



We Have Our Second Refugee Family!!

A Message from the ICSJ Parish Refugee Effort Committee

And they are from Burma (or, as it was renamed in 1989, Myanmar). The country struggled under military rule for over 50 years till Aung San Suu Kyi, the former Prisoner of Conscience, won an overwhelming electoral victory in 2015. However, the military is not letting go—they redrafted the Constitution so she could only be “State Counselor,” not President.

So the problems continue. According to UNICEF, over 150 kids under the age of five die every day unnecessarily; 2.2 million are affected by violence; the military blocks aid deliveries along the borders; the use of children as soldiers escalates as the military steps up its persecution of various groups and ethnic cleansing is occurring along the country’s borders.

But out of this chaos, via a number of years in Malaysia, our new family arrived in Chicago in April. At that time, Catholic Charities was unable to identify a sponsoring Parish so they used money from their refugee emergency fund. But thanks to the generous support of our ICSJ family, we can use our contributions to replenish their emergency fund AND begin to help this family.

Which consists of 3.5 persons right now! The father, Aa Ka; the mother, Nan Htwe who is expecting their second child (a girl!); and their (almost) two-year-old son Tristan Sai. Aa Ka, who speaks some English, completed 10th grade and worked both as a general laborer and waiter. He does not have a job here as yet, but Catholic Charities is trying to place him at O’Hare in food service or janitorial work. His wife was a farmer in Burma where she completed 8th grade but, as of yet, speaks no English. They are living in Rogers Park, in the

same building where another refugee family—from Somalia—will be moving in next month.

How can you help? As happened with our Afghan family in Skokie, our Refugee Committee stepped up to offer their help to this family, so we think we have enough volunteers to cover once-a-week visits. However, we welcome any/all interested Parishioners in this effort as, we all know, life sometimes interferes with the best laid plans and we could be in need of extra hands next week.

Those who can’t contribute their time, however, might consider donating items that each family needs. Our next update will include some specific items for the Burma family; the few items below would be extremely helpful for our Afghan family. One of our most dedicated volunteers, Lisa Dellagiarino Feriend, has already offered them a swing set and activity gym.

Items Still Needed by Our Afghan Family

A Bicycle with a Basket—so the father can more efficiently do the grocery shopping.

Floor fans—for the upcoming Chicago summer.

Soccer and/or basketballs—for the eight and ten year old boys.

Legos—for all the kids!

Angela Gore, Assistant to the Pastor, is our Go-To person for any donations and can be reached at (312) 787-7144, ext. 2112 or agore@icsjparish.org. For any questions/suggestions, please email Betty Woodward at betdmiowa@gmail.com.

Learn more about the effort and how you can get involved at
www.icsjparish.org/refugee-effort