



Our Opportunity to Help a Refugee

Our Tikkun Olam Team is excited about a new opportunity to help a refugee who has come to Rochester. Patrice is from Chad, a country in central Africa. Patrice applied for asylum in the US because he fears for his life if he is to return to Chad; returning is simply not an option for him. Patrice was studying in San Antonio, Texas when he was detained by immigration officials. He was transported to Batavia, and has spent the last two years at Buffalo Federal Detention Center waiting for his asylum case to play out. Patrice was granted bond in December 2020, and was released from the detention center in late March.

One of our members, Ian Layton, met Patrice through an organization in Buffalo called Justice for Migrant Families (JFMF), which is a non-profit organization dedicated to supporting the immigrant community. JFMF runs a variety of programs, including a visitation program that connects volunteers to detained immigrants. Volunteers visit the detention center, talk to detainees, get information, and help JFMF find ways to support detainees in their hopes for freedom and a better life. JFMF reached out to our congregant, Ian Layton, to see if he could help Patrice.

Our government does not provide asylum seekers with assistance, and applicants must wait a certain number of days after they initially file their application to be granted a work permit. For that reason, Patrice is unable to work, and will have to wait months before he is allowed to seek out employment. Ian has agreed to coordinate Patrice's support, and is forming a small team of Tikkun Olam members to arrange for ongoing support while his asylum case plays out.

Patrice needs financial support for his food, cell phone bill, and other basic necessities; we estimate he needs a minimum of \$300 dollars a month. In the case of a medical emergency, financial support is also crucial because he is unable to obtain health insurance. Patrice also needs ongoing housing support. Patrice has been living with Ian for the past couple of weeks, and will live with Ian for two more weeks before he stays with another congregant for a short period of time. Our Tikkun Olam Team will continue to locate places for Patrice to stay until he has his own space.

So how can we as a congregation support Patrice? The best way is to pledge a monthly donation to his fund. Please make out your checks to "TEE Rabbi Discretionary Fund," and arrange to donate every month. We will provide updates about Patrice as he starts his next chapter in Rochester. It is in times like these when our most vulnerable are often left behind. Together, we can support Patrice and help him pursue his goal of living in safety and security.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Carl, Chair of our Tikkun Olam Team (carlwetzstein38@gmail.com, 585-266-6982) or Ian (ianlayton1992@gmail.com, 206-960-2836).

[More about Patrice: Patrice is 28 years old. He grew up in Chad, and spent time in Ethiopia as well. He speaks French and English, as well as other regional languages such as Arabic and his native ethnic language. Patrice comes from a family of health care workers - his father was a doctor. Patrice was in the military for a period of time. Before he came to Rochester, Patrice was living in San Antonio, Texas, going to school in the early stages of studying to eventually attend medical school. He loves reading about philosophy and politics. Patrice ultimately hopes to continue his studies, as well as improve his English.]