



December Update



Dear Bethel friend,

Newly arrived Afghan family we welcomed!

The Afghan refugee we met in a local health clinic arrived to Kansas City recently with his family of six. After visiting them in their temporary home, we found out that they were not ready for the winter. Since they had to leave Afghanistan in a hurry, they couldn't bring much, and most of the clothes they have were given to them while they were in Germany. The couple has three daughters and a son. Their son is 16 and their youngest daughter is 9. They accepted our invitation to visit us at Bethel Neighborhood Center and then go for Christmas shopping, we picked them up in one of our vans. Their children



asked a lot of questions, and they are all very happy being in America. They picked up some clothes and toys from our store room at Bethel Center. Seeing the toys, the eyes of the 16 year-old and 9-year-old lit up and it was so exhilarating to watch them pick up toys! They repeatedly said **"THANK YOU"** while picking up toys and during our shopping. We told them that we are able to help them because we get help from many generous donors like you. **Thank you for your donation to Bethel ministry.** Your donation enables us to welcome and work with those who need help the most in our community.

During our shopping trip with this new refugee family, they liked to take pictures and I (Mang) was their photographer using my phone. It was fun being with them. We were moved and surprised to see them doing peace signs while taking pictures. We sent them all the pictures we took and asked if they'd share them on their social media. The father said, ***"No we will save all the pictures but we will not share them. If we do, we could put our relatives in danger."*** Many of us take pictures and share them freely on Facebook and other social media without any thoughts of repercussions or fear. But that is not the case with this family. They gave me permission to share their story but we cannot show their faces. **We hope and pray that their story will open the eyes of many to see the need around them, and it will motivate them to participate in spreading the love of God this Christmas season.**

We are very grateful to the AB Women's Ministries of Roger Williams and Walnut Valley Association for the Christmas shoebox gifts they have given to our after school program participants from grades 1-12. Our students and their parents expressed their gratitude for the gifts. Alan, one of our students said, "I love to come to Bethel because they give you gifts... and help you with your homework." May God bless you and your family during this Christmas season!

Mang Sonna

Rev. Mang & Nem Sonna, Bethel Neighborhood Center.

