

Mission **MOMENT**

IMAGINING FUTURES AT INFO PARK

Imagine a 12-year-old girl or boy whom you might know. Maybe this is a neighborhood child, or perhaps one of your own children or grandchildren. In your mind, what is this child doing on a normal day? Going to school? Eating lunch with friends? Arguing with a sibling about what tablet game they will play after school?

Today I would like to introduce you to another 12-year-old girl. Her life is a little different than the one you might have just imagined for the student you know.

We're going to call her Z, which is the first letter of her name. She was born in Iran, but her family had fled from Afghanistan and was never fully accepted into Iranian society. So, like millions of other refugee and immigrant families, Z's family began the long journey towards a better life. They came through Serbia, hoping to eventually get to Germany.

As they had been for many weeks, Z's days were filled with walking. One day, Z and her family were walking through a park, looking and feeling out of place and afraid, when staff members from an organization called Info Park noticed them. The aid workers offered them

hope in the form of a safe space to rest and a bowl of warm noodles, which Z described as "the sweetest food she has tasted in years."

"O taste and see that the Lord is good; happy are those who take refuge in God," the Psalmist sings (Psalm 34:8) By your gifts to Week of Compassion, Info Park is able to assist refugees to find a place of respite and a bite to eat when they are hungry.

They also help young girls like Z inch closer and closer to the goals that seemed impossible as they navigated borders, checkpoints, and life as exiles. Your gifts provide for learning centers where girls and boys can escape the life of refugee camps and experience the normalcy that children in many parts of the world take for granted.

Assisted by your generosity, Z embarked on a path towards education that she and her mother had dreamed of. Her days became filled with learning--first at Info Park, then at a German school in Hamburg.

Just one month after enrolling in school, she won the Hamburg regional competition for best writing skills among newcomers to Germany. Two years earlier, she didn't know a word of the language, but now Z is excelling in school and dreaming for a future that is more than we can imagine.



[photo credit: CWS]

**Since July 2016, nearly 170 women and girls have attended German classes at Info Park with support from Week of Compassion partner, Church World Service. Teachers from Germany, Austria and Switzerland inspire students to gain confidence, knowing that if they work hard they will have more opportunities.*