

Arrive Ministries

2023 VOL. 1

3

Dreams of a New Generation

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Beyond the
Welcome,
Becoming
Family

Welcoming Refugee and Immigrant Neighbors



Restoring Hope

Annie Perdue-Olson,
Interim Managing Director



I am honored to join the Arrive Ministries team as managing director for this next season. Our work ahead is significant as we continue to care for 367 refugees resettled last year, and another 409 refugees expected to receive our support services this year.

Extending welcome is a powerful first step in supporting our refugee and immigrant neighbors in their early days in Minnesota. In return, we receive friendship and purpose alongside our new neighbors.

Beyond extending

welcome, we are witness to a powerful restoration as our refugee friends move toward self-sufficiency and experience the restoring of safety, stability, purpose and dreams of a promising future in their new homeland.

Each of the stories in this magazine demonstrate milestones in the journey our refugee and immigrant neighbors' experience. Read on for stories of extending welcome and restoring the hope you help to create as you partner with Arrive Ministries.

Thank you for your partnership.

Snapshots of 2023

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309

Refugees resettling

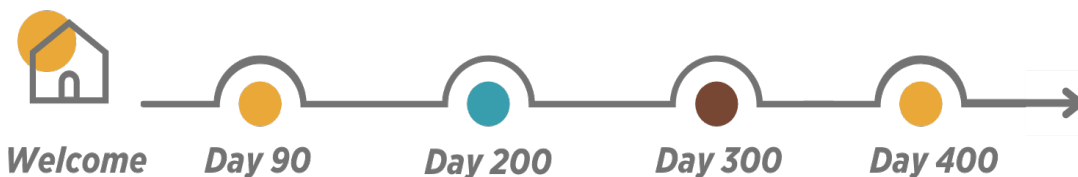
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100

Ukrainians receiving support services

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218

Churches being equipped to love our new neighbors

Armand's Journey

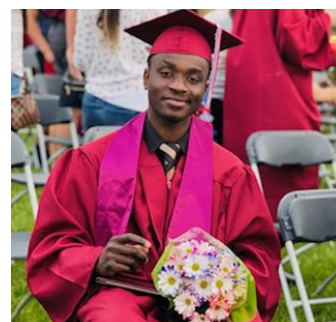


Day 1: Armand's family is resettled to Minnesota by Arrive Ministries

Day 90: Arrive Ministries volunteers begin walking alongside Armand and his family



Day 200: Armand is accepted to Augsburg University (pictured with ELL teacher, Ms. Jerney)




Day 300: Armand graduates from South St. Paul High School



Day 400: Just a year after being resettled as a refugee, Armand attends college

Dreams of a New Generation



Good Neighbor volunteers celebrate with Armand at his high school graduation

Higher education is a big goal for refugees. That's why it was such an exciting milestone on Armand's 200th day in Minnesota when this Congolese young man was accepted to Augsburg University, less than a year after Arrive Ministries resettled his family.

"When I was back in Africa I used to be sent home for not being able to pay my school fees, and the teachers wouldn't help me learn what I missed. In America, high school is free, and teachers are very willing to help, making it so much easier for me to complete my degree," said Armand.

Teachers at Armand's alma mater of South St. Paul credited Armand's hard work and positive attitude for his accomplishments, even awarding him their school's prestigious Teachers' Scholarship.

"Armand has this positive aura that surrounds him. After hearing his story about fleeing the Democratic Republic of Congo and living as

a refugee in Uganda for 12 years, I found his optimism and drive truly inspirational. His resilience is mind-boggling to me," said Carol Jerney, ELL teacher at South St. Paul High School.

It was Ms. Jerney who taught Armand how to type and use a computer, and one of the many teachers who advocated for Armand to go to college, helping him with applications.

When Armand got accepted to Augsburg University, his chemistry teacher made his class waffles to celebrate. Armand worried that

he couldn't afford Augsburg's tuition even with scholarships and financial aid.

"When Ms. Jerney saw the disappointed look on my face, she called Augsburg and explained that I'm a refugee. I was lucky that AU had a grant for first generation college students. I am so happy that I am the

first person in my family to attend college," said Armand.

Armand's family has experienced

the support of a Good Neighbor volunteer team

from Cities Church during their first year in Minnesota. The volunteers played board games to help family members

practice English, assisted them in applying for after school jobs, and moved Armand into his dorm room at Augsburg.

"Armand doesn't let obstacles stop him. He asks for help, he reaches out, and it'll be cool to see in the future just how many obstacles he will have overcome that he didn't let stop him," said Heather, a Good Neighbor volunteer.

"Since moving to Minnesota, everything in my life has changed, I don't know if it's a miracle or what; all good things are coming to me, and I am so grateful for that," shared Armand.

"I found his optimism and drive truly inspirational. His resilience is mind-boggling to me."

"Since moving to Minnesota, everything in my life has changed... all good things are coming to me, and I am so grateful"

Beyond the Welcome

Becoming Family



When the Taliban took over Kabul in August of 2021, Halima was in Afghanistan with her two young daughters.

"We saw the Taliban flag on every rooftop, it was very hard," said Halima.

They waited in Kabul to be evacuated for two perilous months.

"When I left we were happy because we were going to escape the Taliban regime, but there are a lot of women in Afghanistan and a lot of girls like mine," Halima said through tears. "When I left Kabul, that was the hardest day. I left and said 'I can do nothing.'"

Feeling helpless, Halima and her daughters were evacuated to Qatar, later staying in Germany, before flying to Minnesota to reunite with Halima's husband, Iqbal, who was already in St. Cloud through the Fulbright Program.

"The hardest thing for refugees in a new country is not knowing anyone and not being familiar with the culture, so you feel you're on your own, and it's really hard," said Iqbal.

Arrive Ministries staff provided Halima and Iqbal with household items, and helped the family get settled. Arrive Ministries connected the family of four with a volunteer couple, Dennis and Denise, through our Good Neighbor program.

"Denise and Dennis came to our house and welcomed us very warmly and kindly, so on that day I felt that they are good people and we can be

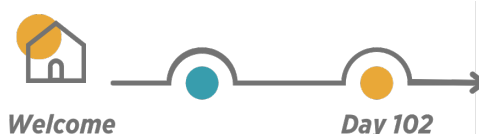
friends," said Halima.

"Iqbal and Halima have given us the privilege to step into their lives. We see that 'Good Neighbor' volunteer as having the ability to allow them to step into our lives and for us to step into theirs," said Dennis.

"When we first started getting together it was more a question of 'What are Halima's needs?' She would

need to get to the grocery store and other practical things. Then, it developed more into a friendship," said Denise.

"The hardest thing for refugees is not knowing anyone... you feel you're on your own."



A significant milestone occurred on Halima's 102nd day in Minnesota when their friendship blossomed into a familial relationship.

"At my birthday dinner, Dennis told me that I am a kind of daughter to him, and I told him that I would love to have an American father and mother," said Halima.

When the Taliban killed 50 young Hazara women taking their college entrance exams a half a world away, Iqbal and Halima gathered Denise, Dennis and St. Cloud community members to stand in vigil for the women and the Hazara people, an

"My dream for my daughters is for them to have a better future, career, and life here."

ethnic minority group in which Iqbal and Halima belong.

"It hurts a lot and we know it is our responsibility here in America to make our friends aware that we are from this group that is targeted, and women are targeted in Afghanistan," said Halima.

Iqbal shared that the safety and security they feel in America is often tainted by feelings of guilt.

"I'm here, I'm safe, but how about other people? We could've been there in that situation," said Iqbal.

That guilt alongside gratitude and compassion for others still suffering, are common feelings many refugees experience after arriving to safety.

Dennis and Denise are moved to tears when reflecting on the emotional burdens their new friends carry.

"We have not had to deal with even a fraction of what they have and I am so impressed and blessed by their genuineness, their openness, and their willingness to share their story," said Denise.

"I think it's the start of something that can be a forever thing. I hope they have all the opportunities and blessings that we've taken

for granted all of our lives, because they're here," said Dennis.

In restoring Iqbal and Halima's sense of safety, they have found a new freedom to dream.

"My dream for my daughters is for them to have a better future, career, and life here," said Iqbal.

Moving Forward, Giving Back



Welcome



Day 5,000



When Lucy arrived in Minnesota in 2008 as a young adult from South Sudan, her family connected with Arrive Ministries (previously World Relief Minnesota) which assisted her in getting her Nursing Assistant certificate through the American Red Cross.

“As a child my education was often interrupted since we were forced to flee many times for safety. When I arrived in America, the land of opportunity, I felt like ‘I’m in heaven,’” exclaimed Lucy.

Lucy’s family moved to St. Cloud the next year, where she spent the next decade working as a Nursing Assistant (CNA). Lucy finally found the sense of stability she had always yearned for.

“After living in one place for 10 years, I was finally able to dream of my future and ask myself, ‘What can I do?’ I realized I wanted to go to school!” said Lucy.

On Lucy’s 5,000th day in America she earned her bachelor’s degree

in Social Work. This milestone accomplishment prompted Lucy to pursue a career that assists refugees when they arrive in Minnesota.

Lucy got connected to Arrive Ministries St. Cloud through our refugee gardening program, working side by side with our staff and volunteers. Lucy’s guiding principle for the future is to help other immigrants make Minnesota home and to give back to the community that has supported her family.



Kateryna’s brother Pavlo left to defend Ukraine on the third day of the war, pictured with their mother and sister.

A Journey to Safety



Kateryna’s Reflection

The morning the war began in Ukraine was the scariest day of my life. Within days, I drove 24 hours to find safety in North Macedonia. Even though my mother, sister, and my brother’s wife did not want to consider leaving Ukraine, my father understood the dangers they were in and asked me to return to drive them across the border. I drove through the night to pick them up, not stopping to sleep, knowing they were in danger.



Welcome



Day 3

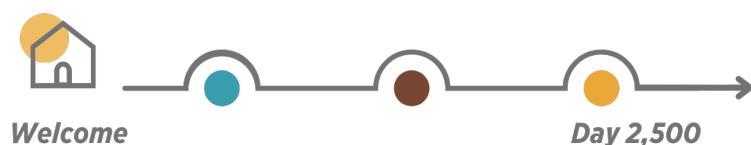
Once safely in North Macedonia, I spent six months working there. In August of 2022, I rejoined my family in Germany, planning to wait there until the end of the war. But God had another way for us.

Our friends from Minnesota offered to sponsor us, so my mother, sister, and I flew to Minnesota. On day 3 we connected with Arrive Ministries which has been such a blessing helping us get the documents we need to work, making us feel less stressed, and helping us file paperwork to reunite with our family.



Theresa and Steve celebrate Huti's accomplishment

Motivated by Patriotism



While living in his homeland of Somalia, Huti was a commissioner representing his home district.

"I liked giving Somali people law and order, I believe everyone must respect the law," said Huti.

After he uncovered corruption in his district, Huti received death threats and was victim to a violent incident that left him hospitalized for 30 days.

Once recovered, Huti fled Somalia and lived in a refugee camp in Ethiopia for eight years.

In 2016, Huti and his son were given the proper documents to move to the U.S., choosing to live in Rochester, near Huti's sister.

Huti's heart is torn in three: between his homeland of Somalia, the refugee camp where his wife, daughters, and grandchildren wait for approval to be reunited as a family, and his new homeland of the United States.

On day 2,500 in Minnesota, Huti proudly earned his U.S. Citizenship.

"Every American citizen is trying to build this country and make it stronger. This country always goes up, never down,"



"Every American citizen is trying to build this country and make it stronger. This country always goes up, never down."

said Huti.

Huti is grateful for the assistance he received from Arrive Ministries English tutoring volunteers, Steve and Theresa. Every week the three of them would practice for the U.S. Citizenship examination. Following Huti's accomplishment, at age 66, the three friends celebrated with cake and a party.

"Huti has a very strong patriotism for the U.S.," said Steve. "It was a joy to work with him, he was highly motivated to get his citizenship."



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Volunteer with us

Befriend, assist, and advocate for our new neighbors.



Hire & Rent to Immigrant Neighbors

Employers and landlords play crucial roles in extending welcome.



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