

# Arrive Ministries

2024 VOL. 2

2

Side-by-Side  
Support

† 7

Fleeing  
Haiti,  
Eager to  
Contribute

*Welcoming Refugee and Immigrant Neighbors*



500

Refugees Resettled



311

Students Participating in Classes



97

Homes Secured



141

Jobs Secured

# New Beginnings

## Transformational Journeys

This year we resettled 500 refugees, each of whom has their own personal journey of turmoil, fleeing, waiting, and travel behind them. Now in Minnesota, their journey is far from over; it's a new beginning that we are honored to help support. The work we do at Arrive Ministries intersects with our new refugee and immigrant neighbors at a crucial point in their life journey. Our missional activities of housing support, case management, employment services, friendship with equipped volunteers, and education classes can lead to life transformation for the next part of their journey.

In this fall edition of our Arrive Ministries magazine each of the four stories you will read is uniquely inspiring. The first

story is of a Congolese woman who is one of many young adult refugees making a huge impact in propelling their families forward.

Next, you'll meet Abdinasir (pg. 5) whose zeal for pursuing advancement opportunities has earned him a career he now is thriving in, as he seeks to achieve new life goals.

A Ukrainian grandmother named Liliia (seen below) and a Haitian family of adult siblings (pg. 7) shows some of the gifts of resiliency, creativity and hard work that new immigrant neighbors bring to our communities.

In each story may you see similarities between yourself and these brave refugee neighbors, and **may you find delight in seeing the image of a loving God in each and every person.**

*And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit. (2 Cor. 3:18)*

"I have learned that no matter what, you need to believe and move forward. The road will be mastered by the one who walks," said Liliia.





Janet, a volunteer, and Olga with her new car



# Side-by-Side Support

Congolese Young Woman Propels Her Family Forward

Janet’s initial friendship with the Hassan family revolved around the car. “Since there are 5 children in this family it often takes 2 cars to get them where they need to go. Carol and I offered to drive them around using our two cars,” said Janet. The two Rochester women from Calvary Ev. Free Church drove members of this newly resettled Congolese refugee family to appointments, mom to her kids’ school conferences, the teen girls to church youth group, and even the youngest daughter to preschool until more bus drivers were hired.

**In the car, seated side-by-side with these volunteers, 19-year-old Olga and her younger sisters developed a deep kinship with their new Minnesota friends.**

“They are like family, I call them Grandma Janet and Grandma Connie. From the day we met, they never left us. They are always here to help us, I have experienced more love through every single person in my life in Minnesota. There is love all around us,” said Olga.

Olga’s gratitude and grit served her well in starting over as a Sophomore in high school; over the past few years, Olga joined the school’s track team, a morning Bible study, was awarded a paid internship at Mayo Clinic, and works an afterschool shift at Caribou Coffee.

“She is really brave about trying new things,” said Janet. Olga even attended her school’s Prom less than a year after arriving in Minnesota.

“I was really scared, I had only seen it on TV and I didn’t have a dress. At the last minute, Kelly (a volunteer) gave me her beautiful bridesmaid’s dress to wear. It was the best experience, I didn’t know any of the songs, but I will always remember it,” said Olga.

Recently, Janet and Olga switched places in the car with Olga practicing driving in the driver’s seat, and Janet mentoring her from the passenger’s seat.

In the fall of 2024, Olga was able to save up enough money to buy a used

car. Calvary Church assisted Olga in paying for a portion of the cost.

“It feels amazing to own a car, it gives me a sense of responsibility. It’s the biggest decision I’ve made here,” said Olga.

Unlike most teenagers who view a new set of wheels as a ticket to ride, Olga understands her new role as a legal driver will be a huge asset to her family, especially in

driving her mother who works full-time at Walmart. Olga hopes to set her family up well for the future.

“I would love for my family to own a home someday, and for me and my sisters to go to college. It was God’s grace that brought us here, I believe that God is capable when there doesn’t seem a way.”

**“I have experienced more love through every single person in my life. There is love all around us.”**

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**Arrive Ministries 4 regional sites are in Rochester, St. Cloud, Willmar, Twin Cities**

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# Driven by Opportunity



As a Somali refugee who lived in Kenya for 13 years, Abdinasir wasn't used to opportunity knocking on his door.

"Where we come from, we didn't have opportunities to get better jobs or improve ourselves in that way," said Abdinasir.

His family was approved to resettle to Minnesota in 2023 through Arrive Ministries. Abdi saw this as an open door he was eager to walk through.

"In America, we have more opportunities to earn an income and do what you'd like with it," he said.

During his first few months in Minnesota, Abdi's family worked with an Arrive Ministries case manager and employment counselor to secure his family a rental home and full-time employment. Abdi initially worked at a Walmart Super Store.

Arrive also connected his large family with a team of Good Neighbor

volunteers who made the family's transition much smoother.

"Once the case worker's commitment is up, the family knows they have friends who are dependable; they can call on our team with any problems and the relationship is there," said Ripley, a volunteer from The North Church.

**Volunteers helped Abdi prepare for his driver's tests, from there Abdi created his next career opportunity.**

"One day, I saw an advertisement that Metro Transit was looking for drivers with much better pay than my current job. So my employment counselor and one of my Good Neighbor friends assisted me in filling out an application, and I got a job as a bus operator," explained Abdinasir.

Abdinasir is aware of the great responsibility in his new role as a bus driver, so in addition to the three

months of training offered by Metro Transit, Abdi watches safety videos of passenger loading practices and studies the route maps for all seven Metro-area counties.

"The bus is nearly 60 feet long, at first it was hard to drive, but after a lot of training, I'm very comfortable driving it," said Abdinasir.

After settling into his new home and job, Abdinasir plans to continue embracing whatever this land of opportunity offers him.

"Maybe I will become a supervisor or a mechanic someday, there are many career pathways," he said. "Our first dream is to buy a house near our current quiet neighborhood. We love it here."

By harnessing his ambition and a strong sense of responsibility with support from new friends, Abdinasir is in the driver's seat of his future opportunities.



Abdinasir's family with their Good Neighbor team

# Volunteer with us!

[arriveministries.org/volunteer](http://arriveministries.org/volunteer)

- † Walk alongside refugee families for one year
- † Set-up apartments
- † Teach English or technology classes
- † Tutor for Citizenship exam
- † Become an interpreter
- † Host families in your home

# Queen of the Kitchen

Ukrainian Grandmother's Next Chapter

"Kievskiy" that everyone liked," said Liliia.

They liked it so much that Liliia won the competition, and was asked to bake her famous kievskiy cake for all 200 residents.

"I love to cook and bake, but I only did it at home. I never thought that it would become my profession in America," said Liliia.

She gives Kayla a lot of credit for empowering her to advance her career path, "Kayla believed in me and convinced me to believe in myself. She surrounded me with her positivity, helped me communicate with the heads of companies, and instilled in me hope that everything would work out. I am very grateful to her, we are queens, strong ladies as they say in Ukraine."

Liliia also connected with Arrive's Ukrainian case manager after learning about our organization's services.

"Life began to change for the better after meeting with the staff at Arrive Ministries. I am very grateful for their understanding and support."

One year after arriving in Minnesota, Liliia has set a couple of very achievable goals for herself, in addition to a lofty dream for the world.

"I'm 63 years old, I don't set big goals for myself, but I will learn to speak English, and I want to improve in my

profession. Most importantly, I want everyone to have a peaceful sky above their heads, to have loved ones alive and well," said Liliia.

This babusya has a lot of hard-earned wisdom to share with the next generation.

"I have learned that no matter what, you need to believe and move forward.

You can't live in the past, you need to be able to close the door and move forward. The road will be mastered by the one who walks."



Liliia with a coworker in the kitchen of her place of employment

Of all of Liliia's roles: Ukrainian, chef, employee, mother, it's her title of "babusya" or Grandmother that gives her the most joy.

Liliia's son, daughter-in-law, and two granddaughters came to Minnesota following the Russian invasion of their homeland in 2021. Liliia felt torn about fleeing her country, but the pull toward her granddaughters directed her path.

"I'll be honest, I didn't want to leave Ukraine, it's the best place on Earth," said Liliia. "If I hadn't left, I probably never would have seen my children and granddaughters again. I want to see them grow up and rejoice in their successes."

She may not speak fluent English yet, but when talking about her granddaughters' achievements, she speaks "doting grandmother" perfectly.

"My 12-year-old granddaughter is a gymnast and is the best student at school," beamed Liliia.

**Liliia has her own talents that she brought with her to Minnesota, including the ability to bake decadent desserts.**

Liliia worked closely with an employment counselor named Kayla at Arrive Ministries, who assisted her in landing a job as a chef at a local nursing home. The nursing home employs people from many different countries and hosted a competition for its staff to cook cuisine from their home country.

"I agreed to make a traditional Ukrainian cake called the

**"You can't live in the past, you need to be able to close the door and move forward."**



Riviaud, Lubin, Carlin, Marie, and John (L-R) with Abang (center), program coordinator at the Arrive Ministries office.

# Eager to Contribute

## Haitian Siblings Find Peace in New Nation

For 30-year-old Carlin, the challenges he faced finishing medical school in Haiti far exceeded what most American doctors would ever encounter.

“Groups of gang members would create chaos in the hospitals frequently disrupting my clinical rounds,” said Carlin.

His uncle, Riviaud, experienced similar instability and threats working in the legal field.

“There would be attacks in the courtroom, roads weren’t safe, even churches weren’t safe. Groups of people would attack while pastors were in the middle of sermons,” said Riviaud, an attorney.

A temporary protective immigration program opened the door for Haitians to seek respite in the United States so Carlin, his father Lubin, uncle Riviaud, and aunt Marie embarked on a dangerous journey

to flee their beautiful island nation laden with gang violence and political unrest.

“It is never easy to leave your country, but at this point, it felt like there was no choice,” said Carlin.

A private plane was chartered from Cap-Haïtien to Miami, but it was the 70-mile car ride getting to Cap-Haïtien from Port-au-Prince that posed the biggest risk to their lives.

“Along the way, you might get killed or kidnapped by a gang,” said Carlin. “God was there for us to make it safely. Anything could have happened on the difficult trek.”

After many travel issues,

the four adults arrived in Minnesota in April.

Carlin, his dad, and his dad’s siblings were reunited with their oldest brother, John, who already lived in Minnesota. John helped his siblings and nephew set up their new lives but said he couldn’t have done it without the assistance of the staff at Arrive Ministries.

“God helped to connect our family with Arrive Ministries. Arrive Ministries called us, it’s a miracle, I don’t know how they connected with us,” said John.

A program coordinator at Arrive Ministries was referred to the family by a county staff person, and worked with the family to secure government assistance and make referrals to help the family achieve self-sufficiency.

Each of Carlin’s family members came with career expertise: in addition to Carlin’s medical training and Riviaud’s law background, Marie was a school principal.

“Restarting my life is an easy problem to have. Life in Haiti was crazy,” said Marie. “Here, I live in peace, I will get a job and by working hard I will have a future for my family.”

“I will go to school to learn English, I will go to work and if it’s possible I would love to get back into the medical field,” said Carlin. **All four adults are eager to contribute however they can to their new Minnesota community.**

“I will go to work and if it’s possible I would love to get back into the medical field.”



Dr. Carlin during clinical rounds



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## Volunteer with us

Befriend, assist, and tutor our new neighbors.



## Rent to Refugee Neighbors

Landlords play a crucial role in extending welcome.



## Donate

Support the work of Arrive Ministries.



1515 East 66th Street  
Richfield MN 55423  
[arriveministries.org](http://arriveministries.org)

