



Jewish Family Services
of Greensboro

Many wonderful volunteers have helped with our Afghan family, and we thank all of you who have participated. When Amanda Loflin left JFS (and we thank her for her enthusiasm and getting this project off the ground), Lynn Zimmerman came on board as our part-time coordinator. She has been organized and clear-sighted about the many tasks necessary.

An overview of the work done includes setting up the house, disassembling, reassembling and schlepping furniture, donating household items and clothing, setting up the wireless and remote, installing the washer and dryer, driving, helping with English, helping with dental appointments, doctors' appointments, house repairs, groceries, haircuts, ER visits, trips to Goodwill, documenting, shopping, maintaining contact with the case worker, the housing specialist, and the jobs specialist, translating, making trips to the mosque, playing with the children, and making financial contributions. There is plenty we've left out and plenty more to do.

A few highlights—the house is comfortable. It had some issues with the plumbing and pipes but the landlord has been responsive about repairs. It's a nice family neighborhood with an ample front and backyard (we are now in need of a lawn mower if anyone can help.) Thanks to Dr Steve Mackler, arrangements were made with the offices of Dr. Neil Lutins and Dr. Matt Applebaum to have the family get dental assessments and begin much needed work. We cannot thank them enough for this. Follow-up physical exams to their original health screenings have been done. The children are all settled at the Newcomers School and one at the local elementary school. The parents have attended classes at New Arrivals Institute with language and job training. (We admire how they are trying to use their English.) The dad is now working as is the oldest son. They've also made friends with other Afghans, some of whom have good English skills and that's helpful in communication. They've also been able to go to the mosque. Recently relatives have joined them here with their toddler son. We haven't formally become their sponsors but we help as we can.

Volunteers have had positive experiences—the feedback is about the satisfaction of helping and making a difference. And feeling admiration for the resilience the family is showing after the trauma they have been through. The face-to-face experience has great impact on both the family and the volunteer. One person brought puppets and entertained the children and tried to reinforce colors and numbers in English. Helping them get simple things like wallets, belts, backpacks and haircuts is very satisfying. A volunteer sat with the children at the dentist distracting and calming them. There are also frustrations with no translation services available, communication among the many players, and the difficulty everyone feels trying to use our public social service systems during COVID.

Finally, we have just learned that there is a hard stop now of four months to being a Co-Sponsorship Team so our official work will end May 30. We will find new ways of relating to the family, but it has been truly an honor and privilege to have entered their lives. We hope you, members of our community, are proud of the work you've done and the contributions you've made to this family's arduous journey.

With great appreciation,

Betsy Gamburg, Director JFS

Lynn Zimmerman, Coordinator