
N E W S R E L E A S E

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Syrian refugees settle into their new home

“Thank you.” It’s not surprising that these are the first two words 18-year-year-old Mohamad learned in English. He and his siblings, ages 6 and 8, and his parents are the first Syrian refugees to settle in Morris County under the co-sponsorship of Church World Service and RAMP, Refugee Assistance Morris Partners.

The family has been eager to express gratitude after their extraordinarily difficult journey from their native Aleppo, Syria, ravaged by war, to their three years as refugees in Turkey, to a true home here.

The family, especially the mother, has truly fallen in love with their new home. Shortly after she learned to use a cell phone, she downloaded Google Translate. Her first communication with a visiting RAMP member was a “big thank you for my beautiful new home.”

Earlier, when the family arrived on Nov. 8 at the airport, no one in the family spoke a word of English. Now, the parents and the older son are enrolled in an ESL class in their town and are receiving additional tutoring from RAMP volunteers, some of whom have been trained by Literacy Volunteers and others who have extensive experience in education. The children were very eager to start school and are enthusiastic students. They too have RAMP tutors.

The entire family is enjoying its lovely furnished apartment in a very friendly neighborhood within walking distance of the children’s school, some shops and a place of worship. The apartment was furnished and fully equipped by RAMP volunteers, along with a number of members of their new neighborhood mosque just prior to their arrival.

“Preparing the apartment was truly a labor of love,” said Gerry Gannon, coordinator of RAMP. “It began with the owner who wanted his apartment to serve a needy refugee family.”

According to Gannon, many people donated all the furniture and furnishings needed to completely outfit the apartment. Finally, 50 or so volunteers showed up on a Saturday, including 20 young adults from the Islamic Center of Morris County, and spent the day cleaning and preparing the apartment for the new family.

(Cont’d)

Refugee Assistance



*A Bridge to Assist People to
Cross From One Life to Another*

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News Release: Syrian refugees settle into their new home, page 2

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The family also needed many clothing basics, especially winter clothing, and a sub-committee of RAMP has been responsible for outfitting both parents and children. Members of the Sofia Community in Sparta purchased and filled backpacks for the three children, gifts they were all thrilled to receive.

The family has had other, unanticipated needs as well. The father needs extensive dental work and RAMP was happy to inform him that a dentist in Chester, Dr. Christine Golis, has agreed to do all the dentistry without charge

In its agreement with Church World Service, RAMP will be supporting the family financially for six months. They are working to find employment for the father, who is very skilled in many aspects of construction, and for the mother, who was a hairdresser in Syria. The 18-year-old, who has computer programming skills, is also eager to find employment.

RAMP volunteers have been busy raising additional funds and hope to welcome a second family soon.

RAMP is a coalition of Protestant churches, Catholic churches, a religious order, religious organizations, synagogues, and mosques located in the area. Civic organizations are also welcome to participate as members of RAMP in this humanitarian, people-to-people effort. It operates as a Special Project Fund of the Community Foundation of New Jersey and accepts donations. Financial donations should be sent to Treasurer, RAMP, P.O. Box 1544, Morristown, NJ 07960. Checks should be made to the Community Foundation of New Jersey with RAMP indicated in the memo line. All donations are tax deductible. RAMP also accepts in-kind donations, especially of house furnishings and clothing.

Those interested in volunteering for RAMP should contact the organization at info@rampnj.org and visit the website at <http://www.rampnj.org>, where there is also a link to a speakers' bureau.

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Please make checks payable to *Community Foundation of New Jersey* and designate RAMP in memo line.