

The Marketplace

FEBRUARY 2025

Ph: (717) 257-1270 | www.marketsquarechurch.org



Dr. Bruce Humphrey
Bridge Pastor

By now we are into the rhythm of reading the Bible more in 2025 than previous years. The challenge for January was to try and read the entire book of Genesis. Now we begin scanning more quickly through the coming stories of Moses, the Israelites wandering in the wilderness, the Ten Commandments, and the forming of the Hebrew nation.

Before we read these next Bible stories, which stories do we know already from this period of Bible history? Baby Moses drifting in a basket among the reeds at the edge the Nile? Moses and the burning bush? The ten plagues and Moses demanding that Pharaoh "let my people go!" The Exodus of the slaves from their Egyptian oppressors as God parts the Red Sea? There are so many famous moments in the next four books of the Bible. Let's keep reading to discern together more of who God is, what God cares about, and how God is at work in the world.

Mark Up Your Bible: Jan 29-Feb 4, Deuteronomy 1-7 | Feb 5-11, Joshua 1-6 | Feb 12-18, 1 Samuel 8-17 | Feb 19-25, 1 Kings 9-19 | Feb 26-Mar 4, Nehemiah 1-13



PNC Update

The Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC) has begun the selection process from interested applicants for Market Square's next Head of Staff/Senior Pastor. With the filling out and filing of official forms; the writing and rewriting of descriptions of our church's past work and future plans; and the prayerful and visionary discussions on the priorities of credentials, personal attributes, and work experiences needed in a successful candidate for ministry having all been done and submitted, we are now considering applications.

As previously described in earlier updates, we are using the denomination's database and computerized selection tool to narrow our choices to those that meet our employment requirements. We review all those matches, and there are many. A second round of consideration for those that are most ideal will follow, with candidates providing even more in-depth information, followed by face-to-face discussions with the PNC.

We are well pleased with the first listing of qualified candidates and are looking forward to learning more about many of them. Those ministers registered in the system who did not match with us may "self-refer," as well, and several have.

We also are eager to know of other ministers who may not be actively looking for a new call, but who might be interested in us if they become aware of our search. If you know of any such people, you can refer them to our official Ministry Discernment Profile, posted on the MSPC website. It includes contact information for the PNC.

These are busy times for the members of the PNC, but we all share in the excitement of the fact that we are now in the midst of the discernment we were called to do.

Steve McMullen, for the Pastor Nominating Committee

Welcome, Sean!



We are pleased to announce that **Sean Meara** has been employed by Market Square Presbyterian Church to serve in the position of church **Facility Manager**.

Sean will have varied duties relating to oversight pertaining to the care of church facilities, inclusive of the furnishings, equipment, and mechanical support systems.

As the Facility Manager, Sean will have significant responsibility for the well-being and safety of the facilities and the persons who use the facilities – other staff, members, and guests.

Sean is a member of MSPC and sings in the Sanctuary Choir.

Next Marketplace Deadline: Sunday, February 9, 2025. Please email articles and photos to both Nancy Sheets and Kari Hultman. sheets@marketsquarechurch.org and khultman@comcast.net



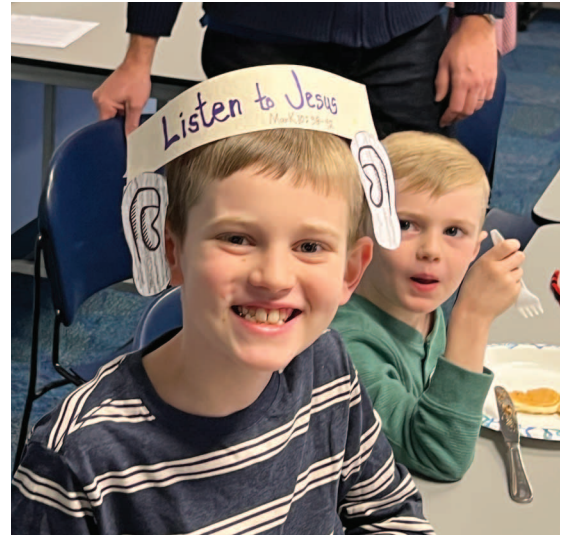
Pastor Allison Smith

At right are photos from the Children's Prayer Breakfast on January 12. The lesson was "At Mary and Martha's: We need to listen to Jesus" based on Luke 10:34-42. Pictured are James and Teddy S., and Jameson and Vaughan K.

Lunch & Learn

Join us for lunch and a discussion of your questions on the book of Genesis!

If your weekly readings for the Mark Up Your Bible sermon series have left you with questions or a deep desire to discuss further then send a quick email to pastorAllison(smith@marketsquarechurch.org) and join us at 12:30 p.m. in the youth room after the annual meeting for lunch, fellowship and discussion on our first month of readings!



Please join us!

Kids' Pancake Breakfast!
February 9

"Jesus Blesses The Children"
Mark 10: 13-16

Adult Forum: Widows to Warriors

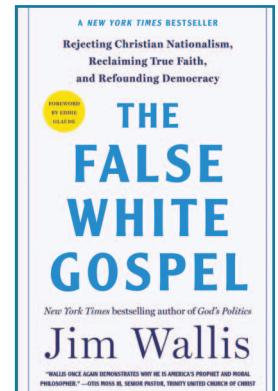
January 26 through February 16

Join us for a 4-week series that will focus on several women from the Hebrew Scriptures based on the book *Widows to Warriors* by Lynn Japinga. Japinga, an ordained minister in the Reformed Church in America, is Professor of Religion at Hope College in Holland, Michigan. This is a companion study to the "Daughters to Disciples" study offered this past fall and will also be led by Donna Harper.

Adult Forum: False White Gospel

February 23

Led by Pastor Allison, the class will begin by defining White Christian Nationalism and talking about why it's a problem especially now. She will also introduce the book *the False White Gospel* by Jim Wallis. There will be an interfaith community book study offered in the spring on this book through a collaboration of Christian, Jewish, and Muslim organizations including Market Square!



Be sure to visit Geneva Hall to view the photos taken by Susan Hoover and Ron Poorman. They will be on display through March 9.

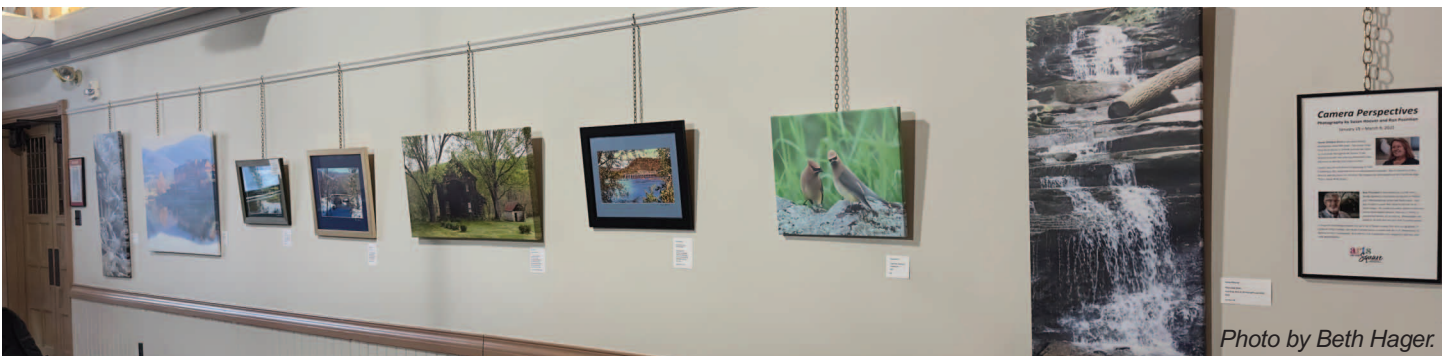


Photo by Beth Hager.

Worship and Preaching Schedule February 2025

Our English language worship services are livestreamed from our sanctuary every Sunday morning at 11:00 a.m. and can be viewed on our homepage. An audio-only broadcast of the service is available as well on our church website www.marketsquarechurch.org. Click on the "Past Services" tab.

Korean language sermons are posted on the Korean Ministries YouTube channel: <https://shorturl.at/mYIYp>

February 2: Fourth Sunday after Epiphany/Annual Congregational Meeting

- 9:30 am Korean Language Worship in the Davis Chapel
The Reverend Ki Nam Lee preaching
- 11:00 am English Language Worship in the Sanctuary
The Reverend Dr. Bruce Humphrey preaching
"Sabbath for Wholeness"
Sacrament of Holy Communion
Deuteronomy 5: 6-21 and Mark 2: 23- 3: 6

Theme: At the center of the 10 commandments is the commandment to keep sabbath. Understanding the other commandments in relation to the commandment to rest provides a framework for understanding these laws not as a covenant that seeks to preserve human dignity and work for wholeness in God's creation.

February 9: Fifth Sunday after Epiphany/Souper Bowl Sunday

- 9:30 am Korean Language Worship in the Davis Chapel
The Reverend Ki Nam Lee preaching
- 11:00 am English Language Worship in the Sanctuary
The Reverend Dr. Bruce Humphrey preaching
"Jericho: Lesson in Trust"
Genesis 15:12-16 and Joshua 6:1-5

Theme: We wrestle with the destruction of the entire city with no survivors. As we dig more deeply in the story we discover there is destruction but also the survivor Rehab, who becomes an ancestor of King David and Jesus. Do we focus on death or life, past or future?

February 16: Sixth Sunday after Epiphany

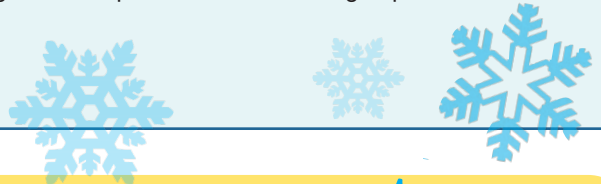
- 9:30 am Korean Language Worship in the Davis Chapel
The Reverend Ki Nam Lee preaching
- 11:00 am English Language Worship in the Sanctuary
The Reverend Dr. Bruce Humphrey preaching
"David and Goliath"
Ephesians 6:10-18 and 1 Samuel 17:38-45

Theme: We often focus this familiar story on size, giant versus small guy. The more significant story is the way David changed his definition of the rules of battle. He saw it as a spiritual battle, not merely a physical contest of strength. What are the spiritual battles in our lives today?

February 23: Sixth Sunday after Epiphany

- 9:30 am Korean Language Worship in the Davis Chapel
The Reverend Nam Gil Roh preaching
- 11:00 am English Language Worship in the Sanctuary
The Reverend Dr. Bruce Humphrey preaching
"Elijah and the Still Small Voice"
James 5:17-18 and 1 Kings 19:9-13

Theme: In the midst of Elijah's amazing victory over the prophets of Baal he sinks into depression. As he hides in a cave, God speaks to him addressing his depression. Sometimes depression is physical in nature. Sometimes it comes from isolation. Changing thinking is one step toward addressing depression.



SPRING CORE VALUES EXHIBIT



Intent to participate: Contact Beth Hager by February 28
Works due at church: Sunday, March 9

Our Core Values in Art: Faith, Community, Compassion, Justice, and Service March 16 – June 1, 2025
Calling artists and crafts people of all ages! The Arts on the Square Gallery will host a special group exhibition featuring works in a variety of media by Market Square members and friends.

Please contact Gallery Coordinator Beth Hager for more information and to discuss how you and your work or words can be involved: bahager@earthlink.net or 717-903-3307.

Special update: Are you a wordsmith rather than a visual artist? We'd love to display your brief prose or poetry (up to 200 words) musing on one of our core values in conjunction with the featured art work. Talk to Beth about including your writing. All works are due at the church by Sunday, March 9.

Dear friends,

I hope your start to the new year is going well!

The Market Square Ringers will return to worship on Sunday, February 9th ringing a fun and energetic arrangement of “Joshua Fit the Battle of Jericho.” We will hear three different settings on this tune we barely get to experience in worship – the choir will sing the demanding arrangement by Moses Hogan, and I will play a jazzy version for the closing voluntary, written by Joe Utterback. I’m honored to present Joe’s piece in worship as he composed this composition in my honor after I presented his setting of “This Little Light of Mine” at an American Guild of Organists National Convention in Nashville, Tennessee. I am looking forward to sharing these different settings with you on the 9th as they’ll go with Bruce’s sermon series.

I encourage you to attend the **Apollo5 concert on Sunday, February 16 at 4:00 p.m.** Five voices – soprano, mezzo, two tenors, and bass – with unparalleled individual talent create an immaculate blend that captivates audiences across genres including jazz, pop, classical, and early sacred music. Apollo5 engages over 20,000 monthly listeners on Spotify and is consistently praised by Gramophone, BBC Radio 3, and Classic FM. BBC Music Magazine has awarded them multiple 5-star reviews, extolling: “One-to-a-part performances of repertoire spanning nine centuries no less...an inspired programme, superbly sung throughout...exceptional cohesion and effortless style...faultless.” They are committed to sharing the joy of music far and wide.

I am delighted that we can bring them to Market Square as a part of our 24-25 AOTS season. They are a phenomenal group and are incredibly talented. I hope you will come and hear them in our gorgeous sanctuary with warm acoustics. Tickets for this performance will be: \$40 Preferred Seating; \$30 General Seating; and \$15 Student (ID required). I invite you to visit <https://aots-apollo5.eventbrite.com> to purchase your tickets!

Peace and love,
Tyler



Tyler Canonico-Dilley
Minister of Music



Sanctuary Choir Repertoire for February:

- February 2 (4th Sun. after Epiphany/ 10 Commandments) – “Let Your Heart Keep My Commandments” by Jon Zehnal and “If Ye Love Me” by Philip Wilby
- February 9 (5th Sun. after Epiphany/ Jericho: Lesson in Trust) – “Death Shall Not Destroy My Comfort” by Mack Wilberg and Moses Hogan’s “The Battle of Jericho”
- February 16 (6th Sun. after Epiphany/ David and Goliath) – Dorothy Smith’s “Be Strong in the Lord” and “Little David, Play on Your Harp” by Frank Glass
- February 23 (7th Sun. after Epiphany/ Elijah and the Still Small Voice) – “Dear Lord and Father of Mankind” by Bonnie Duckworth and “Elijah Rock” by Moses Hogan



APOLLO 5

Sunday, February 16, 2025 • 4 p.m.

Market Square Presbyterian Church
20 S. Second Street • Harrisburg, PA 17101

Purchase tickets →



Renowned for their commanding vocals and unique sound, this critically acclaimed British vocal ensemble demonstrates how impressive five voices alone can be, showcasing jazz, pop, classical, and early sacred music. As part of the VOCES8 Foundation and operating from the VOCES8 Centre in the heart of London, APOLLO5 is committed to sharing the joy of music far and wide.

**Tickets: \$40 Preferred Seating;
\$30 General Seating; \$15 Student (ID required).**
Purchase tickets in advance at <https://shorturl.at/R3rbo> or at the door.

Complimentary parking in the Market Square Garage.





Scenes from the Candles By Candlelight concert on December 22. *All photos by Beth Hager.*



Annual Congregational Meeting

The annual meeting of the congregation and corporation will take place next Sunday, February 2, 2025. The purpose of the meeting is to hear and act upon a report from the officers of the corporation, to receive 2024 annual reports, and review the 2025 church budget.

There are copies of the Annual Report in the narthex and in the members only section of the website. If you are not a member of the church, but would like some exciting reading in the next week, please contact Nancy in the church office for a copy.



The EAC and its partners advocate throughout the year to companies, agencies, and government representatives for important policies and initiatives that serve our planet and our health. As we begin 2025, let's take a look back and celebrate the successes we have accomplished together for our mother Earth and all its inhabitants.

According to *Environment America*, major accomplishments have been made in the following areas:

- The U.S. government finalized a rule (<https://shorturl.at/7ZwuK>) in August protecting 13 million acres in northwest Alaska, roughly the size of Maryland, from oil and gas drilling. Home to walruses, seals, polar bears and caribou, these protections prevent the disruption and fragmentation that drilling would cause, and protects the water, land, and air from the associated pollutants, allowing this huge amount of land to remain wild.
- The company, *Amazon*, has phased out the use of plastic air pillows in packaging, replacing the packaging with paper sourced from 100% recycled content. This transition eliminates single use plastic from packages after testing showed that this packaging kept deliveries as safe, if not safer, than the plastic air pillows did.

Accomplishments noted by another large environmental non-profit, *Environmental Defense Fund* (<https://shorturl.at/QJt4B>), include:

- Enacted in 2024, the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, funds climate protection initiatives. The Infrastructure Law (<https://shorturl.at/0Knfk>) includes the largest investment in water the federal government has ever made. In addition to investing in reducing pollutants in drinking water, including the removal of PFAS, lead pipe replacement, and estuary clean-up, this law also funds the clean up superfund sites, and switching from diesel to reduced carbon school buses, which are so critical to our children's health.
- Cows are a major source of global greenhouse gas emissions, with most of that in the form of methane. An alliance (<https://shorturl.at/J8Cgk>) of major dairy companies that includes Starbucks, General Mills, Nestle, and others have recently agreed to disclose their dairy methane footprints. To reduce these impacts, several trials were completed to test a livestock feed additive, and cleared by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, that demonstrated methane reductions of up to 30%.

Nearer to home, 2024 saw a law passed requiring PennDOT to plant native vegetation along state highways. With a myriad of benefits to planting native, this vote was a rare bipartisan victory, passing in the PA Senate 45-2. Native plants, those that evolved and occur naturally in a particular region, help protect and restore biodiversity, improve air and water quality, and provide wildlife with quality food and shelter. By using natives along highways, PennDOT can reduce expenditures on mowing, help to prevent flooding, and save costs on watering and pruning.

These noted here and other valuable efforts are promoted on an approximately monthly basis by members who enroll in a listserv managed by Rev. Kevin Long. If you would like to participate, Kevin makes it easy by sending links with predeveloped letters that take as little as a click to send. Please let him (kevin.long@me.com) know if you are interested.

Earth Wisdom

LET YOUR GARDEN SLEEP IN
Wait to tidy up your gardens for spring until we have a week of temperatures in the 50's or above. This year's pollinators are still sleeping in your plant stems and leaves until then.

PC (USA) EARTH CARE CONGREGATION PLEDGE



In November 2017, the Session of Market Square affirmed the Earth Care Pledge in order for Market Square to become an Earth Care Congregation. With that pledge, the Market Square congregation promised "to be careful, humble stewards of this earth, and to protect and restore it for its own sake, and for the future use and enjoyment of the human family." By signing this pledge, the Market Square Congregation promised to make the care of our planet a part of all aspects of church life.

It requires our **WORSHIP** and discipleship:

- to celebrate God's grace and glory in creation;
- to declare our responsibility to cherish, protect and restore God's earth.

It promises in our **EDUCATION**:

- to learn and teach about the current threats and damage to God's creation;
- to encourage and support one another in finding ways of healing creation as a response to God's call for earth keeping, justice, and community.

It pledges our **FACILITIES**:

- to be managed, maintained and upgraded to respect and cherish creation'
- to use energy efficiently, conserve resources, and share what we have to assure sustainability of God's creation for all life and future generations.

It commits Market Square's **OUTREACH**:

- to encourage public policy and community involvement that protects and restores the earth, as well as oppressed and neglected people;
- to work for environmental justice through coalitions and ecumenical partnerships.

The Future of Writing?

This subject has been on my mind of late. By now, you know writing is a critical and essential part of my life. I am not (nor ever was) someone who kept a diary. The closest I came to keeping a daily record is some of the travels we have been on. We have gone on at least a dozen or more trips conducted by travel experts. For such trips, I would keep a daily diary—where we went, what we saw, and what sights I captured in photos.

Among these trips was a Wenger heritage tour, in the year 2000, when we visited Wenger ancestral locations. These were in Switzerland, beginning in town called Wengen. Our whole family (as it was at that time) traveled together. So the daily diaries along with photos help recreated the trip. The year was 2000 and the Oberammergau Passion Play was especially important in that year.¹ You can see why keeping a travel diary was a great help.

I don't recall when I started writing as a means to express and form my thoughts. I know I wrote letters home to my parents when I had gone elementary boarding school during my parents' first term as missionaries in then Northern Rhodesia. As it happens I was 5 years old (and had my 6th birthday a month after I began boarding school). I was so homesick that I wrote a letter home EVERY day...and soon ran out of writing paper. In this era that preceded the kind of virtually instant communication we have today, writing was my only means of communicating with family.

When (at age 15) I stayed in the United States when my parents returned to southern Africa, writing was the ONLY means of communicating. No telephone calls. No text messaging. The closest thing to speedy news was a telegram.

All these thoughts about the place of writing in my life have prompted me to wonder what comes next. It is not my intent to muse about the future of writing in this column as it relates to personal communication. What I am really wondering about is what is happening to the **art** of writing today. I have pondered this a fair bit. My first fulltime job was teaching college literature and writing. In my career history, after teaching, I was hired as a writer for a professional organization. My last job, as I was winding down my career days, was once again teaching college level writing.

So here's the question at hand. What is the future of writing? I ponder what teachers and professors these days have to do to teach writing. It's easy to assign a prompt

writing assignment—write about your first job experience; write about a time when you were in danger and fearful....and so on. I suspect that if I were teaching introductory writing and used such a prompt, the student would find an AI website, enter the prompt, and use the AI generated essay as her or his response. I have mused about what kind of assignment I could give that would help me spot the faux work product. And further, what kind of prompt could I use that would actually make the student want to think and work through the permutations involved. Writing and thinking go hand in hand. To write you must think. So a diminution of personal writing leads to loss and maybe inability to think deeply.

I certainly have not come to a conclusion, but there are some ways I would try to encourage individual and personal creativity. Writing is a mental exercise. It causes the writer to think, to muse, to contemplate. Good writing is not only about using correct grammar. It's about thinking through an issue—both critically and creatively. It's about organizing your thoughts; about which thoughts are essential and primary. It's about building to a culmination that persuades and challenges and encourages the reader.

And, sometimes it's about breaking the rules. I have no advance knowledge as to how long I will remain sentient. But I know I will keep on writing. So my query heading leads in multiple directions. Will humanity continue to express its creativity and genius, in part through writing? Will the development of AI enhance or limit humanity's ability to create. This list could go on and on...but, enough.

I leave you with this question—what is the future of writing?

Donna Wenger

¹The Oberammergau Passion Play is about the passion of Christ that has been performed every 10 years from 1634 to 1674 and then each decade since 1680. It has always been performed on open-air stages in the village. The play covers the short final period of Christ's life from his visit to Jerusalem, which leads to his death by crucifixion. It is the earliest continuous survivor of the age of Christian religions vernacular drama.

Here's a thoughtful essay on some of the challenges ahead—*The Future of Writings in the Disciplines and Professions* <https://shorturl.at/h9nTK>

Breadcoin Helps the Unfortunate and the Community

We live in Midtown Harrisburg, so frequently we see people panhandling around Forster, Front and Second Streets or at the corner of Cameron and Maclay Streets or Elmerton Avenue. I wanted to help, but was hesitant to give money. So, last year, I was intrigued when I saw an article in *The Burg* about Breadcoin, which arrived in Harrisburg in 2022.

Breadcoin is a coin worth \$2.50 that can be used to purchase food at participating restaurants, food trucks, and food stands at the Broad Street Market. Founded in 2016 in Washington, D.C., Breadcoin now has 14 vendors in the area, including 10 in Harrisburg including Tacos Amigos, Palumbo's Italian Eatery, and Porter's House. The coins provide food for the poor and at the same time support local restaurants and other food vendors.

Although there was an article about the Breadcoin concept in *The Marketplace* about two years ago and the deacons distributed the coins at the breakfast closest to Christmas, there are MSPC members, like myself, who were not aware of the concept. So, I went through the process of purchasing the coins and have been offering them to panhandlers since the Fall. At first, some of the folks were not familiar with the coins, but for the past two months, everyone I encountered knew about the coins and seemed grateful to receive them. I made small copies of a list of the vendors accepting the coins to hand out with the coins.

If you are interested in purchasing the coins, it is relatively simple to order them. Just go to their website (breadcoin.org), and at the top right of their homepage, there is a "purchase" button. That button leads to a page where you can identify the frequency and amount you want to spend. On the next page, you fill out your name, email, and credit card information. On that page, there is a choice to have the coins mailed to you for \$10 or picked up at a participating vendor.

This area does not have a participating vendor yet, so you can pick up the coins from Aisha Mosley at her office, 1500 N 2nd St, Suite 23. But you need to text or call (717-963-5985) her first to arrange a convenient time for both of you.

Georgia Earp

Communication of Caring

Following are communications between Margee Kooistra and her "Palestinian Family" that might be of interest to you:

Dearest Jamal and Saddiya, Yara, Amr and Ameer - Zain too, when you see or talk with him.

Knowing how I worry about each of you every day, my brother Belden (90) called me this afternoon to ask about all of you, and asked me to let you know that he is thinking of you and sends his love. That is true for his wife Pamela and everyone in my family - as well as for many friends who know how important your family is to us. Our church regularly prays for you as well.

It is such a joy that Yazan and Shahed will be with us for a few precious days over Christmas. Our interfaith family will once again represent the three Abrahamic faiths - Muslims, Jews and Christians - so you know our thoughts and prayers will be with each of you especially throughout this time.

Because at Christmas many of our hymns and lessons refer to Bethlehem, I wrote an article for our December church newsletter (<https://shorturl.at/0LnVM>), making sure that people here realize that the romanticized image of Bethlehem 2000 years ago is very different from the Bethlehem today - so close to your home - and that it remains under a cruel military occupation. I remember how painfully real that was to me Yazan's first Christmas here, and it has been so ever since. If I'm able to send you the article I will do that.

This comes with our love and our prayers, dear dear family. We pray for your health and that you may live each day with peace. I'm also thinking of your beloved Mother, dear Jamal, knowing how difficult her life is as well and with what love you and Saddiya care for her. Likely Dr. Yara as well when she has an opportunity to do so. 🙏❤️ **Mum (Margee Kooistra)**

Dearest Mum,

Your words, filled with love and kindness, reached us in the deepest parts of our hearts. Thank you for thinking of us, worrying for us, and always holding us close in your prayers. It means the world to know that we are so deeply cared for, not just by you but by Belden, Pamela, your family, your church, and your friends. Please thank Belden for his thoughtful call—it is a comfort beyond words to know that he, too, carries us in his thoughts and sends his love.

We are so moved by the joy you've shared about Yazan and Shahed's visit and how your interfaith family will come together, a beautiful symbol of unity amidst the diversity of our faiths. To know that we will be in your thoughts and prayers during such a meaningful time brings us solace and strength. It's this kind of love and solidarity that lights our way even in the most challenging times.

Your article about Bethlehem, Mum: The contrast between the Bethlehem of hymns and the reality of today is a truth that needs to be shared with the world. Your dedication to speaking up for justice and humanity inspires us more than we can express. If you're able to send it, we would be honored to read it.

Your prayers for our health and peace are felt deeply, and we send them back to you tenfold. My mother will be so touched to know that she, too, is in your heart. Her challenges are great, but your acknowledgment of her resilience and the love we give her means so much.

Thank you, Mum, for your unwavering love and your constant presence in our lives, no matter the distance. We are blessed to have you and your family holding us so close. Please send our love and gratitude to Belden, Pamela, and everyone who keeps us in their hearts and prayers.

With all our love,
Jamal, Saddiya, Yara, Amr, Ameer, and Zain



International Service Center

December 2024 Update

Below is an excerpt from the ISC's latest report. To read the entire report, please visit <https://marketsquarechurch.org/newsletter> and click on the February 2025 Edition.

Dear Partners-in-Mission,

In this special Monthly Activity Report of our Refugee Mission for the month of December 2024, instead of submitting to you the customary outcomes of our various Refugee Support Service Programs, we have decided to share with you some personal sentiments of our staff, volunteers, and refugee clients. This report is meant to be a tribute to all you, our precious partners-in-mission. The compassionate and generous support we continued to benefit from all of you had enabled us to overcome most of the toughest challenges in our daily work. Heart-warming donations, including monetary, food supplies, clothing, household goods, and especially personal time from wonderful Good Samaritans like you, have helped us address the needs of destitute refugees during the darkest moments of their lives. For that, we are forever grateful.

Respectfully submitted,

Phuong N Truong, Executive Director

Keystones Oral Histories

Underground Railroad South Central Pennsylvania

Dauphin

Cumberland

Adams

York

Lancaster City

Lancaster

Philadelphia ~ Columbia Railroad

Daniel Kaufman

Harriet McClintock Marshall

Thaddeus Stevens

Samuel Mifflin

Cyrus Griest

Samuel Berry

Movie Night

Join us on Friday, March 7th, 6:45 p.m. in Geneva Hall for an underground railroad documentary: *A History of the Underground Railroad and Abolitionists Throughout South Central Pennsylvania*. A panel discussion will follow the film.

Sponsored by the Antiracism, Peacemaking, and the Education committees.

Gaza Remains a Peacemaking Priority

Our prayers are with those who recently suffered the grave losses of lives and homes from the fires in California as well as the many worldwide who continue to be victims of violent weather resulting from climate change.

It is also the relentless siege of Gaza that remains a primary global concern. The number of Gazans killed since the October 7th tragedy of the Hamas raid is now 46,000 Palestinians, primarily innocent women and children! Among those calling Israel's assault on Palestinian *genocide* are Amnesty International and the International Court of Justice. More than 250 human rights and humanitarian organizations are calling to stop arms transfers to Israeli and Palestinian armed groups. A large portion of Gazan homes, hospitals, schools, water infrastructure and refugee camps have been obliterated and health workers continue to be targeted. For many of us who are people of faith and U.S. taxpayers, it is especially painful that the Biden administration recently proposed that Congress send \$2 billion more military aid in addition to the \$18 billion already sent. Famine is an imminent threat as too little humanitarian aid is reaching those in dire need. Jewish Voice for Peace reminds us that Palestinians have been suffering from violence and apartheid for more than 76 years.

There can be no security or peace for Israelis until there is security and peace for Palestinians as well. Our prayers and voices in support of all those in the Middle East are vital. Please add yours.

Margee Kooistra

Session Activities: January 2025 Update

By Jonelle Darr, Clerk of Session

Market Square's Session is responsible for the church's mission, governance, and programs. Pastor Bruce Humphery moderates the Session. Current Ruling Elders may serve up to two consecutive, three-year terms. Active 2025 Elders are:

Terms Expiring in 2025	Terms Expiring in 2026	Terms Expiring in 2027
George Blashford (1 st term)	Cindy Bendroth (2 nd term)	Sandy Bell (2nd term)
Beth Cate-Freeman (1 st term)	Kristin Cassell (1 st term)	Betsy Cobb (1st term)
Jonelle Darr (2 nd term)	Dale Laninga (2 nd term)	Andrew Hunter (2nd term)
Theresa Elliott (1 st term)	Dave Lehman (2 nd term)	Steve McMullen (1st term)
Beth Hager (1 st term)	David Volkman (1 st term)	Lana Walmer (1st term)
Nancy Snyder (2 nd term)		

Worship

- 1) Ordaining Lana Walmer as a Ruling Elder.
- 2) Ordaining Janet Bargh and Mary Martin as Deacons.

Facility

- 1) Approving the Trustees recommendation that no more than \$850,000.00 for phases 2 & 3 of the exterior restoration project be paid directly from the church's investment fund at Bryn Mawr Trust.
- 2) Learning that staff have agreed to use the church's 4th level for the nursery and Christian education ministry, and the lower level for the music program. To carry out the plans, the choir room needs new chairs to mitigate (possible) future water problems. (The church's old wooden chairs cannot be used on this level because of how they absorb water.) Session agreed to use \$6,401.16 from the Arlene Hershey Music Fund to purchase 60 student-musician chairs. As of December 31, 2024, the fund had a balance of \$27,677.02. The Arlene Hersey Music Fund is to be used for the benefit of the music program.

Ecology Action

- 3) Acknowledging and thanking the Ecology Action Subcommittee for their preparation of Market Square's Earth Care Congregation re-certification; and to re-affirm Market Square's commitment to the Presbyterian Church (USA) Earth Care Congregation pledge.

Mission

- 4) Agreeing to donate Market Square's unused Schulmerich three-octave handbell set to students participating in Dr. Shelly

Moorman-Stahlman's Lebanon Valley College exchange program with music professionals from Brazil. Background: The donation creates opportunities for others in Brazil and is part of the church's global outreach. Market Square has participated in this program in the past. One year a group taught the children's choir to sing a song in Portuguese and then they sang it during worship. The teachers have attended worship before and almost every year Dr. Moorman-Stahlman brings them to see and play Market Square's organ. The church will continue to use its Malmark three-octave handbells.

Membership

- 5) At her request, transferring Tracee Olver's membership to Faith Immanuel Presbyterian Church. Tracee was ordained a deacon in 1969. She joined Market Square on April 8, 2007 and was ordained a Ruling Elder on January 9, 2011.

Personnel

- 6) Learning that Sean Meara had been hired as Church Sexton to replace Victor Morales. He will start work on February 3 at the amount stipulated in the 2024 budget.

Organizational

- 7) In 2025, three new Elders were installed on Session: Betsy Cobb, Steve McMullen, and Lana Walmer. Outgoing 2024 Elders were Kevin Burrell, Keith Camilli, Morgan Dame, Jane Murray, and Jong Hwan Yi.

As of January 21, 2025, there were 368 members on the church membership rolls. If you have any questions about Session activities, you may talk with me, a Session member, or one of our Pastors.

Helping Refugees: A Market Square Success Story

Since 2018 Market Square Church has been helping refugee families. We continue to help our first family, the AlMeslehs. They are Syrian. Help has included job finding, English learning, school district registration, housing assistance, home repairs, reading English stories to the younger children, assistance with medical and dental problems, teaching driving skills, and assistance with car repairs. Members of the Peacemaking Committee have orchestrated this help.

In 2022 the Peacemaking Committee noted that a significant number of Afghan refugees were coming to the Harrisburg area. This was a result of the US military withdrawal from Afghanistan in August 2021. The Committee decided we should help these needy families. We solicited volunteers. A substantial volunteer roster was developed. Because of the anticipated project size, a partnership between Market Square Church and Pine Street Church in downtown Harrisburg was formed.

To date the Market Square/Pine Street Partnership has helped a total of five Afghan refugee families. We work closely

with the ISC to optimize our help. The families are the Afghanzadas (moved to Virginia in May 2024 because of a family business opportunity), the Popals in Carlisle, the Azizyars in Grantham, the Mawdudis in Camp Hill, and the Bayanis in Carlisle. Help has included job finding, locating housing, English learning, providing household goods and furniture, transportation to medical and dental appointments, teaching driving skills, and related work.

Our goal in helping refugee families is to see them reach self-sufficiency. This was realized with the Afghanzada family. The AlMesleh, Popal and Azizyar families are close to reaching this goal. Much work remains to be done with the Mawdudi and Bayani families before they reach self-sufficiency.

The Peacemaking Committee is pleased with the success of our refugee program. We are following God's call...to help one another.

Roger Olson
Co-Chair, Market Square/Pine Street Partnership

Urgent Request for Help

Market Square has gained another Afghan family to help...the Bayanis of Carlisle (father, mother, 4 school-age children). They came from Qatar in December 2024 and lack English proficiency. We are looking for volunteers to spend just a few hours a day each week with the mother and father learning about such things as cat, dog, table, chair. We find refugee families are very conversant with the benefits of the internet and remote English teaching. But a real person who has always spoken the English language is needed. Fulfill your 2025 New Year's Resolution to get away from your normal, routine, ordinary, somewhat boring life and help needy (and interesting) people. Please volunteer! Contact: Roger Olson at (717) 571-0124 (always best to text, not phone) or housedoctr@hotmail.com.

Stewardship	
2024 Actual	\$436,108
2024 Budget	\$452,000
Deficit	\$ 15,892

Our Church Family
Ken Batemen's sister-in-law Karen died on December 26.

With the ringing in of the new year, the capital campaign to fund the organ and sanctuary restoration and renewal reached the end of its intended 5-year life. By any ordinary measure, the campaign was successful. With a goal of \$900,000, we received cash gifts and 5-year pledges-to-pay that totaled over \$962,000. The pledge fulfillment rate is equally impressive. As of December 31, we have collected \$950,676, or 99% of the total pledged.



The original plan was to close the books on the project at this point in time. The Board of Trustees has elected, however, to keep the books open for the foreseeable future, to accommodate additional gifts to the fund. At least one member, who made monthly gifts for five years to complete his pledge, has announced his intention to continue making occasional contributions and has challenged others to do the same. Others who were unable to complete their payments in five years also intend to continue giving.

All the project bills have been paid, so why does this matter? Because every additional dollar received will replace some of the Investment/Endowment Fund dollars used to pay for the project. Although we completed the project within the amount allowed by Session under the original funding plan approved in 2019, it is in the church's interest to rebuild the Fund.

So - if you have the means, please consider giving an occasional gift, above and beyond your annual giving, to help us restore the Investment/Endowment Fund that has served us so well. Every Sunday now, and at every concert, service, or other event in the sanctuary, we rejoice at the positive effects of the renewal of our organ and worship space. We know that many of you do, as well, because you tell us.

We will always be humbled by the congregation's extraordinary generosity toward an expensive and sometimes controversial project —launched inauspiciously just weeks before the pandemic suspended live church services and upended people's jobs, plans, and family lives. Yet here we are, five years later, highlighting the "rejoice" in the campaign's slogan of *Restore, Renew, Rejoice!*

Dave and Gwen Lehman
Co-Chairs, *Restore, Renew, Rejoice!* campaign

Annual Reports
are available
in the Members section
of our website.

Market Square Presbyterian Church
20 South Second Street
Harrisburg, PA 17101
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Lizzie Camilli, *Nursery Caregiver*
Steve Jackson, *Parking/Events Staff*
Art Miles, *Community Breakfast Resource Person*
Ollie W. Silver, *Sunday Sexton/Events Staff*
ollie.silver@aol.com
Newman Stare, *Audio Visual Technician*
nleeaudiotech@gmail.com
Andrew Hunter, *Sound/Livestream Technician*
hunterandrew2314@gmail.com

The Souper Bowl of Caring is just around the corner! The Elementary Education Committee is looking for donations that will help to keep our Food Pantry stocked with all the necessary food items to serve both our refugee families working with the ISC and our homeless guests. Again this year, we're encouraging financial donations, since our storage space is still limited due to the flooding in the lower level.

You can bring **cash on February 9** to put in the Souper Bowl donation kettles our youth and children will have. You can also donate online by scanning the **QR code on the right** or by accessing our website's homepage: www.marketsquarechurch.org and clicking on **"Donate."** If you do donate food items please remember, no glass containers! Thank you so much for your generosity. Our Food Pantry serves anywhere from 100 people per week; these gifts make a huge impact on our community. (ARS)



Sunday Services

Korean Language Service—9:30 a.m.
in the Davis Chapel.
Sermons on YouTube
(*link on the church website's
Worship page*).

English Language Service—11:00 a.m.
in the sanctuary is livestreamed
on the Homepage
<https://www.marketsquarechurch.org/>
and
the church's YouTube channel.
<https://www.youtube.com/@marketsquarepresbyterianch5396>



OUR MISSION

TO PROCLAIM AND LIVE THE GOOD NEWS OF JESUS CHRIST BY WELCOMING FRIEND AND STRANGER ALIKE INTO OUR DIVERSE AND INCLUSIVE FAMILY OF FAITH REGARDLESS OF RACE, CLASS, NATIONAL ORIGIN, SEXUAL ORIENTATION, GENDER IDENTITY AND EXPRESSION, OR WORLDLY CONDITION OF ANY KIND AS WE CELEBRATE OUR GIFTS, WORK FOR JUSTICE, PEACE, AND A SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT, REACH OUT IN MISSION, AND WITNESS TO GOD'S TRANSFORMING LOVE.



INTERNATIONAL SERVICE CENTER

21 South River Street, Harrisburg, PA 17101

Telephones: (717) 236 - 9401, (717) 236 - 1523, (717) 230 - 8741

Fax: (717) 236-3821 Email: tnp@isc76.org Website: www.isc76.org

Dear Partners-in-Mission,

In this special Monthly Activity Report of our Refugee Mission for the month of December 2024, instead of submitting to you the customary outcomes of our various Refugee Support Service Programs, we have decided to share with you some personal sentiments of our staff, volunteers, and refugee clients. This report is meant to be a tribute to all you, our precious partners-in-mission. The compassionate and generous support we continued to benefit from all of you had enabled us to overcome most of the toughest challenges in our daily work. Heart-warming donations, including monetary, food supplies, clothing, household goods, and especially personal time from wonderful Good Samaritans like you, have helped us address the needs of destitute refugees during the darkest moments of their lives. For that, we are forever grateful.

HELPING REFUGEES-A MARKET SQUARE SUCCESS STORY

Since 2018 Market Square Church has been helping refugee families.

We continue to help our first family, the AlMeslehs. They are Syrian. Help has included job finding, English learning, school district registration, housing assistance, home repairs, reading English stories to the younger children, assistance with medical and dental problems, teaching driving skills, and assistance with car repairs. Members of the Peacemaking Committee have orchestrated this help.

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The Peacemaking Committee is pleased with the success of our refugee program.
We are following God's call...to help one another.

By: by Roger Olson, Co-Chair, Market Square/Pine Street Partnership

Date	Volunteer Name	Refugee Names	Activity type for the month of November, 2024	Hours
12/10/2024	Christine F.	Salim Family	Took the Salim family members to appointments at Sadler Clinic and assisted with paying their Patient First bill.	4.5
December	Christine F.	Volunteers	Communication and coordination related to work and needs of the volunteers and clients.	9
12/12/24, 12/19/24 &12/ 26/24	Pat D.	Mohammad and Arifa Sultani	Taught to English to Mohammad and Arifa Sultani includes planning, transportation to their home and teaching 2 hours each day for a total of 12 hours for the month.	12
12/01/2024, 12/09/2024 & 12/16/2024	Cheryl M.	Shahnaz Khetabi	English instruction for Shahnaz Khetabi using spoken and written language.	3
December	Marleen K.	Rukhshana Salim	Dropped off Rukhsana Salim to medical appointments	3.5
December	Marleen K.	Nargis Ahmadzai	Dropped off Nargis Ahmadzai to a dental appointment	
12/30/2024	Susan Rimby	Fayquill	Driving Instruction to Fayquill	1.5
12/21/2024	Susan R.	Zamir Ahmad	ESL Class for Zamir Ahmad	1
December	Dotsy	Salim Family	Took Rokhsana to New Hope Ministries	2
December	Dotsy	Rukhsana Salim	Took Rokhsana to an MRI appt. at OIP but she had the time wrong: 1 hour for my travel time and a visit.	1
December	Maripat Wehman	Amiri Ladies	English instruction for Amiri Ladies	4
12/12/2024	David C.	Saboor	Drove Saboor and his two daughters to a dentist appt in York PA	4
12/4/2024	Michael V.	Popal	Mrs. Popal Project Share, 30 miles	2
12/24/2024	Michael V.	Popal	Dropped off Mrs. Popal to medical appointment, 30 miles	3
December	Barbara H.		Had a credenza donation and sent to Christine Filipovich and she sent to the case workers who sent to their	0.75

			clients and it ended up with Adiba Sadat.	
December	Barbara H.	Christine	Coordinated with Christine about donation	0.25
December	Barbara H.	Zahra	Called/emailed Zahra	0.25
December	Barbara H.	Ivanna	Coordinated with Ivanna	0.5
December	Barbara H.	Oksana	Sent Christine Filipovich photos of kitchen items and she sent the photos to case workers who sent to their clients.	1
December	Barbara H.	Adiba	Coordinated with Adiba about what she needs after moving.	1
December	Barbara H.	Rukhsana and Mo Salimat	Took Rukhsana and Mo Salimat to a clothing giveaway at church and delivered silverware, and 2 sets of serving utensils; and helped them with getting clothes.	0.5
December	Barbara H.	Ivanna & Olena	Coordinated with Ivanna and prepared plastic ware for Olena.	1
12/19/24 & 12/20/24	Barbara H.	Olena	Coordinated with Olena about items	0.5
12/22/2024	Barbara Hamm	Olena	Meet Olena and family members in Camp Hill to deliver: plastic ware, dishes, plastic storage with drawers, linens, 1 nightstand, bath items.	2
12/22/24 & 12/23/24	Barbara H.	Adiba	Shop for items for Adiba Sadat. Drive to Hbg address she gave me to see parking possibilities.	3
12/25/2025	Barbara Hamm	Adiba	Dropped off items to Adiba (plastic ware, king bed set, bath towels, 2 blankets for the kids, hats/earmuffs for kids, end table/credenza) at correct address.	2
12/27/2025	Barbara H.	Salim Family	Obtained blanket for Salim family to see if it's what they want. Shopped for kitchen items they need	1
12/24/2024	Barbara H.	Adiba Family	Dropped off Adiba Family to laundromat for washing their clothes.	2
				52.75

By: Mrs. Christine Filipovich, Volunteer Coordinator of the Harrisburg Capital Region.

A Journey of Resilience: The Inspirational Story of Basira

Ms. Basira's journey to success began with unimaginable challenges and heartbreak. On November 6, 2021, after the fall of Kabul, she arrived in the United States, leaving behind her family, her home, and the life she had built in Afghanistan. At just 28 years

old, Ms. Basira carried the weight of an uncertain future, but her resolve to create a new life in a foreign land was unwavering.

Back home in Afghanistan, Basira held a prestigious position at the Ministry of Defense. She worked in the Planning and Policy Department and was part of the Afghan Army Chief of Staff's team. Her career reflected her exceptional capabilities and a strong commitment to serving her country. In addition to her work, she earned a bachelor's degree in finance, a testament to her dedication to education and professional growth. Despite her success, she had always dreamed of becoming a doctor or working in the medical field, a dream she never let go of, even amidst the chaos of war and displacement.

"When I left Kabul, I felt as though I was leaving behind a part of myself," Ms. Basira recalls, "But I told myself that this was not the end. I carried my dreams with me."

When Ms. Basira arrived in the United States, the road ahead was anything but easy. Like many refugees, she faced significant cultural and language barriers. Initially, she worked through staffing agencies to support herself financially. But the work was far from fulfilling, and she yearned for a more stable career aligned with her dreams.

On February 27, 2024, Ms. Basira became a client of the Afghan team at the International Service Center (ISC). It was a turning point in her journey. During her first meeting with the Afghan team, she expressed her desire to pursue a career in nursing. Moved by her passion and determination, the Afghan team began crafting a comprehensive plan to help her achieve her aspirations.

After completing the appropriate needs assessment, the Afghan team developed a comprehensive Educational Development Plan for Ms. Basira. They reviewed her case file regularly and provided crucial support in upgrading her resume, ensuring it met the standards of various healthcare and social service organizations. Recognizing her bilingual skills, the team encouraged her to explore interpretation opportunities. Ms. Basira received interpretation training, including the rules and regulations of professional interpreters, and became a certified interpreter in the ISC's Language Bank program. This certification allowed her to secure a part-time position as a Dari interpreter, a role that provided her with valuable professional experience while helping her pay for her continuing education.

The Afghan team's next step was enrolling Ms. Basira in Medical ESL (English as a Second Language) classes designed to help her understand medical terminology. These classes, taught by a group of dedicated doctors at the Language and Literacy Center in Lancaster, not only enhanced her language skills but also built her confidence to navigate the complexities of the medical field in a new language.

Recognizing her need for practical experience, the Afghan team assisted Ms. Basira in applying for various healthcare positions. After weeks of applications and interviews, she secured a position as a Patient Care Technician at UPMC Pinnacle Harrisburg Hospital. In this role, Ms. Basira began providing compassionate care for patients, gaining invaluable hands-on experience that reaffirmed her commitment to a future in healthcare.

While working, Ms. Basira continued her studies with the support of the Afghan team. They guided her in enrolling in online medical terminology classes and complementing

her Medical ESL coursework. At the same time, the team helped her navigate the complex financial aid process by assisting her in applying online for the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). To further support her academic journey, the Afghan team invited her to a college application workshop organized by the ISC in collaboration with medical students from Penn State College of Medicine. This workshop provided Ms. Basira with essential guidance on college admissions and the U.S. education system.

Ms. Basira's determination and the unwavering support of the Afghan team eventually led to a significant milestone. She was accepted into the Medical Assistant program at TEC Centro under the umbrella of the Harrisburg Area Community College (HACC) with a full scholarship. This achievement marked an essential step in her journey toward becoming a nurse.

Today, Ms. Basira balances her role as a Patient Care Technician at UPMC Pinnacle Harrisburg Hospital with her studies as a Medical Assistant. Her story is one of resilience, ambition, and the power of community support. It reflects her strength and the importance of organizations like the ISC in helping refugees rebuild their lives.

Ms. Basira's journey is far from over. She dreams of becoming a nurse and eventually giving back to her community by caring for those in need. Her story is a powerful reminder that hope, and determination can lead to a brighter future, even in the face of adversity.

Ms. Basira's story is not just about personal success; it is about breaking barriers, inspiring others, and proving that every challenge can be turned into an opportunity for growth.

By: The ISC's Afghan Team

Ms. Husna's Journey: From the Depths of Despair to a Future Filled with Hope

Ms. Husna, a 26-year-old young woman from Afghanistan, was always a dreamer. Born into a family that valued education and believed in the power of knowledge, she was destined to achieve great things. Growing up in Afghanistan, a country scarred by war and violence, Ms. Husna's dreams were nurtured by the warmth of her supportive family. She always had a deep desire to help others, particularly those who struggled with health issues. Inspired by her experiences watching sick people at her family-owned pharmacy, Ms. Husna dreamed of becoming a pharmacy technician. She was determined to pursue this path, no matter the challenges that lay ahead.

In 2019, after completing her secondary education with excellent grades, Ms. Husna began taking active steps toward her dream. She started a clinical skills training program with Grade A, which helped her land a pharmacy internship in a clinic. Her determination and hard work paid off when she was offered a job as a Pharmacy Assistant at the ALEM Health Center in Afghanistan. As she gained more experience, Ms. Husna also began volunteering at community events to promote the role of pharmacists in healthcare. She was proud of how far she had come, and with every step, she felt closer to her dream of becoming a pharmacy technician.

Just as Ms. Husna was beginning to see her dreams take flight, disaster struck. In September 2021, the Taliban took control of Kabul, dropping Afghanistan back into a nightmare. The oppressive regime rapidly stripped women of their rights, imposing cruel and heartless restrictions. Husna was no longer allowed to work, study, or even leave her home without a male guardian. Her aspirations were crushed, her future uncertain. It was as though everything she had worked for was taken from her in an instant.

The following year was one of hopelessness for Ms. Husna. Trapped in her home, her dreams suffocated under the weight of cruelty, but in the middle of this hopelessness, God had a different plan for her. After months of struggle, Ms. Husna and her family managed to escape Afghanistan and leaving behind the country that had stolen their future. With a heavy heart and nothing but a bag of clothes, she set foot on the soil of a new land, the United States, hoping that here, in a country of opportunities, she might rebuild the life she had lost.

However, life in the United States was far from easy. Ms. Husna arrived with nothing but her dreams and a determination to survive. She spent a year waiting for legal documentation that would allow her to work. During this time, she struggled to adapt to a new culture, language, and way of life. To help her family make ends meet, she took a job at a warehouse, loading heavy boxes. Every day felt like a step further away from her dreams of becoming a pharmacy technician. The work drained her, and she could not see how her dreams could ever be realized.

It was during this time of uncertainty that a spark of hope appeared in Ms. Husna's life. A friend introduced her to the International Service Center (ISC), an organization dedicated to helping refugees like Ms. Husna rebuild their lives. ISC's Afghan team saw potential in her, and they immediately began to help. They created a professional resume for her, tailored to her skills and aspirations. They worked tirelessly, submitting her resume to over 39 pharmacies and clinical centers in the region, following up every day with the respective HR managers.

One day in April 2024, Ms. Husna received the call she had been waiting for. A pharmacy, GDD Pharmacy, wanted to interview her. Tears of joy filled Ms. Husna's eyes as she came to the ISC to share the exciting news. ISC staff, ever supportive, immediately jumped into action. They helped prepare her for the interview, focusing on technical and mathematical questions related to pharmacy work, preparing her for success. For two and a half weeks, they worked with her, reinforcing her knowledge and boosting her confidence.

On the day of the interview, the ISC team waited anxiously for Ms. Husna's return. When she finally arrived, her face was alight with joy. She had done it; she had secured the job of her dreams as a Pharmacy Assistant. The room erupted with cheers as Ms. Husna hugged her ISC team, tears streaming down her face. The journey that had begun in the dark days of Kabul had led her to a new beginning in the United States.

Still, Ms. Husna's success did not stop there. ISC team continued to guide her, helping her enroll in English as a Second Language (ESL) classes at the Harrisburg Area Community College (HACC). Ms. Husna knew that mastering English was essential for her career, and with ISC's support, she took her education to the next level. They also provided interpretation services during her work training, helping her learn the pharmacy terminology and inventory system. She worked diligently, determined to excel in her new role and enhance her skills.

Ms. Husna's hard work paid off once again. She was promoted from Pharmacy Assistant to Pharmacy Specialist, a remarkable achievement that made her and her family incredibly proud. Her journey, which had once seemed impossible, was now filled with success and promise. ISC team also helped Ms. Husna continue her education at HACC, where she is now preparing to further her career in the medical field.

In a heartfelt letter to ISC, Ms. Husna expressed her gratitude in her native language: *"I sincerely thank ISC for helping me reach my goal and giving me hope for my future. You have guided me toward the path I had always wished for, and I will continue to serve my community with the professionalism you have helped me develop. I promise that I will help other girls who start from zero in this country, just as ISC helped me through my darkest times and brought light into my life and the lives of my family."*

Now, Ms. Husna is not only living her dream but also helping her siblings achieve their own goals. She has become a beacon of hope for others, showing them that no matter how many obstacles life may throw at you, with determination, faith, and the right support, you can rise above and achieve your dreams.

Ms. Husna's story is evidence of the power of resilience, the strength of hope, and the incredible impact of organizations like ISC. From a young woman in a war-torn country to a professional Pharmacy Specialist in the land of opportunity. Ms. Husna has proven that no dream is too big, and no obstacle is too great when you have the courage to keep going. Her journey is not just her own, it is a reminder for every young woman with a dream, that there is a chance to rise above the darkness and reach the light.

By: ISC's Afghan Team

Rebuilding Dreams: Iryna's Success Through ISC's Employment Program

Starting over in a new country is never easy, especially when faced with language barriers and unfamiliar systems. For Mrs. Iryna, a Ukrainian refugee woman who arrived in the United States on April 17, 2024, the challenges of finding work seemed insurmountable. With limited English skills and no transportation, she struggled to envision a path forward. But thanks to the unwavering support of the International Service Center (ISC) and its Ukrainian Job Developer, Mrs. Iryna's story transformed into one of hope, resilience, self-sufficiency and success.

When Mrs. Iryna first connected with the ISC, she was overwhelmed and unsure of where to begin. Diana, the ISC's Job Developer, immediately stepped in, offering a lifeline of support tailored to her unique needs. She began by conducting a thorough assessment of her skills, aspirations, and previous work experience. This personalized approach allowed the team to create a clear and achievable plan for Mrs. Iryna's journey toward self-sufficiency.

Recognizing that language was a significant barrier, Diana enrolled Mrs. Iryna in the ISC's VELT (Vocational English Language Training) class. These VELT lessons were more than just language instruction, they were a gateway to confidence and empowerment. Mrs. Iryna learned essential workplace skills, including self-presentation, resume building, and interview preparation. The classes even covered profession-

specific vocabulary for roles like housekeeper, cashier, and waitress, ensuring she was well-prepared for the job market.

Transportation was another major hurdle for Iryna. Without a reliable way to attend interviews or training sessions, her opportunities were limited. ISC's staff and dedicated community volunteers stepped in to provide pick-up and drop-off services, ensuring she could participate fully in every step of the process.

With her newfound skills and confidence, Mrs. Iryna was ready to take the next step. Diana worked closely with her to create a compelling US-style resume and actively applied for positions on her behalf. When an interview at a prominent hotel in Hershey had been secured for Iryna, Diana did not just wish her luck. She drove her to the interview, provided interpretation assistance, and offered moral support throughout the entire process.

On December 9th, 2024, Mrs. Iryna received a job offer for a housekeeping position with an excellent hourly wage of \$20.17, far exceeding her expectations. However, this job is 10 minutes' drive away from Iryna's house. Fortunately, committed ISC's community volunteers stepped in to help her resolve this transportation issue until she could save money to take care of her transportation needs.

For Mrs. Iryna, this job was not just a paycheck, it was a turning point. It represented stability, independence, and the beginning of a brighter future. She now has a rewarding full-time position close to home, a testament to her resilience and the comprehensive support provided by the ISC.

Mrs. Iryna's journey highlights the transformative power of ISC's Employment program. By addressing every obstacle such as language barriers, transportation challenges, and job unpreparedness, the ISC had empowered Mrs. Iryna to overcome the odds and thrive in her new environment. Her success is a shining example of how ISC helps refugees not only survive but truly flourish in their new communities.

Today, Mrs. Iryna is filled with gratitude for the ISC team and volunteers, who believed in her potential and stood by her every step of the way. Her story is a reminder that with the right support, even the most daunting challenges can be overcome, and a brighter tomorrow is always within reach.

By: Diana, ISC's Job Developer

From Struggle to Strength: Isabel's Path to a Brighter Tomorrow

In the vibrant yet turbulent streets of Havana in Cuba, under the shadow of Fidel Castro's regime, Mrs. Isabel grew up in a world where opportunities were scarce, and dreams were often overshadowed by harsh realities. Born into a family struggling with poverty, Mrs. Isabel's childhood was one of resilience and determination. Despite the challenges, her parents instilled in her a deep sense of purpose and an unwavering belief in education as the key to a better life. Determined to rise above her circumstances, Mrs. Isabel pursued her studies at the prestigious University of Havana, where she earned a degree in economics. For 31 years, she dedicated herself to her career as an economist, working tirelessly to bring progress to her community.

In a country where resources were limited and progress was often stifled, Mrs. Isabel's work was a beacon of hope for those around her. She became known not only for her professional expertise but also for her compassion and commitment to helping others navigate the economic challenges of daily life in Cuba. But as the years passed, the weight of political and economic instability took its toll. By 2023, following a series of natural and man-made disasters, Mrs. Isabel found herself at a crossroads. An opportunity arose for her to immigrate to the United States under the Cuban Political Refugee program. It was a chance to escape the hardships of her homeland and build a new life for her family. With her aging mother, Mrs. Ana Maria, and her 23-year-old son, Victor, by her side, Mrs. Isabel embarked on a journey fraught with uncertainty and hope. Leaving behind everything they knew, they traveled to America with little more than their dreams and the will to start anew.

The family arrived in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, where they were faced with the daunting challenge of rebuilding their lives from scratch. Mrs. Isabel, now in her 50s, knew that the road ahead would not be easy. Her mother, Mrs. Ana Maria, who was 80 years old, required constant care and could no longer contribute to the household. Meanwhile, Mr. Victor, a determined young man, took on the challenge of adapting to their new environment. He enrolled in online courses at Austin Community College, earning 12 credits in economics while also working as a clerical assistant for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. His resilience and hard work became a source of strength for the family.

Despite their efforts, the challenges of resettlement were immense. Mrs. Isabel struggled to master the English language, a barrier that made finding stable employment difficult. In early 2024, Mrs. Isabel, eager to improve her English, learned from the local Hispanic community about the International Service Center (ISC). She came to the ISC office to request for assistance to improve her English. The ISC's Cuban Program Assistant, Andres helped her enrol in the ESL evening class offered by one of ISC's partners-in-mission, the Trinity Lutheran Church in Camp Hill. Just as she began to find her footing in a new job as a janitor at the Pennsylvania Psychiatric Hospital, tragedy struck.

Mrs. Isabel was diagnosed with a medical condition that required urgent kidney surgery. The operation would leave her unable to work for several months, and with only a few months of employment under her belt, her health insurance did not cover long-term disability. The prospect of losing their home and falling into financial ruin loomed large.

It was at this critical juncture that Mrs. Isabel turned to the ISC for help. Through their Emergency Assistance Program, the ISC provided a lifeline when Mrs. Isabel needed it most. After hearing her story, the ISC's Director provided her with \$4,800 in emergency housing funds to cover her rent during her post-operation recovery period. This support was more than just financial assistance—it was a symbol of hope and a reminder that she was not alone in her struggles.

With the ISC's help, Mrs. Isabel was able to focus on her recovery without the fear of losing her home. The surgery was successful, and after months of rest and rehabilitation, she returned to work stronger and more determined than ever. The ISC's support not only stabilized her family's immediate situation but also gave them the confidence to continue pursuing their dreams in their new homeland.

Today, Mrs. Isabel's story is a testament to the resilience of the human spirit and the transformative power of community support. Her journey from the streets of Havana to

the heart of Pennsylvania is one of courage, perseverance, and hope. With the ISC by her side, Mrs. Isabel has not only rebuilt her life but also inspired others to believe in the possibility of a brighter future. The ISC played a pivotal role in Mrs. Isabel's journey, providing the resources and encouragement she needed to overcome adversity. Thanks to their unwavering support, Mrs. Isabel and her family are now thriving, proving that even in the face of overwhelming challenges, the right support can make all the difference.

By: Andres, ISC's Cuban Program Assistant

A Story of Hope and Perseverance: Laurie's Journey to a New Life

My name is Laurie, and I am 24 years old. On September 7, 2023, I arrived in the United States with my family, leaving behind the only life we had ever known in Haiti. The decision to leave was not easy, but it was necessary. Haiti had become increasingly dangerous, with escalating violence and instability threatening our safety. My family and I endured difficult conditions as we prepared for the journey, driven by the hope of a better, safer future. When we finally arrived in the U.S., we carried little more than our dreams and the determination to start anew.

I come from a large, close-knit family as the youngest of six children. Growing up, we faced countless challenges, but my parents always encouraged us to believe in a brighter tomorrow. When I arrived in the United States, I was overwhelmed by the complexities of rebuilding our lives in an unfamiliar environment. There were eight of us in total, and we needed to navigate a maze of paperwork, including applications for Social Security Numbers, work permits, and Temporary Protected Status (TPS). The process was daunting, and I often felt lost and unsure of how to move forward.

That is when I found the International Service Center (ISC), and everything began to change. From the moment I walked through their doors, I was greeted with warmth and compassion. The ISC team welcomed me like family, offering not just assistance but also hope. They guided us through the overwhelming bureaucratic process, helping us secure the documents we needed to begin building our new lives. But ISC's support did not stop there, they went above and beyond by providing food, clothing, and other essentials that eased our transition during those difficult early days.

What truly set ISC apart was the kindness and dedication of its staff. They treated me with respect and dignity, always ready to listen and lend a helping hand. Every visit to ISC reminded me that I was not alone on this journey. It was not just a place to get paperwork done, it was a community organization that cared deeply about my well-being and believed in my potential.

One of the most memorable moments of my journey happened in late September 2024, when I had the privilege of participating in the 2024 Refugee Health Fair at the Harrisburg Area Community College (HACC), organized by ISC. I was invited to serve as a model in their International Fashion Show, showcasing my culture through dance. It was an incredible honor to share the beauty of Haiti with my new community. Parading in traditional attire, dancing to Haitian rhythms, and connecting with people from Afghanistan, Bhutan, Burma, Congo, Cuba, Ethiopia, Gambia, Pakistan, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Ukraine, and Vietnam, etc.; filled me with pride and a renewed sense of belonging. For the first time since leaving Haiti, I felt fully embraced by my new community.

ISC's support extended beyond cultural events. They also helped me find my first job at Amazon, allowing me to support myself and my family while pursuing my education.

However, I soon realized that my true passion lay in the medical field. I had learned from an ISC's staff member at the Fair that the health care industry would be experiencing a critical shortage of health care professionals in the next ten years. With ISC's encouragement, I made the difficult decision to leave my job and focus full-time on my studies. Today, I am enrolled at University Jobs House, where I am training to become a medical assistant. My ultimate goal is to become a pediatric nurse, a dream I never thought possible before coming to the United States.

The journey has not been without its challenges. Adjusting to life in a new country, balancing work and education, and supporting my family have tested my resilience. But through it all, ISC has been a steady source of guidance and encouragement, helping me overcome every obstacle. Their unwavering belief in my potential has inspired me to keep pushing forward, even when the path seemed uncertain.

I am deeply grateful to ISC for the role they have played in my journey. They have not only helped me achieve my dreams but also given me the tools and confidence to give back to my community. My story is proof that with hard work, determination, and the support of a caring community like ISC, anything is possible.

As I continue my studies and work toward becoming a nurse, I carry with me the lessons of resilience and hope that ISC has taught me. One day, I hope to help others in the same way ISC helped me—to provide support, encouragement, and the belief that no dream is too big. Together, we can build a brighter future, one story at a time.

By: Laurie, a Refugee from Haiti

From Afghanistan to Carlisle: The Inspiring Journey of Mr. Nangeyali Abtahal

Mr. Nangeyali's story is one of resilience, hope, and the power of community. In August 2021, he was forced to flee Afghanistan, leaving behind his wife, two young children, and elderly parents. As a former high-ranking officer in the Afghan Special Forces, he had spent years serving his country, but the tragic Afghan government collapse left him with no choice but to start over in the United States. With courage and determination, he faced an uncertain future. Thanks to the support of the International Service Center (ISC), his journey is a powerful example of how compassion and effective resettlement programs can transform lives.

After arriving in the U.S. and going through a rigorous security vetting process at Holloman Air Force Base in New Mexico, Mr. Nangeyali was resettled in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, in late 2021 under the care of the International Service Center (ISC). All the essential support services were immediately provided to him by the ISC's Afghan team to help rebuild his life. After welcoming him at the airport on a winter night, the Afghan team immediately secured safe and stable housing for him, offering a foundation to heal from the trauma of displacement and start anew. ISC's Afghan team worked tirelessly to guide him through the complex processes of resettlement. From obtaining his Social Security Number and Employment Authorization Document (EAD) to arranging health screenings, they ensured every detail was handled with care. These

efforts empowered Mr. Nangeyali to regain control of his life and take steps toward independence.

A key milestone in his journey was finding employment, and ISC's Afghan team played an essential role in helping him achieve this goal. Through their guidance, Mr. Nangeyali was placed in a job at D.B. Schenker, a leading freight forwarding company in Carlisle. This job was more than just a source of income, it enabled him to support his family back in Afghanistan, even from thousands of miles away. His ability to provide for his loved ones is a testament to his determination and sense of responsibility, with ISC's unwavering support making it possible.

Mr. Nangeyali's background as an Afghan military officer speaks to his discipline, leadership, and resilience, qualities that have been vital in adapting to his new life. His commitment to his family and his drive to create a brighter future have been the guiding forces behind his success. While ISC provided the backbone of his resettlement, the kindness of the Carlisle community added a crucial layer of support. A particularly touching moment came when a neighbor gifted him a bicycle to help with his daily commute to work. This simple act of generosity not only eased his transportation challenge, a 20-minute bicycle ride to and from work each day, but also showed the warmth and solidarity of his new community.

From supportive coworkers to friendly neighbors, the welcoming spirit of Carlisle has helped Mr. Nangeyali feel at home. In addition to this, the ISC American volunteers in Carlisle have encouraged and facilitated his pursuit of a Commercial Driver's License (CDL) to enhance his earning potential. With the emergency support of the ISC to cover his apartment rental for three months, Mr. Nangeyali enrolled in a CDL training program an hour away from his home. In a remarkably short time, he earned his CDL license. Mr. Nangeyali soon transitioned to a new career as a Commercial Truck Driver, demonstrating his determination to build a better future.

ISC's Afghan team also played a vital role in his journey, offering comprehensive assistance with various immigration proceedings. They also assisted with employment authorization renewals, corrections to his EADs, and translating important documents into Dari, ensuring every aspect of his immigration process was seamless. Their proactive communication kept him informed about various U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) updates and asylum interview processes, empowering him to navigate the legal system with confidence. They helped him file his Family Reunification Application Form, a critical step that allowed him to bring his wife and two young children from Afghanistan to Carlisle in record time. In preparation for their future reunification, Mr. Nangeyali has been living frugally in his truck to save money for their first family home to be selected by his wife when she gets to Carlisle. After eight months of anticipation, Mr. Nangeyali's asylum application was approved, paving the way for his family's reunification.

Finally, on October 25, 2024, his wife and two young children arrived in the U.S. marking the happiest day of Mr. Nangeyali's life. Now, the family resides happily in Carlisle, embraced by the local Afghan community and their American neighbors, with Mrs. Nangeyali expecting their third baby.

Mr. Nangeyali's life is a testament to resilience and the power of community support. With his family finally reunited, Mr. Nangeyali is building a stable and fulfilling life in Carlisle. He holds a steady job, lives in a safe home, and has become an active and

valued member of his community. Mr. Nangeyali credits his success to ISC's comprehensive resettlement services, the Ethiopian Community Development Council (ECDC), and specially the Carlisle community. He is deeply grateful for the compassion and support he received and is determined to continue providing for his family, advancing in his career, and giving back to the community that warmly welcomed him.

By: The ISC's Afghan Team.

Tetiana's Journey: From Uncertainty to a Brighter Future

When Mrs. Tetiana arrived in the United States in September 2023 as an asylee from her war-torn country, she carried with her a heart full of hope and a lifetime of experience. Back in Ukraine, she had spent 31 years as a dedicated nurse and 20 years as a skilled, self-employed apartment renovator. But here, in a new country, her qualifications seemed invisible, her skills were lost in translation. Six months later, the harsh reality of finding work as a Ukrainian asylee began to weigh heavily on her.

Mrs. Tetiana's turning point came in March 2024, when she learned about the International Service Center (ISC) and their Practical Approaches to Self-Sufficiency (PASS) project. She heard that this government-supported project was designed to help unemployed Afghan and Ukrainian refugee women in becoming self-sufficient through gainful employment. Feeling uncertain but determined, she reached out and connected with Diana, the ISC's Ukrainian Job Developer. From the very first conversation, Diana listened intently to Mrs. Tetiana's story, offering not just guidance but also hope. Diana saw beyond the surface challenges and recognized the immense value of Mrs. Tetiana's experience. Together, they reframed her skills: her years as a nurse became proof of her compassion, ability to work under pressure, and problem-solving expertise, while her work as a renovator demonstrated project management and adaptability.

Mrs. Tetiana expressed a desire to become a forklift driver like her husband, and Diana immediately sprang into action. She applied for five positions on Mrs. Tetiana's behalf, even securing a screening call with DHL Supply Chain in Mechanicsburg. But despite their efforts, no interviews followed. Instead of being discouraged, Diana encouraged Mrs. Tetiana to focus on improving her English and interview skills by attending the ISC's Vocational English Language Training (VELT) classes. These classes not only enhanced Mrs. Tetiana's communication abilities but also gave her the confidence to pursue better opportunities and envision a brighter future.

While Mrs. Tetiana worked hard in her VELT classes, Diana continued her search. She discovered a company near Mrs. Tetiana's home and reached out to both the company and their third-party staffing agency. With Diana's support, Mrs. Tetiana applied for an electric assembler position. A month later, the breakthrough finally came: Mrs. Tetiana was invited to an interview!

Diana did not just stop there. To ensure Mrs. Tetiana's success, she accompanied her to the interview, providing moral support and ensuring clear communication. When Mrs. Tetiana was offered the position, Diana helped her navigate the new hire paperwork, making the transition seamless.

After months of struggle, Mrs. Tetiana finally secured a full-time job earning \$19.25 an hour at Phoenix Contact in Middletown. It was not just a job, it was a new beginning, a

foothold in her journey toward self-sufficiency and integration into her new community. For Mrs. Tetiana, this opportunity represented more than an income; it was the realization of a dream, a step toward stability for herself and her family.

Mrs. Tetiana remains deeply grateful to the ISC and its PASS project. She acknowledges that without their unwavering support, she would not have found such a great job, especially with her limited English skills. ISC did not just help Mrs. Tetiana find employment, they helped her rebuild her confidence, reclaim her dignity, and take the first steps toward a brighter future.

The American promise, delayed but never broken, had finally begun to take root in Mrs. Tetiana's life. Her story is a testament to her resilience and the life-changing impact of ISC's dedication to helping refugees and migrants achieve self-sufficiency and community integration.

By: The ISC's Ukrainian Team

A Journey of Resilience and Hope: The ISC's Commitment to Supporting a Family's New Beginning

When Mrs. Yulia, her husband and their three-year old daughter arrived in the United States, they carried little more than hope and the courage to start anew. Their journey as Ukrainian asylees seeking safety and stability was fraught with uncertainty, but their lives took a significant turn for the better through the dedicated efforts of the International Service Center (ISC) Ukrainian team, volunteers, and the wider community.

It began with a warm welcome. The ISC Case Manager personally met Mrs. Yulia, her husband and their young child, at the airport, ensuring their first moments in the new country were met with care and reassurance. Recognizing their immediate needs, the ISC's Ukrainian team quickly arranged temporary housing, helping them settle into a safe space where they could begin to rebuild their lives.

The ISC's work did not stop there. The Ukrainian staff helped Mrs. Yulia navigate the complexities of the government system such as applying for public benefits, securing work authorization, and registering with the local food bank to ensure access to essentials. They introduced her to community centers and local churches, creating a support network that would become an anchor during their transition.

As the family settled in, ISC coordinated donations from generous community volunteers to furnish their new permanent home, providing essential items to create a welcoming environment. Thanks to ISC's collaboration with Hope Within Ministries, Mrs. Yulia's child, Weronika, received critical medical tests and treatment entirely free of charge.

Mrs. Yulia's path to independence was further strengthened through ISC's special employment program for refugees. The ISC's Ukrainian team provided job search assistance, interview coaching, and workplace orientation. Additionally, customized English lessons tailored to help Mrs. Yulia prepare for employment in her field of expertise.

Mrs. Yulia brought with her a strong professional background, holding a bachelor's degree in apparel technology and design from Kiev Technology and Design College and over seven years of experience in the field. ISC's Ukrainian team leveraged this expertise to help Mrs. Yulia secure a job at WS Display, a manufacturing company, where she started with a competitive salary of \$19.00 per hour. This opportunity not only aligned with her qualifications but also provided a stable foundation for her family's future.

Recognizing the importance of childcare, ISC's Ukrainian team helped Mrs. Yulia secure a temporary Ukrainian elderly babysitter for a month through carefully allocated funds, giving her time to enroll her child in affordable daycare. ISC's community partners-in-mission stepped in to teach Mrs. Yulia how to drive, empowering her to gain mobility and independence. These committed volunteers worked closely with Mrs. Yulia to teach her essential driving skills. Through personal coaching, the volunteers helped her practice maneuvering, road safety, and traffic regulations, effectively preparing her for the driver's test. This support was instrumental in empowering Mrs. Yulia to achieve this important milestone. After passing her driver's test, she was better equipped to manage her family's needs. She began saving money toward the purchase of a used car to address their transportation needs.

ISC's holistic approach extended beyond employment. Ukrainian staff also provided needed cultural orientation, legal guidance, and translation services, ensuring Mrs. Yulia felt confident navigating her new environment.

This story highlights the extraordinary collaboration between ISC staff, volunteers, and community organizations. Their collective efforts helped Mrs. Yulia, her husband and their young daughter not only adjust to life in the United States but thrive as valued members of society. Their resilience, combined with ISC's unwavering support, exemplifies the power of community in transforming lives.

Today, Mrs. Yulia is a contributing member of her new community, supporting its economy and enriching its diverse culture. Her journey is a testament to what is possible when compassion and coordinated effort come together to uplift those in need.

By: The ISC's Ukrainian Team

Practical Approaches to Self Sufficiency (PASS) ISC's Vocational English Language Teaching (VELT)

In my Vocational English Language Training (VELT) project, I had the opportunity to work with five Afghan refugee women, all of them residing in Carlisle. One of these students was Nazifa, who faced challenges due to her limited education in her native language and lack of knowledge in English. Nazifa was actively seeking a job, which motivated her to learn.

Over the course of three weeks, I focused on teaching her essential skills related to her job responsibilities, including the rules and regulations she needed to understand as she began her employment. I also introduced her to foundational English language concepts, starting with the alphabet and progressing to more complex topics.

Throughout the project, I guided her in several areas:

1. Self-Introduction: I taught her how to introduce herself effectively.
2. Personal Story Writing: Nazifa learned to write a story about herself, which helped improve her writing skills.
3. Grammar Lessons: We covered important grammar topics, such as parts of speech and tenses.
4. Vocabulary Development: I provided her with vocabulary relevant to her job and everyday communication.

I am thrilled to share that, after completing my classes, Nazifa secured a job at Dickinson College as a food service worker. By the end of the project, she was better equipped with the English language skills necessary for her professional journey, enabling her to pursue her job opportunities with greater confidence. Additionally, she had learned how to communicate with her colleagues and acquired vocational skills that are essential in her workplace.

My second student was Noorya, whom I taught how to navigate job interviews and understand her job responsibilities, including the rules and regulations associated with her role. Like Nazifa, she started with little English knowledge but was eager to learn. I provided her with lessons on parts of speech and tenses, teaching her how to construct sentences in different tenses. This foundation allowed her to write on various topics and develop vocational vocabulary relevant to her job.

Noorya also became a member of Dickinson College as a food service worker. What stands out about her is her ambition to pursue a fulfilling career and achieve self-satisfaction. After completing my classes, she recognized the importance of furthering her English skills. She enrolled in the Employment Skills Center, passed their exam, and began an intermediate-level English class. Her dedication to obtaining a better education and enhancing her career prospects is truly inspiring.

Next, I worked with Lida for two weeks. Lida was preparing to become a caregiver for her daughter. I began by educating her on the role of a caregiver and the various types of support and assistance she would need to provide. We covered several important topics, including:

1. Effective Communication: I taught her how to communicate effectively with the person she cares for, ensuring that she could understand their needs and concerns.
2. Understanding Medical Conditions: Lida learned how to stay informed about her daughter's medical condition, which is crucial for providing proper care.
3. Certification Process: I explained the process of becoming a certified caregiver and the qualifications required for this role.
4. Interview Preparation: We reviewed common interview questions for caregiver positions and strategies for successfully answering them.

Additionally, I assisted Lida in preparing for her driving permit test, teaching her the lessons and helping her to understand the rules of the road and the requirements for passing the exam. I am pleased to report that she successfully obtained her driving permit.

Lida's commitment to learning and providing the best care for her daughter was evident throughout our sessions. By the end of our time together, she felt more confident in her

abilities and better prepared for her new role as a caregiver, as well as for driving independently.

I then taught Sadaf for two weeks, with one hour of instruction each day. Sadaf was also preparing for a caregiver position and wanted to become a certified caregiver. I guided her through the certification process step by step and helped her develop effective strategies for answering interview questions.

Together, we focused on:

1. Understanding Roles and Responsibilities: Sadaf learned about her duties as a caregiver and the importance of her role.
2. Report Writing: I assisted her in learning how to create reports of her work, which is essential in the caregiving field.
3. Vocational Vocabulary: She improved her vocabulary, focusing on terms relevant to her job.
4. Effective Communication: We discussed how to build trust with her patients and the importance of respecting boundaries.

Sadaf began her job as a caregiver for her mother, and her dedication to learning and improving her skills was evident throughout our sessions. By the end of our time together, she felt well-prepared to take on her new responsibilities with confidence and compassion.

Finally, I taught my last student, Muska Sarwar, for six weeks. Muska was preparing for an interview to become a daycare teacher. I started with lessons on the rules, regulations, responsibilities, and rights of a daycare teacher, while also preparing her for interviews. I noticed that she had a limited understanding of English, which is crucial for effective communication with both children and their parents in this role.

To address this, I taught her foundational English skills, including:

1. Communication Skills: I emphasized the importance of effective communication and how to build rapport with children and their families.
2. Sentence Construction: I guided her on how to construct sentences and improve her reading and listening skills.
3. Vocabulary Development: We focused on learning vocabulary relevant to her role as a daycare teacher.
4. Self-Introduction: I taught her how to introduce herself effectively.
5. Story Writing: Muska learned to write a story about herself, which helped improve her writing skills.
6. Grammar Lessons: We covered important grammar topics, such as parts of speech and tense.

By the end of our sessions, Muska was not only prepared for her interview but also ready to continue her education. She successfully passed the HACC College test and interview, and she will be starting her new career as a dentist. I am continuing to help her as a volunteer to pursue her dreams, including assisting her in obtaining her driving permit.

Conclusion: All my students received vocational training and are now able to read, write, and communicate effectively. They have successfully started their jobs, passed their

interviews, and learned how to fulfill their responsibilities in a competent manner. Additionally, I ensured that they obtained their driving permits, which will help them become fully self-sufficient. It has been incredibly rewarding to witness their growth and determination as they pursue their career aspirations.

By: Bibi Pakray, ISC's VELT Teacher

Dear Dr. Phuong,

As we celebrate this season of joy and hope, I want to take a moment to thank you for being a vital part of the work the Lord has entrusted me with in serving the Haitian community. You have been more than a supporter—you are one of what I like to call my destiny helpers, divinely positioned to uplift and advance the mission God has placed in my heart.

Your prayers, encouragement, and contributions have been instrumental in every victory we've experienced, from overcoming challenges to witnessing lives transformed. I see God's hand in your partnership, and I am deeply grateful for the role you play in this journey of faith.

May this Christmas season fill your heart with peace, love, and the assurance of His faithfulness. As we step into the new year, I pray that the Lord multiplies His blessings upon you and your family and that He grants you abundant favor in every area of your life.

Thank you for being such a tremendous blessing to me and to the vision God has given us. Together, we will continue to advance His kingdom.

Merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year!

With heartfelt gratitude,

By: Pastor Roussel Costumé, First Haitian Christian Assembly in Enola

Dear Most Respected Volunteers,

As Christmas approaches, we have been reflecting on how much you have done for our family and how blessed we are to have you in our lives. We wanted to take this opportunity to express our heartfelt gratitude and wish you all a very Merry Christmas.

When we first arrived in Mechanicsburg, life was full of challenges, and we often felt overwhelmed. But your kindness, support, and dedication brought light into our lives and helped us overcome those difficult times. You have truly been a gift from God to our family.

We believe that God works through people like you—His heroes and angels on earth. Your willingness to help those in need shows your deep faith and love. You are a reflection of God's goodness, and your actions remind us of the true meaning of Christmas: love, compassion, and selflessness.

On behalf of our entire family, we wish you a Merry Christmas filled with joy, peace, and blessings. May God grant you long, happy, and fulfilling lives both in this world and in

the eternal life to come. Please know that you hold a special place in our hearts, and we pray for each of you daily.

Thank you for being such an important part of our journey.

With love and prayers,

By: The Salim Family, recently Dear Most Respected Volunteers,

May the New Year 2025 bring you and all your loved ones Peace, Good Health, and Endless Happiness.

Respectfully submitted,

Phuong N Truong, Executive Director