

October 23, 2018

Arrival of the Third Family from Afghanistan

We met the third family, husband and wife, at Newark Airport on Thursday, September 27. They were a delight to meet. Since they are expecting their first child in late November, Ann Griswold, the health advisor for the family, had brief conversation with them to assure that she was feeling well and the baby was doing fine. They were.

Since their apartment was not yet available we brought them to Joan Belz home, who hosted them for about a week. There we met our 2nd family, who were preparing their first meal. It was nice to see the two Afghan couples bond immediately. The husband's English is excellent, but the wife's is very limited so the two Afghan women were able to have a long conversation and I was glad that may have helped her feel more welcomed.

On Wednesday, October 3 we were able to move them into their apartment. They seemed pleased with it and I want to thank the many volunteers who helped get everything ready. Mary Aktay had prepared a welcoming meal that was waiting in the refrigerator, and only needed to be warmed up. The community seems to be a good location. There are many shops and services within walking distance and they do seem to enjoy long walks.

While they have been settling in to their new environment, our social and health service teams have been busy with them. We are still waiting for their social security and green cards to arrive, but the application was begun in Afghanistan. We are expecting them to be mailed to Church World Services and then delivered to the family. Applications for TANF, SNAP and Medicaid have been started, although they are not eligible for TANF until they are a family with children. That eligibility begins 30 days prior to the baby's birth. There have also been two prenatal visits. The general health screenings that CWS schedules will be later this month. And we have begun ESL tutoring.

So far all has been going fairly well. One need is to line up drivers for when they need to go to St. Clare's hospital in Denville for the baby's delivery. We would like particularly drivers who live in the Boonton, Denville area. If you can volunteer for this, please let me know. I will email a driving grid where volunteers can select the days/ time slots when they would be able to drive the family on short notice.

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