Jane Dixon serves as co-chair of ICNAW and Terri Kung coordinates school and ESL tutoring. Others have helped set up apartments, driven family members to countless appointments and activities, led conversation groups, babysat, knit winter hats, and generally helped the families acclimate to our area. CUUC has hosted meetings for ICNAW and other refugee groups, members have provided important employment contacts, and we have supported the catering business of one of the refugee women. It truly has taken a village to successfully support the resettlement of these refugee families in our area.

Here is a letter from Jeff Swarz, co-chair of ICNAW:

Dear friends at CUUC,

Jane Dixon and I both have refugee stories in our family history. The word pogrom is rarely heard these days, but that is exactly what is occurring in countries in the Middle East and Africa. Afghanistan is one such example, where militant religious groups such as the Taliban target those seeking civil liberties and safety for their families.

The Interfaith Council of New Americans (ICNAW) has worked to settle refugee families who have faced life-threatening danger in Afghanistan. Many of you know these families who are now thriving in our country: husbands employed, their wives donating their time and sewing skills making COVID masks and their children, in school learning and becoming Americans.

Through your dedication and hard work as well as your financial support, we have been highly successful. Eight adults and ten children may not seem like much of a dent in the larger scheme of an estimated 79 million internally displaced persons and refugees, but it is meaningful as the children saved

today will grow and have children, and they will have children and they will become part of the fabric of American society,

Thus, ICNAW has decided that with a new President and more empathetic policies towards refugees, we should continue our mission to help these families no matter what country they may come from. President elect Biden has stated that in 2021 he will issue an executive order allowing 125,000 refugees to enter the U.S. A considerable increase from the current paltry 18,000 (of which only 8,000 were actually admitted in 2020).

With the implacable tenacity that has driven us all these past few years, we have decided to raise funds for the expected call that will come and ask us to once again assist a family fleeing from, religious intolerance, or fear of rape and/or murder in a country that is no longer safe for them.

We are cognizant of the challenging times we are living in, and we know that all of you give your time and precious dollars to many charitable causes that you believe in, but we hope and pray that you will once again give to ICNAW so that we can continue our much needed work. We want to continue to greet these new refugees with open arms, an open heart, security, and love.

With warmest regards,

Jeff Swarz, Co-Chair, ICNAW