



JUBILEE PARTNERS REPORT

Spring 2017

"There is no fear in love, but perfect love drives out fear, because fear involves punishment. The one who fears has not been perfected in love. We love because He first loved us."

1 John 18-21

"Do not be overcome by evil, but rather overcome evil by good."
Romans 12:21

"I just want you all to know, God is good. I did not have any friends when I came here. I did not expect to be treated so kindly. I did not know what to expect. I was surprised that people are so generous here. Thank you for helping my family. God is good and he is taking care of my family and I pray for you at Jubilee that God will keep taking care of you and bless you." Christina repeated these words as we formed a "goodbye circle" for Uwimana's* family. (*Name changed to protect her privacy*) The day before, Christina had asked a translator to help communicate final health record details with Uwimana before she and her kids moved to their new apartment. Uwimana asked the translator, a local graduate student, to convey her heartfelt thanks back to the Jubilee community.

Uwimana had arrived at Jubilee two months earlier, recently widowed, with her five children ranging in age from one to eleven years old. Her family fled violence and ethnic discrimination in Congo and lived in a refugee camp in Rwanda for several years before finding out that they would be resettled in the United States. She was relieved to find out that her brother-in-law would also be resettling here this spring. As an able-bodied, single man, he was eager to come help provide for his late brother's family. She found out in early January that he had completed the intense vetting for all refugees, which includes multiple interviews, fingerprinting, and medical screening. He was cleared for travel and only waiting for his ticket to

It's Congo night at the K House! Gloria (R) and Justine (L) spent hours in the kitchen preparing a feast for our Sunday supper—hmmm, spicy and delicious. Little ones Knowless and Brave just "hung out" the whole time, as you can see.



Ahhh! The universal language of children's smiles and laughter, shown here by Vanessa, Julienne, and Bruno.



Yep, Jubilee is a welcoming sorta place—we'll even accept four-legged refugees! In this case, it was two donkeys that had gotten loose from a neighbor's farm and behaved themselves nicely until it was time to go home.

Atlanta, that is purchased through the State Department as a travel loan that all refugees must pay back within 48 months of arriving. She was so excited to be reuniting with family soon.

In late January, in response to a question about her brother-in-law's spring plans she replied, in her newly found English vocabulary, "Interview, yes. Ticket, no. Trump, no Jesus." She shook her head. But she looked up and said "America, friends, yes. God is good."

As of the writing of this newsletter, the president has just issued a revised Executive Order. Starting March 16, all refugee resettlement will be halted for 120 days to improve upon (an already very secure) vetting process for incoming refugees. This order also cuts the national quota of refugees to be welcomed to the US from 110,000 to 50,000 people for the year 2017. Resettlement agencies across the country are facing a lot of confusion and budget cuts as a result of this decision. Uwimana's brother-in-law now faces a major delay before the day he will be able to reunite with his family.

Since the fall we have fielded an increasing number of emails, phone calls, and letters of support and invitations to share about refugees with churches and school classes. Our hearts are warmed to know so many people want to learn from our community, to open their hearts and homes, to connect with refugees in their towns. If we can see any good coming from these turbulent days it is in the opportunities to bear witness to the immense power of love to cast out fear and to build relationships across perceived barriers. It strengthens and challenges our own courage and faith for a person who has lost everything to remind us God is indeed good.

In early February, after we sang our goodbye song and exchanged many hugs, Uwimana and her kids settled into her new apartment in Clarkston with thankfulness for the many friends that have helped and welcomed her thus far. Before she arrived, volunteers from New American Pathways had set up and furnished her apartment. On moving day, her school age children all received new backpacks packed lovingly by members of Crawford Baptist Church in Lexington, GA. The kids were wearing new clothes and had new toys, thoughtfully purchased as Christmas gifts from members of Colbert Methodist Church. They were greeted by a woman from a church in Decatur who had offered to walk with them through the next leg of the journey and had bought books for the kids to start their own home library. Upon arrival at her new address, Uwimana was thrilled to discover that a friend from the refugee camp in Rwanda lives in the same

Wood stoves are wonderful - they heat our houses, and let us have indoor cookouts! Here Serafina and Emily are grilling bacon to go along with morning pancakes; a great way to start the day.



apartment complex. The generosity and kindness goes in all directions. Over the Christmas holidays, Chris, who lives here as a novice and works with Chou as refugee co-host, spent four days as a guest in the home of one of our recent families from the Congo. The three Congolese families that were staying here were also hosted over Christmas by resettled refugee friends.



A sunny winter's day - who wants to stay cooped up inside? Volunteer Sophia Bayram looks after her young friends from Congo on the playground while the parents are in their morning English class.

Reflecting on his Christmas in Clarkston, Chris wrote: "Here is certainly a case of the host and hosted

roles being reversed. The sense of welcome I felt as I visited families who had stayed at Jubilee or that I met during the visit was the best gift one could receive for Christmas. It was by far my most memorable Christmas (not counting early childhood of course). Seeing families from the past few years at Jubilee adjusting to the challenges of life in their new land was encouraging in this often dark time."

Many times, we will hear from people, "We don't know how you do it." The truth is we couldn't do what we do without the amazing support not only of people who live far from us, but of so many loving neighbors who live close by. From helpful smiles in the grocery store to generous private gifts for much needed building renovations, we have been overwhelmed by kindness and generosity. Busy University of Georgia graduate students have dedicated time to teach English here once a week. Retired neighbors teach kids' class and help with childcare. Students studying counseling have led sessions on mental well-being for Karen and Karenni neighbors in Comer. Members of the Church of the Nations in Athens have invited Jubilee to worship services and have volunteered valuable translation in Kinyarwanda and Swahili in addition to sharing in Jubilee's own worship services.

In our Fall 2016 newsletter, resident partner Jennifer Drago described her visit to Thailand and the needs of Karen and Karen-ni refugees living in camps or orphanages. Many of you sent donations - totaling \$14,300 - to assist with schools or medical clinics. We are so grateful! We sent the money to three schools and medical clinics in Thailand and to four in Burma.

Here is a sample of thanks (in their own words) from one of the recipients. From St. John's Boarding House that houses twenty orphans: *"We will use this fund for children's food from January - December. The rest of the money will be used for construction to repair the boarding houses because of the landslide every year during the rainy season. We need to do this again in April as emergency before coming rainy season in May. We will use this money wisely and helpfully way for our children. Thank you so much for your support and please give our greetings and thanks to your friends and your church members who give the support. Have a blessing year in 2017."*

Our residential spring volunteer group includes people from as far away as England and Iowa, but we are also so thankful, in these increasingly divided times, to point out the local support we are receiving. The good news is that the outpouring of local support for refugee resettlement has been more than we can even list in this newsletter (so please forgive us if we didn't name you, your church or agency.) The more that people of faith and conscience put love into action, the more that love will push away the shadows of fear. A few local journalists visited our community in recent weeks and have written some articles to dispel common myths about refugees. One of them noted, "People can have a right to their opinions, but they can't have their own facts." He and so many others are helping to shine light and tell truth about actual people who have fled persecution to live in peace.

A single mom from Burma who lived at Jubilee before resettling to Athens, Georgia, has been recently surrounded with a circle of women who asked how they could be of support to a local refugee family. Support with grocery shopping, rides to appointments, help with steps toward citizenship and learning how to drive are making a world of a difference for her and her family. Our hope is that in the months ahead the light from more communities of mutual understanding and respect will grow brighter than the darkness.

The Bible says, "perfect love casts out all fear." We aren't saying we are doing it perfectly here at Jubilee. In fact, many days we feel like we bumble and stumble in loving one another. Even though we have empty houses at the welcome center, we still welcome refugee and immigrant neighbors for English class, continue in worship and the daily rhythms of life together and we are taking a look at ways to improve our work. We put our trust in Jesus, who by the power of the Holy Spirit is able to work in and through all of us far beyond what we believe we can do and far beyond fear.

*You can find a printable PDF of a brochure at
<<http://www.jubileepartners.org/content/ways-welcome-refugees-your-town>>
if you would like more ideas for practical ways to support newly arrived refugees
near where you live.*

from the people of Jubilee



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.

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Remembering Ed Weir, who passed away on January 7, 2017.
 Ed, along with wife Mary Ruth and their four children, was one of the three founding families of Jubilee in 1979. His ashes were buried in the Jubilee Cemetery (photo below), alongside those of Mary Ruth, who died in 2006.

The Weirs left Jubilee in 1989 to found the New Hope House ministry near Jackson, Georgia, supporting people on Georgia's death row and their families and friends. Ed's second wife, Lora, continues that work today.

Well done, good and faithful servant.



Have pond, will share... The Lord has blessed us with beautiful woods, fields and ponds—and in turn we share that blessing with congregations like this group of African believers in Atlanta who needed a place to conduct a baptism.



Yvonne and Arthur Noble have been a most welcome addition to our community this spring. They are the latest folks from the Bruderhof communities to come and join in our life, work, and ministries for a spell. Their son Roscoe (*not pictured*) is with them as well. We sure appreciate their kind hearts and willing hands!

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

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Just look at these faces, and you see a wonderful diversity: of ages, colors, nationalities. But most importantly of all, as the apostle Paul reminded us, you see in these faces that we are as one in Christ Jesus (*Galatians 3:28.*) At Jubilee we seek to live into the fullness of this marvelous promise, and we