



JUBILEE PARTNERS REPORT

Summer 2016

***Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil, for you are with me. Ps 23:4 (NIV)***

Back in early November when we decided to send out the appeal for donations to help some of those refugees suffering all over the Middle East, our own funds were at a record low level for that time of the year. Guess what? You responded with great generosity to the appeal for the refugees – with many notes of gratitude that we had reliable ways to channel your gifts to them through our connection with Dreams InDeed International – but then you also responded to our own newsletter in December with an amazing surge of gifts to support our work here at Jubilee! In addition to that, you sent literally hundreds of notes with such inspiring messages of encouragement that we taped them over a large section of our community dining room wall. Notes and gifts came from rich and famous people as well as many very poor people, even from people in prison. One of the most touching things was that so many of the gifts were sent by former refugees who had come through Jubilee's refugee program themselves – people who know personally what those millions of men, women, and children are now experiencing in the Middle East!

A few weeks ago our friends Janice and David Haskell, who have lived in the Middle East for decades and who are the founders of Dreams InDeed International, were talking with a group of Syrian children from a refugee camp in Lebanon. At one point Janice asked several of them, "What are your hopes for the future?"

One of the little girls responded sadly, "I have no future." Her sister scolded her at once, "You are not supposed to say that!"

Well, maybe not, but it is certainly easy to understand how such children could be afraid and hopeless, given all they have suffered in their brief lifetimes. In just the past four years more than half of the people in their country have been driven from their homes by war. At least a quarter of a million of them, including many thousands of other children, have been killed. Is it any wonder that some of these uprooted and displaced kids, many living in makeshift housing year after year in crowded refugee camps - now doubt that they have a future?

The Haskells have been visiting such refugee camps in several countries repeatedly in recent months. They have seen the cost of food and other essentials increase dramatically, in some places doubling just in the past year. With donor fatigue on the rise and international funding shrinking, even clean



We are very grateful to so many of our readers who donated generously to help feed hungry kids like these 2 little boys in Syria.

drinking water is becoming scarce in some camps. They have carefully distributed the contributions that have come through Jubilee from many of you friends on our mailing list. Something over \$80,000 so far, it may seem to be a small amount in comparison to the immensity of the overall disaster – but it has brought some very welcome relief to thousands of the most needy of the refugees! Many of those people have expressed their gratitude with great emotion, speaking of God’s love having been shown to them through such tangible acts of mercy.

Meanwhile, as we have mentioned in our past several Reports, we also continue to see beautiful expressions of sympathy and love from many of our neighbors right here in Georgia as well as from other parts of the country. Hundreds of former refugees have moved into the area within a few miles of Jubilee. They are responding to the warm welcome they feel from local churches and schools, from some of the city and county governments, from retired neighbors who spend many hours in personal tutoring to help them prepare for citizenship tests or other such hurdles, from some medical people who give them special attention the list goes on and on. We appreciate this all the more, of course, because it is in such stark contrast to much that dominates the news in this election year.

Another dramatic example of this spirit of compassionate concern for refugees has come from our friends in the Bruderhof communities of upstate New York. Not only have they been sending members to help those in key places like northern Iraq and the island of Lesbos, Greece, but a few weeks ago they responded to speakers from Jubilee by sending a team of seven men to help us



Left: These recent executions have been especially difficult for Robbie and Al who have visited several of the men on a regular basis. Right: Albert (atop ladder) came with 6 other men of the Bruderhof communities to lend us their capable building and fix-it skills for a week. They also generously donated funds for the materials. We were inspired by their early rising habits and inexhaustible work schedule, plus their singing was a bonus!



Finally finished!



Tuning...



Playing the Karen harp

with maintenance and construction needs! “We are very concerned about the suffering of the refugees, and helping Jubilee is one way that we can help them,” they said. In one short week their team accomplished more than a typical group of hired workers might have done in twice that much time!

Jesus taught and demonstrated throughout his life that we should reach out in love to those who are suffering, regardless of nationality or other such factors. He repeated over and over that attitudes like fear and greed should never shape our relationships to others. Love of God and love of our neighbors (yes, even love of people like those Samaritans!) should guide all of our actions.

What is happening to us in this country, a country that used to take pride in symbols like the Statue of Liberty, that so many of our leaders and our citizens are making it harder and harder to welcome people like these refugees? Why, for instance, has the US admitted only about 1,500 so far of the millions of the victims from five years of tragedy in Syria— while the Canadians, by contrast, have admitted *over 27,000 of them in just the past six months alone*? (And meanwhile, much smaller and far less wealthy countries such as Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, and Egypt are hosting millions of them!)

Friends, these days it is *urgently* important for all of us – especially those of us who want to be faithful to the teachings of Jesus – to resist the pitfalls of fear and apathy, to try vigorously to help ease the suffering of others. In the process, we will not only feel warm gratitude from many of those we try to help, but we will experience the joy that God sends to those who love their neighbors as they love themselves.

By no means, of course, will that work always be easy. In fact, it often stretches us to our limits! In the past few months at Jubilee we’ve been struggling to cope with some major medical problems among our refugees, involving hospice care in one case, concurrent with some severe emotional and psychological challenges for others. The departures of several longer-term staff members is causing the rest to have to stretch even further and take on extra work for at least a few months. All of this is in addition to a depressing drumbeat of executions in Georgia – an average of *one a month for the past eight months!* – each one of which we have protested publicly with signs and prayer in downtown Athens.

To deal with all of these kinds of matters and also to tend to a few more maintenance and upkeep projects, we are cutting

Left: Mya Thay, born in the hill country of Karen state, Burma, amazed us all with his ability to hand-build and then play, this beautiful Karen “harp”. From an oak log, with machete and hand-made tools, he fashioned even the tuning pins from the same tree. He generously left us with a gift only he can play, so we look forward to your coming back often to play it, Mya Tha!

back just a bit for a short time this summer in the rate of acceptance of new refugee families. (We've hosted somewhere close to 4,000 refugees from three dozen countries in those cabins, and that takes a toll on them!) Also, we are grateful that some of our former volunteer staff members are coming at various times this summer to help us with this work.

Moreover, we are very thankful that we already have a large number of excellent new applicants for our fall volunteer program, in addition to several returning volunteers who are experts in the work that needs to be done.

Yes, the challenges can seem overwhelming at times, but the faith and courage of these refugees, the warm welcome from so many of our neighbors, the compassionate partnership with so many of you – and most of all, the knowledge that *God is with us* – keeps us moving ahead through the “valley,” looking forward to whatever God has in store for us next.

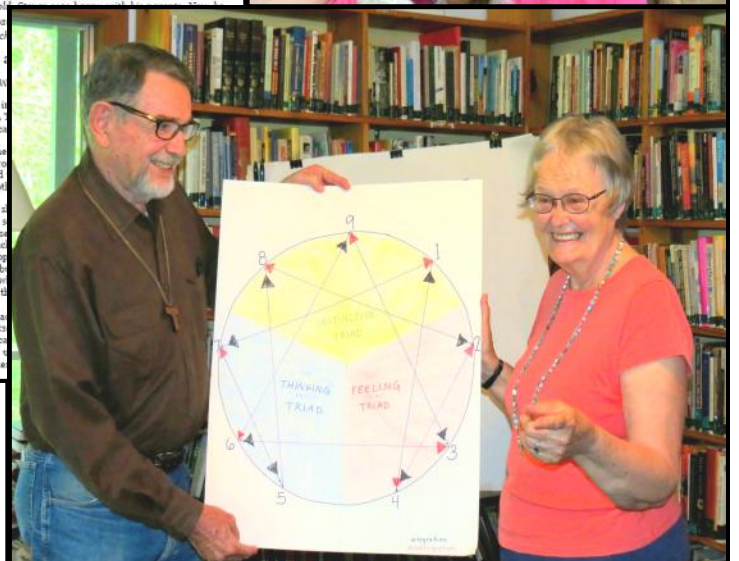
from the people of Jubilee



Fun on funny hat day...



Baby goat love...



Middle above: Read it—first edition ever! See the 4-page Jubilee Journal with articles by ESOL students at jubileepartners.org. Right: Long-time friends Jim and Sarah Hornsby gifted us with a 2-day workshop about the Enneagram. We still have lots to learn!

Who we are

Jubilee Partners is an intentional Christian service community in north Georgia. Our primary ministry is offering hospitality to newly arrived refugees. We are a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization; donations are thus tax-deductible. Your donations and support of our work are most appreciated.

Jubilee Partners Box 68 Comer, GA 30629 706-783-5131 www.jubileepartners.org



BELOVED WIFE, MOTHER AND FRIEND

ELIZABETH PAW, born in Karen State, Burma on November 10, 1973, fled to Thailand as a refugee in 2005, then found a new home in the United States on November 23, 2015. She passed away peacefully in her home at Jubilee on May 20, 2016. Surviving are her husband, Tin Tin, 5 children, 1 daughter-in-law and 1 granddaughter.



View Jubilee's newsletter in color online at www.jubileepartners.org!

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Summer 2016



It was an amazing "Goose Feast" prepared for a crowd of us by Zac and Kristi on a spring evening, and as you can see—it was a lot of fun. Creating their own farewell party, they treated us to a buffet featuring smoked goose plus other tasty dishes and a separate buffet of desserts. After-dinner entertainment included an open mic with music, poetry and laughter (right), as Candy Ree, Jess, Ingrid and Lisny can attest to. Zac and Kristi we will miss you! Our love and prayers go with you to your next home at the Hermitage in Three Rivers, MI.