

# ASSISTANCE FOR AFGHAN EVACUEES

## Partner Update as of October 28, 2021

Indiana-  
Kentucky  
Conference  
UNITED CHURCH  
OF CHRIST



to love  
& serve  
like Jesus

### Backpacks and luggage

(Some refugees are already departing Atterbury.

As refugees depart, they are able to take up to two 50 pound bags of luggage with them.

Many arrived with little to nothing. Backpacks and luggage are needed to help them make their next transition so that they do not leave Atterbury with their belongings in trash bags.

Team Rubicon said that gently used backpacks and gently used luggage are okay as long as all the zippers work.)

**Team Rubicon also informed me that the following have also been named by the refugees as top needs.**

(Interpreters daily present to Team Rubicon needs identified by the Afghans, who are in 7 different housing locations, each housing around 1,000 refugees.)

### Housing Area 1's Top Needs:

- Close-toed shoes
- Volleyball Nets
- Cricket Equipment
- Strollers

### Housing Area 2's Top Needs:

- Close-toed shoes
- Jackets
- Traditional clothing
- Toys
- Shampoo/Lotion

### Housing Area 3, 4, 5, 6, & 7's Top Needs (aggregated into one list):

- Close-toed shoes
- Jackets
- Hijabs (traditional women's head covering)
- Qurans
- Balls/Toys

### **Team Rubicon is now willing to receive gently used clothes.**

In cooperation with Team Rubicon, the Men's Prison at Pendleton is able and willing to wash any gently used clothes that are donated. So spread the word; check your closets; and help our allies. Once the donations arrive at Atterbury, Team Rubicon will transport used clothes to and from Pendleton for laundering.

### **Team Rubicon is now willing to receive gently used, winter-weight jackets and coats.**

These will be laundered at the Men's Prison at Pendleton before being distributed to our Afghan allies. Once the donations arrive at Atterbury, Team Rubicon will transport used coats and jackets to and from Pendleton for laundering. If you have gently used jackets and coats that cannot be laundered, please have them dry-cleaned and donate them inside the dry-cleaning bag.

### **Team Rubicon is now willing to receive gently used shoes.**

#### **SMALLER SIZES ARE BETTER:**

Team Rubicon informed me that the refugees – women and men -- are not as large as Americans in terms of weight and height.

So, smaller sizes are better.

Last week I met two Afghan men, who were helping Team Rubicon sort donations.

One man was about 5'5"; the other was about 5'4".

The taller man probably weighed about 140-150 pounds and the smaller man probably weighed 135-140 pounds.

While I did not notice their shoes, no doubt their shoes are also smaller. Of course, not all our Afghan guests are like these two; however, that really impressed the fact upon me that SMALLER SIZES ARE BETTER - **probably no bigger than Adult Medium.**

Also, keep in mind: Half of the guests at Atterbury are under 18. Of that number, 40% are under age 10.

So, lots of kids and children's sizes are needed.

That being said: If you are wondering about a gently-used item being TOO BIG, go ahead and donate it.

Any and all items which cannot be used by the refugees will be shared by Team Rubicon with the Red Cross.

In other words, someone in need WILL end up with your item.

### **WHAT ABOUT IMAGES ON CLOTHES?**

Given the Muslim prohibition of images, I asked a Muslim friend Fatima this question.

Q: Many items of children's clothing have pictures on them of Mickey Mouse and other cartoon characters. Is it acceptable/not offensive for clothing to have images on them?

A: There are varying opinions on this, and we know that the guests at the camp are all diverse in thought, so there is no straightforward response. There are families who will avoid such clothing if they can, and others who won't think twice about it or truthfully may even enjoy it. If there is a choice for the clothes to be plain, I believe that's generally best (and Team Rubicon has been encouraging this for equity purposes as well). But I don't think there will be any harm in this overall.

Russ from Team Rubicon told me last week that another need is for **one-liter insulated bottles -- and more baby bottles.**

The moms have been taught how to mix formula with water; however, the moms are saying that the warm formula doesn't stay warm for bottle feedings in the wee hours of the night.

The hope is to get insulated, one-liter bottles to the moms so they can mix the formula, which will then stay warm throughout the night.

More baby bottles are needed as well.

The base would like to set up a baby bottle exchange program where moms can turn in used bottles for cleaning and receive cleaned ones. With our help, they can.

**Classroom items and other learning materials are needed:**

The Afghans are organizing classroom learning opportunities and would like to receive basic workbooks with A, B, C's and numbers. They have also requested flashcards with images on one side and the English word for the images on the other. So, educational materials would be appreciated. (I also found online vendors selling children's books that are in both English and Farsi or Dari or Pashto (three of the main Afghan languages).) Anything along these lines would be helpful to organize learning opportunities.

**Regarding religious items:** I relayed questions about the number of prayer rugs, Qurans, hijabs, and kufis that have been received. I was informed that all that have been received have been distributed.

**Balls and Dolls:** Jennifer from Team Rubicon told me that the soldiers, who distribute the donations to the refugees, love to share playground balls with the boys, who stand with their arms open, saying: "Ball! Ball!" Jennifer said that the girls hold their arms out, saying: "Doll! Doll!" While teddy bears and other plush toys are not being shared with the refugee children (plush toys cannot be cleaned; any received will be given to the children when they depart Atterbury), Jennifer said that dolls would be welcome. Since I had a son, I was unfamiliar with the doll aisle at Wal-Mart. However, I did find some, reasonably-priced dolls, which I thought were culturally-appropriate. If you search online for "Muslim dolls for girls" or "Middle Eastern dolls" a good number of links appear.

**If you live in the Crawfordsville area** and would like to donate items for our Afghan allies at Atterbury, you can drop off purchased goods and gently-used clothes, jackets, shoes, and luggage at my congregation Wabash Avenue Presbyterian Church. Enter by the red double doors closest to Sanders & Priebe Funeral Home on Washington Street. Please leave donated goods by my office door. The church is open Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. I haul donations to Atterbury every Friday. (The picture below is St. John's Episcopal Church of Crawfordsville dropping off items today at WAPC.)

PLEASE NOTE THE FISH CLOTHING PANTRY, WHICH IS HOUSED AT WAPC HAS A CLOTHING DROP BOX ON THE WEST SIDE OF THE CHURCH. THAT DROP BOX REMAINS DEDICATED FOR CLOTHING DONATIONS TO THE CLOTHING PANTRY FOR OUR COMMUNITY. TO DONATE CLOTHING TO CAMP ATTERBURY, PLEASE PLACE IT OUTSIDE MY OFFICE DOOR.

If you would like, you may purchase items online and have them shipped directly to Atterbury.

Simply use this shipping address: Team Rubicon; 5921 Schoolhouse Road; Building # 3011; Edinburgh, IN 46124

Don't know what you should get or in what amount?

Here is the link to Team Rubicon's Amazon wish list so you can get exactly what is needed: [https://www.amazon.com/ishlist/lis/38IM08EL9V9EU?ref=wl\\_share](https://www.amazon.com/ishlist/lis/38IM08EL9V9EU?ref=wl_share)

If you do not live the Crawfordsville area, you may drop off donated items at the following locations:

Nine Indiana National Guard armories will serve as regional collection sites:

- Evansville: 3300 E. Division St.
- Greenfield: 410 Apple St.
- Rockville: 224 W. Strawberry Road
- Danville: 1245 E. Main St.
- Muncie: 401 N. Country Club Road

- Indianapolis: Kessler-Moore Readiness Center,  
2625 W. Kessler Blvd. North Drive
- Fort Wayne: 130 W. Cook Road
- South Bend: 1901 Kemble Ave.
- New Albany: 2909 Grant Line Road