

# Refugee Assistance

# RAMP

## Morris Partners

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

For Immediate Release

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## Refugee Assistance Morris Partners (RAMP) celebrates the arrival of the Tarakji family from Syria to Morris County

*"Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free, the wretched  
refuse of your teeming shore. Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed to me, I lift my lamp  
beside the golden door!"*

The words of Emma Lazarus echoed inside the Morristown Unitarian Fellowship as more than one hundred people associated with Refugee Assistance Morris Partners (RAMP) came together on Saturday, April 1 to celebrate the arrival of the Tarakji family from Syria to Morris County. The chilly weather outside was eclipsed by the warm reception hosted by the Fellowship, one of the many faith-based organizations that are partners of RAMP. Participants brought platters laden with appetizers, salads, entrees and desserts to share with each other in tribute to the success of helping a refugee family come to our "shore."



Tarakji Family; Khalid Mohamed, translator; and Gerry Gannon, Coordinator

Religious leaders from three faith traditions, Rev. Paul Olsson, Pastor of St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Morris Plains; Rev. Michael Howard, the Interim Minister of the Brookside Community Church; and Dr. Mohammad Ali Chaudry, Imam of the Islamic Society of Basking Ridge, gave the invocation for the evening recalling no matter to whom we pray or in what language we pray, "we are all God's children." David Palmer, President of the Morristown Unitarian Fellowship, welcomed the gathering. Gerry Gannon, a member of Voice of the Faithful New Jersey, which together with St. Peter's Episcopal Church in Morristown originally initiated RAMP, cited the inscription on the Statue of Liberty as the motivation for RAMP's initiatives.

In his role as RAMP Coordinator, Gerry introduced the father, Adnan, and the mother, Duha, and their two beautiful, spirited children, Lona and Maxi with Khaled Mohamed serving as translator for the family. Their older son, Mohamad, could not join the festivities as he was working. Having endured the civil war in their homeland, Syria, and the death of one of their children, the Tarakji family became refugees in Turkey for two and a half years during which time they were “vetted” by US government authorities before coming to this country. RAMP worked with Church World Service, which assists refugees in establishing themselves in America, to bring the family to their new home in Morris County.

Gerry named the committee chairs and thanked all of the RAMP volunteers, who worked tirelessly to make sure the Tarakji’s housing, clothing, educational, medical, transportation and employment needs were and are being met. Most notable among them is Mary Gannon, Gerry’s wife, who is RAMP’s guiding spirit. Committee chairs for the Tarakji family included: Laufey Bustany, Clothing; Noel Robinson, Education; Ted Bustany, Employment; Mark Brumbaugh, Family Welcome and Orientation; Diane Marks and Leo Rogers, Financial Assistance; Kirk Nixon, Furniture and Household Items; Mary Gannon, Health and Social Services; Gerry Gannon, Housing with special thanks to Adam Kandil; Dee Banicki, Transportation and Translators; and Dave Sullivan, Public Relations and Community Outreach.



Adnan Tarakji performing the Whirling Dervish

To show his appreciation to all of the RAMP volunteers who helped and continue to assist his family, Adnan performed the Mevlevi (Whirling Dervish) Dance which he has been doing since his was four years old paying tribute to his culture and family traditions. Duha could not stop expressing her gratitude in English and in Arabic, saying “Shukran” and “Mamnuun” multiple times while their children gave hugs all around.

There is a saying in both the Talmud and the Qur’an: “Whoever saves a life, it is considered as if the entire world is saved.” RAMP member organizations, volunteers, and supporters are helping to save refugee families and help them “breathe free.” In doing so, they indeed are saving the world.

RAMP is a non-profit coalition of faith-based organizations dedicated to helping families from Middle-Eastern refugee camps transition to productive lives of dignity, safety and hope in the Morris County area of New Jersey. For information, please go to RAMP’s website, [www.rampnj.org](http://www.rampnj.org).

**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](mailto:info@rampnj.org) and visit the website at [rampnj.org](http://rampnj.org).

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