

An Update From the ICSJ Parish Refugee Effort

It has been a bit over three years since our Parish sponsored our first refugee family. They came from Afghanistan where the father worked as a military interpreter for the US army. The ICSJ volunteers who met the family of five at the airport that March night have become much more than dedicated volunteers—they have become good friends.

Since that evening at O'Hare, the Parish has added seven more families—and seven more committed groups of



volunteers. In this update, we are highlighting two of those other families; the first, from Myanmar who arrived just weeks after the first family from Afghanistan and the other our latest family, from Burundi.

Aa Ka, his wife Lin and their three children Tristan, Susanna and Gabriel just left Chicago for Indianapolis to join a Burmese language church so they can better understand the service. They will be living with friends until they find a place of their own (one not-often-mentioned benefits of volunteer assistance is the ability to help the refugee family become self-sufficient).

Lin and Aa Ka told their volunteer friends that they are grateful to God for the friendships they made with each one of

them and for the generosity of the ICSJ community who helped them feel welcome when they first arrived. And gave them the tools and the confidence necessary to make this move in the next chapter of their lives. AND this heartfelt thanks ended with an invitation to “come say hello” to any of the parish community who might visit Indianapolis!

Our newest family, from the small African country of Burundi, arrived in the fall of 2020. They had been in a refugee camp in Kenya for ten



years where their son, Ryan, was born—and soon diagnosed with a severe form of cerebral palsy. Unable to move by himself, his parents would

carry him wherever they went. Now, however, the doctors have fitted him with a special wheelchair and so for the first time in their son's nine years of life, the family is able to walk around their neighborhood, run errands, shop, and even take strolls along Lake Michigan without having to carry him in their arms.

Ryan's dad is working and already hoping to further his education so he can work in health care. His mom worked as a counselor in the refugee camp and hopes to eventually find similar work here in Chicago. They, too, want to say “thank you” to the ICSJ parish community for all the help they have given.

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