

Afghan Family Update

To start this week's column, we want to update you all on our driving situation with the Father's work. Through the Welcome Neighbor website, we found that there was another gentleman who had been carpooling with the Father to work and was also left stranded when their driver changed jobs. We were able to connect with his Core Partners and we are sharing the driving duties with them. That is very helpful but it remains that this is a huge challenge for us and it isn't sustainable. The daytime drive isn't too bad as it's about an hour and ten minutes round trip in the early afternoon. However, the pickup is much more challenging as it takes place at 10:30 at night. And we found that sometimes they must work overtime and it's a 12:30 am pickup! Uber really isn't an option as they're out in Fenton. The donation of a reliable, used vehicle would be our huge prayer and ask. However, even with a car donation, there will still be taxes, insurance, maintenance, etc. Please consider giving to our Afghan Family Fund so that we can all help this dream become a reality. This would give the family so much independence! And please check out our SignUp Genius to see some other smaller needs that need fulfilling. We have an upcoming birthday for one of the children and there is a gift idea on there that we think most of the children will enjoy sharing.

We're grateful for some of the warmer days we've had as Sue and Allan Scott, along with Mia Walters, were able to take our entire Family to the Zoo on Monday. We think they had been to the zoo in Kabul but we St. Louisans know that we have one of the very best zoos anywhere in the world and it was great fun to share it with the Family. While there are many more places to explore in the future, on this trip the Family got to see Kali, the Polar Bear, along with penguins and puffins, chimps and orangutans, and sea lions. They also ran into and met Amy Escott and her boys, another WGPC family. Initially, they weren't going to go on the carousel (the zoo was super crowded) but when the youngest boy saw it, there was no way to pass it up. The three year old girl was less than enthusiastic but everyone else thought it was great. Such big smiles! Honestly, while we know that all the driving, shopping, appointments, etc. are crucial to the family's daily living, the fun things like the zoo trip recharge our batteries as we see the joy in our family's faces. This, church family, is really the payoff. We've learned from the Father that the family spent ten days in Kabul, surrounded by Taliban, and not knowing whether they were going to make it out. How terrifying and stressful for them all. So, to see everyone relaxed and enjoying life is a blessing and a gift.

Steve Seele took the Father out driving on Sunday. But, first it was tea and forty five minutes of conversation before Steve told him that they really had to get going. Steve reported that the Father should probably only need about four or five more driving sessions and he's good to go. Of course, the Father drove large military vehicles for the U.S. for years so his driving skills probably exceed many of our own! Afterward, he invited Steve to stay for lunch..."classic Middle Eastern hospitality", per Steve. We have learned to always allow time for tea as it is important to the Afghan culture that time is spent in conversation and socializing before the "work" begins. And we are almost always invited to then stay to eat lunch. We can't often stay as we have our own tasks to get done but we have a few times and the food is delicious! There isn't much meat used but lots of vegetables and beans. The Mother makes all of their bread daily and it's terrific. Last week, the Father insisted that we each take a "loaf" (it really looks like a large pizza dough) home. Chewy and warm...right out of the oven!

We had a good meeting with the Family's landlord and will be meeting with him this coming week to sign a one-year lease. Initially, the Parents weren't convinced that the neighborhood was right for them

but they have come to realize that they are in a good location where they can walk to a Schnucks, their pharmacy, the International Institute and their bank. Also, the children's school bus stop is just two houses away so they can keep an eye on them the entire time. Sue Scott found a great app that allows the Parents to watch their children's bus drive in real time and determine when it's just two minutes away so they aren't waiting outside for too long in bad weather. Gotta love good and helpful technology! School seems to be going well for the children and the oldest Daughter has made two good friends already. Each child has at least one other student in their class who speak Pashto, which must be a comfort.

In Partnership,

Sue Davis, Sue Scott and Noreen Mayfield