

LONDON LIFTS TOGETHER LONDON LIFTS TOGETHER

Afghan Refugee Committee

Dear Fellow Londoner,

Most people will remember the scenes of chaos, panic and fear at the Airport in Kabul, Afghanistan in August 2021 amidst the pullout of American military forces from that country.

A small group at First-St. Andrew's (FSA) United Church were approached shortly thereafter by a London family who came to Canada from Afghanistan 20 years ago. Here is part of the letter that we received from the mother:

"After the Taliban gained control people have had a very difficult life. Schools are closed and students are left at home without any chance of education. Government offices do not exist, most markets are closed; those that are open have almost empty shelves. People have to dress according to the dress code of the Taliban. Women and children seldom leave their homes for fear. At night these terrorists enter the homes of people.

The Taliban are enemies of people who worked with foreign governments and institutions. Members of my family worked with various Canadian offices. Life is difficult for them and their lives are in constant danger. Over the past 40 years, where there has been constant war, I have lost 16 members of my family. I still have family members there. I am suffering from depression and anxiety and require medication to cope. I do not want to lose any more of my family."

The Afghan Refugee Committee from FSA is spearheading a London wide project to bring 7 family members to Canada. We want this to be considered a London project, where people from all faiths and beliefs will be supportive.

We need to raise \$100,000, the amount necessary to support the family for one year. Our initial fund raiser, a Weight Lifting Marathon (please see the poster), will occur on Saturday September 3rd from 9am to 5pm. Donation information is on the poster, and tax receipts will be provided.

If there are other ways in which you or your organization can support the project, please reach out to us.

Thank you for your support.

Important update 28 July 2022

We have just received following information from members of the family

I am writing about the problems we face here in Pakistan. We came to Pakistan with a visa and our visa has expired. When we asked to extend the visa, they said that it will not be extended and our visa will get rejected from the relevant ministry. The only the way to extend our visa is to go to the border and get a stamp on our passport for exit and re-entry and if we do so, it is extremely dangerous for us, and so currently we are living here secretly without a valid visa. We have registered with the United Nations, but the process of the United Nations takes a long and uncertain time, and currently the immigration card for asylum seekers in Pakistan is closed. Excruciating heat problems which is weather above 45 degrees, the price of renting a house is very high, drinking water must be bought which is even more money, electricity and gas are very expensive, most of the time we do not have water even in this humidity, the house that we live in has water fall from the roof in our rooms when it's raining. The price of everything has increased immensely. Living here get hard day by day.

One of our family members is still in Afghanistan and has been unable to get a visa since the option to do so has closed down. He's scared and hesitant to cross the border into Pakistan because of the repercussions if he were to get caught as he says he's weak and too fragile for the consequences if they were to find out (physical beatings).

Time is of the essence. Please support this family.

Thank you once again.



*Afghan Refugee Committee
First-St. Andrew's United Church
London Lifts Together*

***** In the event that the required funds cannot be raised or the refugee family does not end up coming to Canada under the sponsorship of FSA, any funds raised will be donated in support of a refugee sponsorship or sponsorships being pursued by another church in the London area or a non-profit organization in the London area, and/or donated to the United Church Mission & Service Fund in support of a project or program that supports refugees. If it becomes necessary to disburse funds due to incompleteness of the sponsorship project, the detailed disbursement of funds will be brought to the FSA Council for approval. *****

IMPORTANT UPDATE