

Afghan Resettlement Volunteer Teams

As part of the process of resettlement for Afghan newcomers to our New Mexico and El Paso communities, El Calvario is already assisting 100-150 people, some in family units and some individuals. This is a great opportunity for you as well to engage in this season. Through December we have already placed 60 persons, including 4 families of 8 and 1 family of nine (which has its own little Christmas Story of their own as the mom has just given birth to their newest member). The individuals and families resettling in the Las Cruces, NM/El Paso, TX area come from military facilities across the country. Upon arrival, the newcomers will be supported in gaining access to services such as housing, transportation, employment, schools, ESL and other benefits for which they are eligible.

We are currently assembling sponsors and/or resettlement teams of approximately 15 - 20 people to assist each family unit in this effort. The Welcome Team fulfills initial setup responsibilities and forms a relationship with the refugee family that can optionally extend past the initial month post-arrival commitment. The commitment is about 2-3 months: 1-month pre-arrival collecting items, and 1-month post-arrival interacting with the family. The Welcome Team is mainly designed to be relational and community support, not simply provide goods to the family. You would help the family problem solve to find sustainable solutions (job, learning how to use public transportation, etc.).

Don't worry, you will not be alone. There will be a case manager from El Calvario responsible for core services and will be guiding you through the process, so if you come to something you do not feel equipped to handle, we are there to help. El Calvario will provide keys to the house and a list of necessary items before arrival. After arrival, El Calvario will set up appointments for the newcomers (social security, government assistance, medical, etc.) as well as classes for assimilation.

Each team will be responsible for:

Pre-Arrival –Help find housing. Collect/sort donated necessary household, food, and furniture items; set up house; purchase groceries for their kitchen and arrival day meal(shopping list provided).

Post-Arrival – meet family/individuals; introduce to other newcomers; visit and respond to needs; help enroll children in school; take families/individuals to appointments (such as initial medical screening, government assistance, social security); assist family/individuals with applying for government programs and employment; help connect family with community groups.

If you would like to be a member of a team, already have a group of 15-20, or would like more information, please, contact me via email, phone, or text. Rev George Miller, 575-524-1230 or our Volunteer Coordinator Amy Russell at amy@elcalvarioumc.org.

Thank you in advance!