



OUTREACH NEWSLETTER

FALL 2016

Zully Alborno, Case Manager

ABANDONED IN A NEW COUNTRY

A Mother Finds Hope through York Community Resource Center

In October 2014, Farah, her husband and their three daughters moved from Saudi Arabia to the United States of America, with hopes of starting a small business. After only ten days, Farah's husband headed back to Saudi Arabia, saying he needed to close up the family business and would come back with more money. He never returned.

Farah was left with three young daughters in an overcrowded apartment with no money. "Whatever I had, he took from me," Farah said. As hard as she tried, Farah's husband refused to send money, leaving Farah in poverty with a visa that would soon expire. In an unknown place, with three daughters, no money and no car, Farah didn't know where to turn.

Luckily, the principal at her daughters' elementary school connected Farah with York Community Resource Center. There that she met case manager Zully Alborno.

York Community Resource Center is Outreach's newest site and Farah was one of Zully's first clients. As a case manager, Zully helps residents in the Lombard and Villa Park area who are experiencing a personal crisis. "I help people get through difficult, temporary situations. I always

stress that they're temporary," Zully said. "This includes financial assistance, immigration issues, child abuse, and other basic needs. Whatever it is, I'm there to help find resources."

She did just that with Farah. "Alone with no support," as Farah told Zully on that first meeting, Farah was in need of financial help, medical services for her children and, most importantly, a solution to her situation of a soon-to-expire visa. Because of religious disagreements, it was not safe for Farah to go back to her family in Pakistan. Because her husband refused to help Farah financially or bring her back home, her Saudi Arabian identification had expired and she was unable to reenter the country. Zully helped Farah contact a lawyer, apply for asylum and write her story. Her application was accepted. "She is grateful," Zully said. "Asylum is a long process, and there were times when she thought she couldn't do it. But she did, and I admire her patience."

Slowly, with the help of case management, Farah is getting back on her feet. Along with financial assistance, York has provided many services for Farah's family. When Farah realized one of her daughters was struggling with depression, York

connected the family to an Outreach Community Counseling site. Farah's daughters attend York's after-school program, which gives Farah peace of mind, as she knows her daughters will be somewhere safe and enriching while she's at work. "This is a very big thing that they are doing for me and for my kids, especially for their education," Farah said.

A registered nurse with 14 years experience, Farah is now looking for a health care job. "If I need to take extra classes, I'm willing to do that. Even working in a nursing home, or as an assistant nurse, I will do that," Farah said.

With the help she has received from York—financial, educational and emotional—Farah is up for the challenge. "At York, they are very good people. They are working for each and every person," Farah said. "They helped me stand on me feet so that I can survive with my daughters and I can provide them with a good future," she says. "My whole life, I just bent my head in front of [my husband]. Now this is my time. I am a mother of three daughters. I thank God that I have all these people, and they make me strong. I am ready."

FALL YOUTH PROGRAMS BY THE NUMBERS

Outreach Community Center in Carol Stream

Jubilee Neighborhood School (elementary)

- **Number enrolled:** 55
- **Tutoring time:** 57 hours/week (59 volunteer tutors)
- **Electives:** 5 clubs meet for 45 minutes/week each Friday

Big Buddy Mentoring

- **Number matched:** 29 (10 on wait list)
- **Time spent together:** 5 hours/month

Superb Student Program (middle school)

- **Number enrolled:** 23
- **Weekly breakout:** 1.5 hours tutoring, 5 hours academic enrichment, 2 hours social-emotional learning

SALT (high school)

- **Number enrolled:** 25
- **Tutoring:** 10 volunteer tutors = 1 hour/week/student

College Opportunity Program (college)

- **Number enrolled:** 21
- **College graduates:** 21

Warrenville Youth & Family Services

Quest (middle school and high school)

- **Number enrolled:** 31
- **Weekly breakout:** 4 hours academic enrichment, 3 hours life skills, 3 hours tutoring/mentoring, 1 hour service learning, 6 hours recreation
- **Friday Fun:** Fridays are optional and break format, providing students fun outings and time with community partners such as the Warrenville Fire Protection District (see page 3).



York Community Resource Center (Lombard)

Elementary

- **Number enrolled:** 21
- **Weekly breakout:** 7.5 hours academic enrichment, 2 hours art

Puente del Pueblo (West Chicago)

Puente del Niño (2nd–5th graders)

- **Number enrolled:** 28
- **Weekly breakout:** 12 hours academic enrichment, 1 hour Christian Education, 3 hours recreation

Puente del Futuro (middle school)

- **Number enrolled:** 40
- **Weekly breakout:** 7.5 hours academic enrichment, 1 hour serving learning, 4 hours life skills, 5 hours recreation

Puente del Futuro (high school)

- **Number enrolled:** 30 (3 on wait list)
- **Hours:** Open 15 hours/week, including 1 hr college prep class each week plus tutoring sessions

REMEMBERING PHIL

Phil Woods, long-time Chief Financial Officer for Outreach Community Ministries, passed away on Thursday, September 15, 2016 after battling cancer. While his death was sudden, his passing was peaceful. He had recently shared with co-workers and friends his confidence in God's plan for his life. Phil embodied the servant leadership model, working quietly behind the scenes on jobs big and small. He will be deeply missed.

At the all staff meeting just days before Phil passed, CEO Chris Ellerman invited the team to rally around Phil in prayer. Chris shared, "Phil is a good man, a Godly man and a person with a servant's heart, always on the lookout for how God would have him serve within the kingdom."

May Phil rest in peace in the arms of the Lord.





CLIMBING THE LADDERS

It's more than a certificate: it's a rare opportunity for one young woman from Warrenville.

This September, Nathalie Marquez received a certificate of completion, marking the end of a six-week journey through the Basic Operations Firefighter Recruit Academy. After grueling 200-plus hours of physical fitness, equipment safety training, live fire experiences and classroom time, Nathalie is one of ten to graduate this month from the academy, the first offered to recruits from both the Naperville Fire Department and the Warrenville Fire Protection District (WFPD).

"We are incredibly proud of the hard work Nathalie Marquez and her fellow Warrenville recruits put into the rigorous fire academy training," said WFPD Fire Chief Dennis Rogers. "This is their first step towards becoming a fully certified firefighter, and the future of our department."

While many of her fellow graduates had long dreamed of someday becoming a firefighter, this was a new and exciting goal for Nathalie—one made possible by a partnership between the WFPD and Warrenville Youth & Services (WYFS).

"Earlier this year, Chief Rogers came to us with an exciting opportunity," says Angela Mains, WYFS director. "His team was work-

ing to recruit potential firefighters for the upcoming academy and wanted to offer a spot to one of the former students from our Quest after-school program. When he asked if we had anyone we thought would be a great fit, we immediately thought of Nathalie."

Sponsoring a Quest student through the fire academy is the natural next step to a burgeoning relationship between WYFS and WFPD. Just over two years ago, the two organizations began collaborating together through the Hot Shots program.

"The goals of Hot Shots are to engage students in civic life, engender a trust between students and our civic leaders and to develop leadership skills in our students," says Angela.

"To accomplish those shared goals, we bring the Quest students to our Warrenville fire house one Friday each month," continues Chief Rogers. "The students participate in service projects, have received basic fire and safety training, and have fun with our staff. It's a win-win."

Nathalie's younger brother is currently part of Quest and the Hot Shot program, and

that connection encouraged Nathalie to answer the call when Quest staff reached out to her about the fire academy opportunity.

"I am really interested in the sciences and had wanted to go to College of DuPage or another college but wasn't sure how I could make that work when [Leslee Cremer], my former teacher, messaged me about the academy," says Nathalie. "She explained that it was a really good opportunity, and I just went for it. I definitely want to do this now."

While Nathalie says the academy wasn't easy—"there were good days, there were really rough days, there were bad days, there were hot days"—it's inspired her to take the next steps to becoming a paramedic and fully certified firefighter. "I definitely want to do this now."

This opportunity wouldn't have been possible without a special scholarship for Nathalie through WFPD and WYFS to underwrite the costs for the academy. With her successful graduation, the two organizations are now considering how they can partner together to support more future recruits like Nathalie.

AN UNEXPECTED MINISTRY

Stuart and Robyn Hackett and their two sons recently returned to the U.S. after spending five years in Cameroon, a country in West Africa. Little did they know, those five years overseas would perfectly prepare them for an unexpected new position: becoming house parents at Jubilee Village.

Through Wycliffe Bible Translators, Robyn and Stuart worked respectively as a linguist and exegetical advisor, helping one of the people groups in northwest Cameroon translate the New Testament into their native language. Now Robyn and Stuart are taking on a new ministry project, serving as volunteer house parents at Jubilee Village. "It was a really good time in our life to do something like this," Robyn said.

The move back to the United States after spending years in Africa wasn't the easiest transition. The couple faced the challenge of readapting to the United States' individualistic culture after living in a Cameroonian community, and they had concerns as to whether some of the initiatives they had advocated for during their time in Cameroon would prove to be sustainable after they left.

However, when an Outreach employee who attends the Hacketts' church told them about the house parent opening at Jubilee Village, the couple felt that they had found a unique and compelling opportunity. "When we were first given the position description, we were kind of surprised to look back at our time overseas and see a fairly high degree of continuity between what we were doing over there and what we might be doing here," Stuart said.

Though their work in Cameroon was focused on Bible translation, Stuart and Robyn to put time and effort into advocating for the large population of single mothers in Cameroon and sponsoring initiatives to spur their development. "Though we didn't anticipate having a ministry to single moms over there, we did," Stuart said. "And we saw a lot of values and policies in place here, at Outreach and Jubilee Village, that seemed to be in line with the passions and concerns that we had coming back from



overseas ministry."

For both Stuart and Robyn, beginning as house parents at Jubilee Village felt like a near-seamless transition. "We interfaced a lot with single moms in Cameroon, and we experienced a lot of the benefits and drawbacks of communal living. We didn't feel overwhelmed at the prospect of doing that here. When we were presented with this opportunity to live in a community again, we felt pretty excited about it," Robyn said.

Though faced with challenges in this new position, Stuart and Robyn's excitement has continued as they begin to gain a greater understanding of what their role entails. "One main role is to watch over the girls and make sure that they're completing various parts of the program. So there's that aspect of being the authority on the floor. But then there's the more nurturing part of it. We want to help them develop—and just be someone that they can turn to. They just need help—practical help—and encouragement," Robyn said.

With this in mind—and with the experience they're obtaining each day—Robyn and Stuart are coming to a deeper

understanding of why Jubilee Village is such an important place for these young women. "The women who live here have been thrust into needing to be independent pretty quickly. If they didn't have any boundaries or guidelines—or anyone to help them deal with the hardships that they were going through, or to help them process consequences—they might just give up," Robyn said. "Jubilee Village is not just a place to live. It's an environment where women can learn how to make good life choices, and they need people to help them do that."

One of the biggest ways that Stuart and Robyn feel they can help the residents is through the example of their own family life. "There are lots of opportunities to model healthy relationships, effective conflict resolution, communication and good parenting," Stuart said.

Robyn, who struggled with a difficult home life growing up, understands firsthand the importance of modeling healthy family dynamics and relationships. "Things can be theoretically possible in our minds, but we've never seen them happen in real life. We really think the girls need to be exposed to what's possible," Robyn said.

At Puente, Students Come Full Circle

Eight years ago, when Puente del Pueblo began their after-school program, Barbie and Brisa were 2nd and 3rd graders, struggling at school and trying to learn English as a second language. Today they're in High School, with good grades in AP and Honors classes, considering colleges and imaging careers. This summer they came full circle, working as interns in the same program that started it all—Puente del Nino.

Over the hot summer months, Brisa and Barbie helped facilitate academic and recreational components of Puente's elementary summer program. Every piece of it has been a trip down memory lane as they experienced many of these same events in their first years at Puente.

Their role as interns allowed the young ladies to look forwards and backward. Working in the program solidified their desire to go to college and pursue a career teaching children, or running a business that works with kids.

At the same time, it allowed them to reflect on how far Puente has taken them, and what a difference it has made. Barbie shared, "Puente helped me learn, helped me with homework and English, gave me a vision for the future and taught me to be a good student."



Brisa is grateful that Puente has grown up with her, expanding to middle school, then high school and now facilitating college visits. She feels like the extra attention has helped her grow into a stronger person. She loves seeing how the program that started with seven kids—including her—is reaching more than one hundred students today. And she's on the giving end of that, now.

As they always have, Stuart and Robyn incorporate their Christian faith into their family life. "We have this opportunity to live out—not just as a family, not only in front of our children—the truth of the Gospel," Stuart said. "We're just hoping that, in a non-overwhelming way, we can help people see what a big part of our functioning the Lord is, and his love, and his being with us in everything," Robyn adds.

While they hope they are role models of God's love to each young woman at Jubilee Village, Stuart and Robyn also feel that this opportunity will help them grow in their own faith. "It's a true opportunity to show grace, patience and compassion," Stuart said. "We've been mindful of the need for the Gospel to be at the heart of our family and the center of what we're doing as we try to reach out to the young ladies. Because if it's not, we're either going to burn out really quickly or we're going to find ourselves consumed with cynicism or judgment."

Though Stuart and Robyn have been embracing this role with loving hearts and open minds, being house parents, especially new house parents, doesn't come without difficulties. For this couple, the biggest challenge so far has been earning trust and building connections with the young women who may not yet be comfortable with the newcomers' presence in the building. Stepping in as new authority figures in girls' lives is not easy, but Stuart and Robyn are facing this challenge with a positive attitude.

"You'd love to be able to just step into their lives and have a really great connection immediately, but we don't mind if it takes quite a while to establish that," Stuart said.

Despite that difficulty, Stuart and Robyn are filled with warmth when they think about their time so far at Jubilee Village. They love the community that is formed within the building. "When kids are tired and cranky, we can all empathize with each other. There's just a lot of comradery

that way. You don't feel as alone in the struggles of life when you're all living here together," Robyn said.

They also feel welcomed and mentored by the other house parents at Jubilee Village. Even in their short time there, Stuart and Robyn have felt the care that exists among the house parents in the building. As they work together, as a team, they allow their various strengths to shine. "There's very much an attitude and a willingness to help when you feel equipped to do something," Stuart said. "It's been pretty fun to see how our various strengths complement each other."

As they move forward in their experience as house parents, their ministry with single mothers, and their journey as a family, Stuart and Robyn feel blessed to be in such a caring place as Jubilee Village. "We're all supporting each other and it's just really wonderful to live in this kind of community," Robyn said.

UPDATE FROM IRAQ: ZENAT'S JOURNEY

You might remember Zenat. This remarkable young woman suffered a traumatic and violent childhood as her family moved from Afghanistan, to Pakistan and eventually to the United States. As a teenager, Zenat found help, safety and stability in Wheaton Youth Outreach's Transitional Housing program. Now, with her husband Caleb and sons Isaac and Patrick, Zenat lives in Northern Iraq and works for an organization called Samaritan's Purse.

"We work directly with ISIS victims and ISIS sex slaves. You have to see it to believe it. It's an intense, front-line kind of work," Zenat said. "We are not in the war zone, but we are 45 minutes away from Mosul [Iraq]. We can hear explosions sometimes go off across the water. So we are working with women and girls who ran away or were released from ISIS."

Zenat combines her photography skills and her desire to help others who, like herself, have suffered trauma to teach a photography class at Grace Community Center in Northern Iraq. Her class incorporates therapy for victims and lessons about Christianity in a place where Christianity is otherwise not taught, all while giving the victims opportunities to prepare for a successful and independent future.

"If they get their certificate at the end of the class, they can get a job. And while we're teaching them these job skills, we're doing therapy," Zenat said.

Zenat has worked at Grace Community Center for one year, and in this time, she has used her own experience with trauma and recovery to touch the lives of so many. "Their wounds and their pain are what define them at this point. It's the definition of who they are. And when I tell my story, all of a sudden they get comfortable, and can open up to me."

Zenat recalls a girl who was abused by her older brother and lost an eye as a result. The staff had been trying to help the girl for years but hadn't had any success. The girl was quiet, withdrawn and spent her time alone, washing and rewashing dishes.

"I went up to her, and held both of her hands, and told her 'It's okay, I under-



stand what's happened to you.' And she said, 'How do you know—do you have an eye missing?' And I told her, 'No, but I've got scars that only Jesus can heal, or I wouldn't be here,' Zenat said. "The staff told me they'd been trying to reach out to her for the past four years, but couldn't get through. But we could connect, through our pain, one survivor to the next. She saw that if I could do it, she could do it, too."

Zenat feels that her time in Outreach programs was critical not only to her own recovery, but to her success today. As her mentors at Outreach helped her to heal, Zenat learned the skills that she now uses to help others heal. "I use things I learned from Sandy [Oyler, Transitions Program director] and Gail [Hoffman, director of Wheaton Youth Outreach] every day. I'll sit across from a girl who is having a conniption or simply wants to cry, and the words I use to comfort them sound just like Sandy or Gail."

Though her class helps people in so many different ways, one of the experiences that brings Zenat the most joy is helping her students discover Christ. She explains the moment when she gave one young girl her first Bible.

"You should have seen the look on her face—like a child who had just opened a favorite present under the Christmas tree. She was touching it, putting it over her

eyes. This Yazidi girl was chained by her culture. And now she had her own Bible," Zenat said.

As she shares Christ's message with her students, Zenat can't help but think about Outreach. "I've had de ja vu moments. Just teaching them how not to hate, to slowly become Christ-like. But most haven't accepted Christ. And there was a time I hadn't accepted Christ fully, either. I still was holding onto my anger, my revenge. So I had to learn [to let go of] that. Those are things I teach them, daily. And I learned it from Outreach," Zenat said.

"We are incredibly proud of Zenat," says Sandy Oyler. "It's been a privilege to encourage her and be a sounding board for her long after she graduated from our programs, and to see how God is using her personal experiences to prepare her for this unique ministry. She is living out Outreach's mission—to restore hope and provide opportunities—through her ministry to the Yazidi people."

Together with her husband Caleb, who is deputy director for Northern Iraq, Zenat continues to do amazing ministry for these victims in Iraq, and Samaritan's Purse is recognizing her for that. "In the past year, I've done a combination of women's ministry, teen ministry, and teaching photography classes."

THROUGH VICTOR'S EYES

The Unseen Work of Outreach Counselors

For Victor Argo, no day is exactly the same. As program director for Outreach Community Counseling Center in Carol Stream, Victor takes on responsibilities ranging from supervising the center's many interns to meeting with clients.

Victor started at the center as an intern in 1988 and has continued to work diligently there ever since. Now, it's Victor who is supervising the master's interns, walking side-by-side with these students as they grow in ability and confidence.

Every Tuesday from 2:30 p.m. to 10 p.m., Victor and the interns participate in live supervision. During this time, an intern will meet with a client while the rest of the group is able to observe through a one-way mirror. Throughout the session, Victor is able to call into the room and offer the intern suggestions. The interns are also able to observe Victor's session with a client. At the end of the night, the whole group comes to together to discuss their own sessions and observations of each other's interactions. This intense, hands-on training allows interns to develop professional skills quickly and confidently and allows clients to obtain outstanding service.

Working with interns is one of the biggest parts of Victor's job and he feels truly inspired as he watches them progress. "At first, our interns are nervous and unsure," Victor said. "But soon they develop into who God wants them to be as clinicians. It's so rewarding to watch our interns develop in their identity as therapists."

Though Victor spends the majority of his time working with the interns, he still manages to find time to meet with clients—up to fifteen each week. Victor is a licensed marriage and family therapist and has training in Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) therapy, a type of trauma recovery therapy.

In Victor's eyes, working directly with a client is a powerful experience. "It is inspirational to see the courage that our clients have to face really difficult parts of their life and their past," Victor said. "To sit with someone who trusts you with their deepest thoughts, feelings, secrets and stories of trauma is an honor."

It is an honor earned through hard work, dedication and perseverance. Providing therapy is not an easy job, and it is a job that is often undervalued. "A lot of the work we do is unseen. We carry people's secrets. People grow in front of our eyes. We hear devastating stories of trauma and loss. This is powerful work," Victor said. "I feel very unequipped to do this work at times, but God sustains me. I depend on Him to be there with me in each session."

As a licensed therapist with such talent and passion, Victor could easily make more money if he chose to work at a private practice. However, he chooses to work for Outreach because of his belief in the mission. "This is one of the only places that is truly able to fulfill the needs of the underserved," Victor said. "We are very community-minded. We do what private practices can't. We will go to schools, homes, hospitals, prisons – we will do whatever is needed to assist a client."

Victor has proven to do just that. For more than 20 years, he saw a client with significant health issues and a strong faith and love for God who struggled with depression. Because of her health, she was unable to come to the office. So, Victor went to her. When he visited, they would talk about depression, skills to manage that depression and the importance of faith in this woman's life, all while planting flowers together in her garden or walking around the pond on a beautiful day, counting the frogs.

Near the end of this woman's life, when she was moved into hospice care, Victor visited as often as possible. He would play his Native American flute, something she always loved. Shortly before the end of this woman's life, Victor visited for the last time. "I could tell that she wasn't doing well. She wasn't conscious. But I sat there and prayed for her and played my flute for about an hour nonstop. I played notes and songs, and I played Amazing Grace. Then I kissed her on the forehead and I left," Victor said. "I am fortunate that I was able to be with her on that last day."

Victor was asked to part a part of the funeral service and he graciously accepted, playing Amazing Grace on his flute at the service. "I am really grateful that I could be a part of that, celebrating her life," he said.

Victor's dedication to his clients goes above and beyond any expectation of a therapist. Through his compassionate heart and his strong faith, he is a shining light in the lives of so many, and a critical piece of the good work that flows out of Outreach Community Counseling Centers. With a mission to help each and every person reach their highest potential, Outreach, through the counseling centers, chooses to make counseling more accessible to those who need it by never denying services due to a client's inability to pay.

"I am so grateful and in awe of the work that God does. I have a heart of gratitude for this work. He called me to this work, and He is always encouraging me."



Outreach

Community Ministries

Restoring Hope, Providing Opportunities

Outreach Community Center in Carol Stream • Warrenville Youth & Family Services • Wheaton Youth Outreach • Outreach Community Counseling Centers
Serving at Puente del Pueblo in West Chicago and York Community Resource Center • Resale Centers: Jubilee Cars, Jubilee Furniture & Discoveries Resale

Join Us

RSVP as a table host or guest to Mindy Inman at 630-682-1910 or minman@outreachcommin.org.

Hearts of Grace Women's Luncheon

All women are invited to join us **Tuesday, October 18** at our new venue, the Westin in Lombard's Yorktown Center. The fun begins at 11 a.m. with music and a raffle. Our luncheon and program is from 12 to 2 p.m., featuring Judy Peterson, dynamic speaker and campus pastor from North Park University. Plus, hear stories from our transitional housing program and learn how you can join Hearts of Grace in supporting vulnerable women and their children here in DuPage County through a new ministry project.



WYFS Fall Dinner

Save the date for the Fall Dinner, supporting Warrenville Youth & Family Services. This year's event is **Friday, November 4** at Piper's Banquet in Aurora. The reception and live music begins at 6:30 p.m., while the dinner and program starts at 7 p.m. Join us for this inspiring evening to learn how you can support essential youth programs, case management and counseling services serving our vulnerable neighbors in the greater Warrenville community.



SUPPORT OUTREACH

Through your giving to Outreach, you demonstrate the importance of investing in Christ-centered programs that bring about Kingdom changes in the lives of those we serve and the communities where we serve.

Your gift today will...

- Infuse needed funds in our sites' youth development programs.
- Help stabilize families through case management and counseling services.
- Provide support for older adults who are vulnerable.
- Give young women who are homeless a place to call home.

Outreach Community Ministries is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Gifts are tax deductible as a charitable contribution to the extent provided by law.

Donate today using the enclosed envelope or visit our secure website at outreachcommin.org/give. Thank you for your support!

SERVE + IMPACT

Whatever your time or talents, we have a volunteer opportunity for you. Current opportunities include one-on-one tutors, classroom assistants, mentors and front desk receptionists. Or, volunteer at our resale centers as a store clerk or warehouse assistant. To get started, visit outreachcommin.org/volunteer.

