

2023 VOL. 2

# Arrive Ministries

*Welcoming Refugee and Immigrant Neighbors*

Fleeing  
Ukraine  
While  
Expecting  
a Baby

† 4

Persecuted  
for Faith



# Opening Doors for Thriving



Annie Perdue-Olson  
Executive Director

Watching Arrive Ministries from the sidelines over the years has built a sense of awe for the inspiring and sometimes difficult work we do. Since joining Arrive Ministries as its Executive Director, my awe grows in witnessing



The Paw family welcomed at the airport by extended family members and Good Neighbor volunteers from Crossroads Church.

the impact of working alongside the church to be the hands and feet of Jesus in the Twin Cities and in greater Minnesota.

As followers of Jesus, we are called to live out our faith while humbly learning from our refugee neighbors.

Our new neighbors have much to teach us about faith, culture and the world. Together we are welcomed into new learning and new experiences

while seeing hope restored by the love of Jesus expressed in our actions toward one another.

“Our work creates opportunity for access to resources, friendship and services that open the door for refugees to thrive.”



500

Refugees to be resettled by Arrive Ministries in 2024

100

Homes and Welcome Kits needed to set up our new arrivals for success in 2024

150

Jobs to be secured by our employment team in 2024

## 2023 Impact

310

Clients assisted in achieving immigration status milestones

3

Regional sites growing in Rochester, St. Cloud, Willmar

579

Refugees connected to volunteers



Anton and Liubov expecting their second child in Minnesota

# Anticipating Baby During Escape

## Liubov's Journey Reflection

who would sign the sponsorship documents for our entry to the U.S., but everything was resolved once we found someone. We arrived in the U.S. and immediately found a home in another state but we were lonely being new to the country, and having no friends here.

Later, we found out that some friends were planning to move to Minnesota,

so once again we packed our things and moved to a new place. Friends advised us to seek help from the

refugee resettlement agency Arrive Ministries to support us in our new state.

How important it was for us to have someone help us in submitting documents for local benefits, health insurance, health screening, and other matters. The Arrive Ministries case

managers would call and ask how

things were going, help with various documents,

support our job searches, and advise us about life in our new community. We are grateful for our case managers and all of the kind people at

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Arrive Ministries.

Just **250 days** after arriving in Minnesota, we now rent our own apartment, my husband goes to work, we are learning English, and we're expecting another baby!

We do not know how our life will turn out and whether we will be able to stay in America, but we continue to live our unique life.

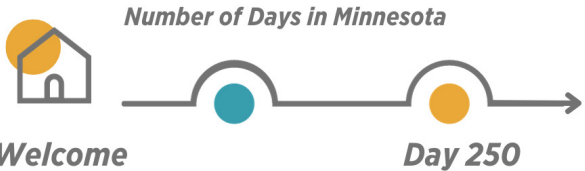
When the war in Ukraine started on February 24, 2022, my husband, Anton and I knew we needed to leave Ukraine immediately; I was pregnant with our first child who was due in four days.

We were very worried about where to go to give birth to our baby after fleeing our homeland.

First, we went to Romania and were welcomed by people at a Christian seminary. A few days later, we received a call inviting us to Germany. Thankfully our daughter, Emilia, waited until we had arrived in Germany before she was born. People we didn't know took care of us, and we were given a wonderful apartment to stay in for six months.

The war continued and we didn't know what to do next. We thought about America a couple of times, and decided to try to look for a sponsor. It was difficult to find a person

“We were very worried about where to go to give birth to our baby after fleeing our homeland.”





# Persecuted for Faith



Zafar, Nadia, and their adult son, Simon who was living in America as a student when the rest of his family arrived in 2022.



After the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991, Zafar and Nadia noticed a spiritual curiosity within their homeland of Tajikistan.

"The economy collapsed, the nation was in deep poverty; it was a really difficult time resulting in people thinking about God," said Zafar.

Zafar and Nadia both sought solace in their Muslim faith; 98% of the Tajik population identifies as Muslim.

Over time both husband and wife separately had deep encounters with Jesus through dreams, books, and loving friendships resulting in choosing a new Christian belief, independently of each other.

"Through the love that took place in my heart, I found what I was searching for," said Nadia.

The couple went to a school in Moscow to study the Bible before moving back to a small town in Tajikistan.

"There, God made lots of miracles. There was a vivid presence of the Holy Spirit in our town," said Zafar. Conversely, a deep sense of intimidation happened to their family; photos of them flashed on the news as a warning of false teachers, stones were thrown through their windows, teachers bullied their children.

Zafar and Nadia worked translating Bibles and hosting secret church services; but neighbors frequently reported these activities resulting in regular raids to destroy Christian

materials. Zafar once was imprisoned for a week and tortured by State Security.

Zafar said he had accepted his likely fate of being killed in Tajikistan, but when his adult daughter married a Ukrainian missionary, the increase in persecution took a severe toll on their extended family members' health. The couple decided to seek refuge elsewhere in the world.

Once their son-in-law and daughter received legal entry into the United States as a part of a program for persecuted members of the former Soviet Union, Zafar, Nadia and their young daughter applied to join them in Minnesota.

In December of 2022, Zafar, Nadia and their 11-year-old daughter flew to Minneapolis and for the first time since their faith conversion, found their freedom to choose their beliefs

was protected by the law of the land.

"We are so grateful to the people of the United States that they accept us,

and receive us so well. The people are free. It is a very good place. God bless America," said Zafar.

After their long-anticipated family reunion with their adult children and

grandchildren, the family was in for a pleasant surprise at the airport.

"We were welcomed with banners and flowers from Arrive Ministries staff and volunteers. We were happy to have people there to welcome us, and who were happy to see us," said Zafar.

Two of those volunteers, Dave and Linda from The Grove Church, committed to walking alongside the family in support and friendship.

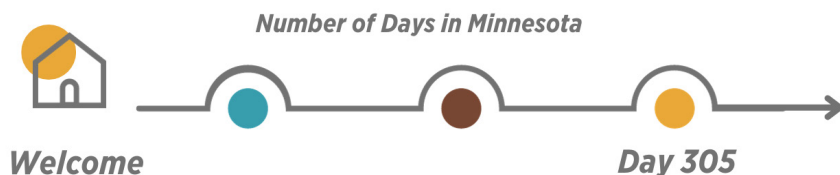
"Dave and Linda have been helping us a lot and introduced us to a really good church that we love. We feel like we belong at The Grove Church since we know Dave and Linda," said Zafar.

Zafar was also deeply touched by the personal support his family received from his Arrive Ministries Case Manager, Zach. When the two men said their goodbyes at the closure of case management, Zafar exclaimed, "Losing Zach is like losing a son!"

Zafar found a good job and now, on his **305th day** in Minnesota, Zafar is setting his sights on global faith sharing opportunities.

"One of my hopes and dreams for being in America is to find ways to spread the gospel through media or other communication channels. We have the capability, and we have not lost our vision for serving God."

**"They used to threaten us...  
beat us up for our faith, but we  
loved God..."**



# Welcoming New Life

## A Network of Support

Julie volunteers with six others as Good Neighbors to a family of five (including three children under the age of five) who came to St. Paul after living more than 10 years in a Burundi refugee camp.

The team of volunteers from Roseville Covenant Church has been assisting the Congolese family as they navigate healthcare, finances, school, insurance, driving lessons, trips to the grocery store, learning



Aisha surrounded by friends at her baby shower

English, plus introducing their new neighbors to fun first-time experiences like trips to the zoo and picnics at the beach.

“The team model is critical. Everybody is pitching in where they can,” said Julie. “We are blessed to know them. As their English grows, we hope that our relationship with them deepens even further.”

The Good Neighbor team threw Aisha a baby shower along with her extended family. Julie consistently took Aisha to her prenatal appointments and was honored to be invited to the birth of the couple’s third child at the hospital.

“To be with Aisha from the start of her labor until the delivery of baby Aayan was incredibly special,” said Julie.

# Cooking Up Community

## Fellowship in Willmar



Friday cooking class in Willmar

A multicultural group of women meets on Fridays in Willmar to teach each other how to cook cuisines from their homelands. The idea came after some immigrant moms asked Jenny, Arrive Ministries’ Willmar Area Coordinator, how to make easy meals that their kids were requesting, like tacos and spaghetti.

“It’s been one of the coolest communities that developed organically by these women,” said

Jenny.

Each week a different woman buys the groceries and teaches the rest of the women how to cook a meal from places far from Willmar, but near and dear to their hearts: Somalia, Honduras, Haiti, El Salvador, Morocco and more. After the lesson, the women and their children sit around a lunch table to enjoy a delicious feast and cross-cultural comradery.







Tun Win greeting his mom, dad, and younger siblings at the airport after more than a decade apart.

# True Service

Restoring Separated Families

As a little kid living in a refugee camp in Thailand, Tun Win dreamed of serving in the U.S. Military.

"I saw a black and white movie and the U.S. Army looked so cool," said Tun Win.

A lot had to align for this dream to come true, as each year less than 1% of refugees are accepted to resettle in the U.S. As Tun says, "It's like winning the Powerball. It's unbelievable for it to happen."

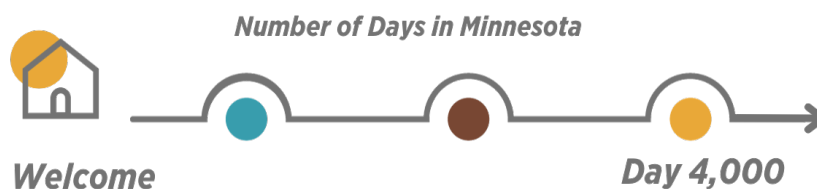
In 2012, 10-year-old Tun Win and his grandparents, his legal guardians, found that luck was on their side when they were resettled as refugees to Minnesota.

"We didn't know English so we were worried about ending up on the streets. But we knew the U.S. gives one of the best educations in the world, so my grandparents took the risk. It's the best decision we made," said Tun Win.

After graduating from Central High School, Tun Win joined the Minnesota National Guard.

"They were yelling at me, trying to turn me from a civilian into a soldier. I had to do hard stuff, but I got through it," said Tun Win.

Tun Win is used to doing hard things; the hardest has always been being separated from



his parents and siblings who lived in Thailand.

That changed with a phone call to Tun Win. On his **4,000th day** in Minnesota, Tun Win learned that Arrive Ministries would be resettling his family to Minnesota.

"I was shaky at the airport. I was super nervous. My parents didn't recognize me, we'd been apart for over a decade."

These last few months have allowed Tun Win to spend time with his parents and siblings and help them have a smooth transition to Minnesota.

"I finally feel like I'm the big brother I am supposed to be," said Tun Win. "When I told my father that I joined the Army, he was really proud of me, and that means a lot to me."



Tun Win serves in the MN National Guard

"I've been able to travel and meet a lot of people from different cultures. I am excited for my upcoming deployment to put all of my skills to the test and do something real."



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## Volunteer with us

Befriend, assist, and tutor our new neighbors.



## Hire & Rent to Refugee Neighbors

Employers and landlords play crucial roles in extending welcome.



## Donate

Support the work of Arrive Ministries.



1515 East 66th Street  
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[arriveministries.org](http://arriveministries.org)

