

Action Update- June 16

Saturday, June 20, is World Refugee Day. Week of Compassion celebrates the contributions of resettled refugees to our local communities, and lifts up the work of our global partners who continue to meet the needs of those who await resettlement, or a safe return home. For more information about how you and your congregation can support refugees, visit the Disciples Refugee and Immigration Ministries website and download the toolkit.

A Sign of Hope



A colorful kite flies against a clear blue sky, its long tail dancing behind it. It's an unlikely sign of hope in an unlikely place.

Imagine that you and your family have had to leave your home because of a violent conflict. You are living in a tent among other refugees. You have found work and community, but life is still difficult.

Then imagine that a global pandemic brings even more challenges and more restrictions into your life--not to mention the threat of illness.

This is the reality for Syrian refugees living in north Jordan. The Orthodox Initiative, a Week of Compassion partner through Global Ministries, considers this group of about 60 families, currently working as farmers, to be especially vulnerable. They live outside of the more settled, organized camp that houses many refugees, so they do not receive as many services. For several years, our partners have been working to meet the needs of this group. Until recently, The Orthodox Initiative regularly provided food, clean water, women's health services, and--for children--school supplies and even soccer balls.

But with the COVID-19 pandemic, severe restrictions mean that people can only be out during daylight hours. Travel by car is prohibited, so people can only get around on foot or bicycle. Before the shutdown went into effect, our partners were able to distribute emergency food packages to these families, hoping that it would help them through the difficult days ahead. The limitations of quarantine made it impossible for our partners to continue their services beyond that; and even more difficult for people to access the things that they needed.

After weeks of not being able to travel to the area or have contact, the Orthodox Initiative staff, through a grant from Week of Compassion, were recently able to distribute an additional 200 food parcels. As part of psychosocial interventions, they also delivered packages of items for children. Parents did the best they could to entertain children during confinement, resurrecting a tradition from their childhood

and teaching them to make kites. But education, entertainment, and even outdoor space to play was limited.

Can you imagine what a gift it would be if someone delivered necessities, and even surprises for your children, after so many weeks of isolation?

And can you further imagine that those who were working to serve you were members of a different faith than your own?

Peter Makari, Global Ministries Area Executive for Europe and the Middle East says, "The response initially came out of a Christian commitment to support the needs of the most vulnerable, and in this case the most vulnerable are not Christian; they are Muslim families. The Orthodox Initiative respects their faith and has even provided Iftar meals during Ramadan. This shows a true Christian commitment in a context challenged not only by large populations of refugees, but also the reality of COVID-19."

The kites that fill the sky now were handmade by refugee families during this difficult season. They flew in the wind above this temporary place of home during the time when Christians observed Pentecost and Muslims celebrated Eid al-Fitr, marking the end of the month-long dawn-to-sunset fasting of Ramadan. Thanks to your support through Week of Compassion, those colorful kites truly mark a spirit of hope, as our partners continue to serve and empower those in need.



-  Texas, COVID-19 Relief
-  Georgia, COVID-19 Relief
-  Tennessee, COVID-19 Relief
-  Missouri, COVID-19 Relief
-  Oregon, COVID-19 Relief
-  Jordan, COVID-19 Refugee Support
-  Oklahoma, COVID-19 Relief
-  Arizona, COVID-19 Relief
-  Istanbul, COVID-19 Refugee Support
-  Indiana, COVID-19 Relief
-  Florida, COVID-19 Relief
-  Syria, COVID-19 Refugee Support
-  Virginia, COVID-19 Relief
-  California, COVID-19 Relief
-  Lebanon, COVID-19 Refugee Support

-  Palestine, Women's Empowerment
-  Zimbabwe, Food Security
-  South Sudan, Covid-19 Relief
-  Honduras, Women's Empowerment
-  Ghana, Women's Empowerment
-  Philippines, Women's Empowerment
-  Sierra Leone, COVID-19 Relief
-  North Carolina, Long-Term Hurricane Recovery
-  Arizona, Emergency Relief
-  Liberia, COVID-19 Relief
-  Illinois, COVID-19 Relief
-  Idaho, COVID-19 Relief
-  West Bank, COVID-19 Refugee Support
-  Democratic Republic of the Congo, COVID-19 Relief

For an interactive map of all 2020 responses, [visit our website](#).

Week of Compassion is the relief, refugee and development mission fund of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada.

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