

Our Syrian Refugee Family

Our Syrian Family's Journey—Part 1 3/26/17

Eight short weeks ago, our Syrian Family arrived in El Cajon. After enduring four years of war in Aleppo, Syria, and 18 months in a refugee camp in Turkey with almost daily vetting, they were approved for admittance into the United States under the sponsorship of Catholic Charities. They were allowed to bring in only two suitcases of personal belongings. They were relocated to El Cajon, where there is a well-established Arabic speaking community and access to many services offered by Catholic Charities.

Any refugee entering the United States is assigned a resettlement agency and given a one-time, per-person lump sum of money. (Currently, \$1,850 of grant money) The role of the resettlement agency is provide an apartment that includes beds, basic kitchen items and toiletries, a dining room table and chairs, and two days of food. The resettlement agencies take a small fee from that money, and the remainder of that money is the budget to provide for this family for the next 90 days. The complete list of what is provided by Catholic Charities is itemized on our website: www.stmoside.org/oursyrianfamily. Also on our website is a secondary list Catholic Charities tries to provide, and because of your generosity, we have been able to help with many of these items! We will continue to inform you of their ongoing needs!

The families are immediately assigned a Case Manager to help them obtain Social Security cards, Medi-Cal health insurance, and EBT cards; to help them enroll their children in school; and to show them how to use public transportation. They are able to attend free English classes, cultural training classes, and learn job skills. Within 90 days, the United States expects them to be self-sustaining and begin paying all their expenses! If they have been unable to find work, they can apply for general relief for a short period of time.

You can see why it is necessary for the reestablishment agencies to find sponsors for these families! Thank you for all you are doing to help our Syrian family, and where we are able, to help other refugee families who need help beyond what Catholic Charities can provide! ...To be continued...

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I was a stranger
and you welcomed me...

