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## Our Family Has Arrived!

**T**hrough the overwhelming love and generosity of our ICSJ Parish, our family of families, we were able to add one more very special family! After months of meetings beginning in 2016 with a small group from our parish and representatives from Catholic Charities, we learned the steps and time frame for sponsoring a very well vetted Refugee family. We discussed the need for raising the necessary funds, and then we finally received word that there was an Afghan family of six for us to sponsor!

On Wednesday March 29th four of us, representing all of you, hopped the Blue Line out to O'Hare and headed to the International Terminal. We knew their 14 hour Emirates flight from Dubai had landed (they had a 10 hour layover there after their flight from Afghanistan), but we didn't know how long it would take them to clear Customs. The excitement mounted as we chatted with the Case Worker from Catholic Charities, as well as with the sister and brother-in-law of our family. He has been in the US since the 1980's and she has been here for 14 years, and that is how long it has been since the sisters have seen each other. She was eager to meet her brother-in-law, her nephews aged 10, 8 and 3 and her adorable 6 year old niece.

When they appeared, there was palpable joy and excitement amongst all of us, as we exchanged love, smiles and hugs that needed no words. They were travel troopers (these were the first airplane flights for the children) and they were happy at long last to be "home". Various parishioners had prepared gift bags, and the children clung to their goodie bags with great glee, as they inspected the interesting contents.

When their luggage was gathered, it was time for the Case Worker to drive them to Skokie, where they will stay with her sister, while their new apartment was being painted and furnished. It is also in Skokie – just a short bus ride from the sister's. Normally we would be involved in this work, but because the sister and her family offered to get them settled, we will reconnect with the family when Catholic Charities contacts us. They like to give the families time to catch their breath and adjust to their new lives. When the time is right, many of us will share our time and talents with them in any way they need. The Catholic Charities model is to create independency for the family as quickly as possible. The father does speak English, and with family nearby, their transition will hopefully be easier than for that of many other Refugees. Please keep them in your prayers.

**WHAT WE ARE** and **WHAT WE DID** is in keeping with the words of the Gospel, as well as fulfilling the wishes of Pope Francis and Cardinal Cupich, to warmly welcome and open our hearts to Immigrants.

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Learn more about the effort and how you can get involved at  
[www.icsjparish.org/refugee-effort](http://www.icsjparish.org/refugee-effort)