

## **Refugee Resettlement Ministry: Afghan Family Update**

*From Jeff Meade, RRM co-chair*

We will start with one wonderful bit of news. Our committee has found a nice rental house in the Northeast, walking distance from two sets of relatives. Their children will be able to go to the same elementary school that the relatives' children attend. Moving day was scheduled for this week.

And now, I'd like to tell you a bit about my new friend Hasan. I'm not sharing his real name or that of anyone else in his family out of respect for their privacy.

Hasan is 8 years old. With the rest of his family, he fled Afghanistan because his father, who had provided logistical support to U.S. forces during the war, was being harassed by the Taliban. They arrived to stay at a relative's house in Northeast Philadelphia on May 19<sup>th</sup>.

The first time I met Hasan it was to take him and his father grocery shopping at a halal market on Bustleton Avenue.

He charged out the front door of the relative's house, extended his hand in greeting just like a very polished adult and said, "Hello! How are you!"

I had been told that the family's English language skills were limited, so I was surprised. I did what came automatically. I extended *my* hand and said, "I am fine! How are you!"

At which point the conversation hit a brick wall. Hasan looked puzzled. He didn't know what to say next. He just didn't have the words – yet. "Hello! How are you!" was all he knew, and since I know no Dari, we'd exhausted the possibilities for a cozy chat then and there. But trust me, that kid will learn English in no time.

So, the three of us – the father Saleem, Hasan and me – piled into my car and headed off to Zamzam for their meats, breads and other groceries – and my first visit to a halal market.

When we arrived, Saleem pulled out his list and went shopping. I roamed the store, taking in all the strange new food items. Dried mulberries! Who knew? A friendly clerk offered me a pomegranate soda, and then I went off in search of a seat to wait while Saleem shopped. There were two red plastic chairs next to the cash register. I sat down in one and sipped my soda. After a while, along came Hasan, looking bored. Like any other 8-year-old taken shopping. He sat down in the seat next to mine. And then he leaned over and put his head on my shoulder. I knew at once that I had made a friend.

As you know, we at St. Martin's are sponsoring Hasan's family. We were initially trying to raise \$22,000 to help defray the cost of rent and living expenses. We have made encouraging progress in the initial weeks, and we are expecting two large donations within the next few weeks, so we are lowering our first-phase fundraising campaign to \$18,000. We have momentum, but we need to keep the ball rolling.

Hasan and his family have had a rough time of it. We hope to show them what people who really care about them and their future can do. We want to show them our very best side.

If you can help out with a donation, it would mean a lot to this family. **Please click [here](#) to give online.** Select "Refugee Fund" from the drop down menu and write "Afghan Sponsorship Project" in the memo line. **You can also mail a check** to the church with "Afghan Sponsorship Project" in the memo line. Our mailing address is 8000 St. Martin's Lane, Philadelphia, PA 19118. **There is also an Amazon home furnishings wish list [here](#).**

After the first week of wish list donations – thank you, everyone who chipped in on those housewarming gifts – we now know of a number of items that have not yet been selected that the family urgently needs:

- Frying Pans
- Black and Decker Toaster Oven
- Black and Decker Microwave
- Bath Towels
- Kitchen Wash Cloths
- Throw Blankets
- Cutting Boards
- Mixing Bowls

In addition, we are looking for two gently used twin beds with slats. If you have mattresses to go with them, all the better. Also, a full-length couch.

Thank you so much for your generosity.

Jeff Meade

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