

Refugee Assistance

RAMP

Morris Partners

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

Newsletter

SUMMER 2022

RAMP HAPPENINGS

RAMP Elects Steve Shannon as Leader

Refugee Assistance Morris Partners (RAMP) has elected Steve Shannon as the new president of its Board of Trustees. Shannon, who lives in Florham Park, is a former senior executive at Burrelles, Critical Mention, and Helixa.

“I have enjoyed and immensely benefitted from being a RAMP volunteer. I am honored to have been chosen to lead the organization now as it gears up to assist even more families in the years ahead,”



Shannon said. “There is an urgent and enormous need to help as many people as we can.”

RAMP, founded in 2016, is a faith-based, non-profit whose mission is to help vetted, legally admitted refugees from war-torn countries find safety and success in Morris County, New Jersey.

In the past six years RAMP teams of volunteers have welcomed and supported eight families from Syria and Afghanistan, now totaling more than 30 people, providing them with everything from housing, furniture, and clothing to educational and employment support. Volunteers provide additional aid navigating medical and social services assistance. RAMP supports families for a year or more.

RAMP emphasizes rapid financial self-sufficiency, English language proficiency, and American assimilation. Refugee Assistance Morris Partners is a co-sponsor of refugees with both the International Rescue Committee (IRC) and Church World Service (CWS), two of the nine American refugee resettlement agencies.

To learn more about RAMP, including how to donate or volunteer, go to www.rampnj.org.

Credit Card Donations Up and Running Again

Community Foundation of New Jersey (CFNJ), which currently oversees RAMP's finances, has now completed its migration to new, comprehensive software. Therefore, RAMP can once again accept online credit card donations. For more information, go to the RAMP website, www.rampnj.org and click on donate.



The washing machine left to our family of five by the previous tenant of their apartment has broken and would incur some cost to repair. If any RAMP members know of a used washing machine in good condition that could be donated, it would be much appreciated. Please send responses to their family coordinator, [Jackie Bay](#).

Rising Eighth Grader and Honor Roll Student Starts New Business



Right photo: Lona is ready for shoppers at her middle school's TREP\$ Marketplace May 20, 2022, where she launched Lona's Art Studio selling inspirational bookmarks.

Lona, from our first refugee family, who arrived here as an 8-year-old fleeing civil war in Aleppo, Syria, is now a rising eighth grader and an honor roll student. Lona has had a passion for art from the time she could hold a pencil. Lona's creativity continues to flourish in her newly created business Lona's Art Studio. Last spring Lona participated in an after-school series of workshops, TREP\$ - Empowering Kids through Entrepreneurship, where she learned about starting a business. Lona combined her love for inspirational quotes with original watercolor illustrations to create bookmarks - the first product line in Lona's Art Studio. If you would like to support Lona's new business and add to her college fund, check out her [order form](#) here or contact her [here](#).

NEWS OF OUR TWO CURRENT FAMILIES

Ali, Somaya, and their three daughters

The Afghan family that arrived in November via Italy now resides in Boonton. Father Ali worked for the

U.S. government in Afghanistan as a civil engineer, and his wife Somaya is a medical doctor who was unable to complete her residency due to the war. They have three girls, Laya, 10, and four-year-old twins, Liana and Barana.



Ali, Somaya, and their girls continue to make great strides in their new lives, according to family coordinator Jackie Bay and her dedicated volunteers.

Ali has started a new job in Wayne that better leverages his civil engineering background. He is studying in the evenings to complete an online functional engineering class as a first step towards a professional engineer license.

Ten-year old Laya is doing wonderfully at school. She excels in math and science and is making great progress in English. Her teachers acknowledge how hard she works and appreciate her optimistic outlook. Laya particularly enjoys art class and will attend summer camp in Boonton.

The four-year old twins are enrolled in a local preschool three half-days a week. This experience has allowed them to make friends and improve their English as well as getting started on number and letter mastery. They loved their June “graduation” although they will continue school during the summer

until public preschool begins in September.

In late May, the Community Church of Mountain Lakes hosted a family barbeque to which all four Afghan families were invited plus their family coordinators. It was a lovely day of bouncy house, bubbles, conversation, and popsicles! Unfortunately, we were one family short due to Covid. We hope to host the same event next year.

Somaya has been busy getting her driver’s license and taking ESL classes twice a week. Her English has improved a great deal and she is transitioning to study for the TOEFL exam which she needs to enter an academic program. Her goal is to get a certificate in diagnostic medical sonography starting September

2023. In the meantime, she is looking for a job in a hospital or doctor's office. Ideally this job would involve on the job training (versus the need for a certificate) in a field like EKG tech or phlebotomist. Any assistance people can provide in her job search would be much appreciated.

Ehsan, Freshta, Karim, and Their Two Little Girls

Our second Afghan family also resides in Boonton and is under the very able care of family coordinator Joan Belz and a large group of volunteers, including many drivers who transport the family to numerous doctors' visits and to ESL classes for the men in the family.



Parents Ehsan and Freshta, and Grandfather Karim along with daughters Sama, 3, and Mahya, 1, are all busy adjusting to life here in the U.S. since their arrival on February 7. Baby Mahya, who has several medical complications, has physical and speech therapy several times a week, and was recently fitted for hearing aids.

Mom, dad, and grandfather are eager ESL, sign language, and drivers ed students. Both parents look forward to transportation independence when and if a car becomes available.

Their hospitality is evident whenever a team member visits, and their motivation is apparent as they

complete many applications for a change in immigration status and for health care, school enrollment, and a job for Dad as an HVAC technician.

The family fled from their comfortable home in Kabul years ago when the Taliban initially took over Afghanistan and then again with the recent takeover last September. They are very grateful for our support as they yet again adapt to a new life.

Ehsan, Freshta, Karim, and their girls are under the auspices of Church World Service and RAMP, while Ali, Somaya, and their three daughters are in the

United States under RAMP co-sponsorship with the International Rescue Committee.



Refugee Assistance Morris Partners is comprised of volunteers representing churches, synagogues, and mosques, who co-sponsor families with the International Rescue Committee and Church World Service, and operate under the financial auspices of the Community Foundation of New Jersey. RAMP assists Middle Eastern and other refugee families to transition to a productive and safe future in the Morris County region.

[Donate here.](#)

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