



September 2023

### The Summer of Yes, Part III

Dear Friends,

I'm excited to share the third story in this series highlighting ways the people of God are showing up in bold and beautiful ways to care for refugees and displaced people this summer...so much so that I'm calling this the Summer of Yes! If you missed the first two letters in the series, you can go back and read them here: [Part I](#) and [Part II](#).

#### Afghanistan

Last week marked two years since RCA Global Mission joined with a network of mission agencies and other non-profit organizations to evacuate vulnerable Afghans as the Taliban seized control of Afghanistan. A total of 758 people were evacuated to a country that agreed to host them short term, but, unfortunately, the evacuation efforts stopped after the original approved plan of bringing them to the U.S. was later denied and the host country wouldn't accept any more evacuees. Eventually, many of the evacuees moved on to other countries, but some continued to live in this first host country without a permanent legal path to safety and refuge.

Twelve of the people stranded in this first host country had a connection to an RCA family, and for the past two years, I have worked diligently with this family to find a new home for the Afghans. Eventually, six of them moved to another country, but six have remained in limbo.

For the past two years, I've worked with mission partners all around the world trying to find a country willing to resettle this family from Afghanistan. It has been hard work. But the answer continued to be no. There was simply no room to accept one more Afghan family for resettlement, especially after the invasion of Ukraine began and millions of people fled Ukraine in search of refuge.



Then, in the fall of 2022, I received news that Canada might be an option for this family. I immediately reached out to World Renew (one of our mission partners who facilitates refugee resettlement in Canada) to ask questions and see if this family might qualify for private resettlement, and if World

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Renew would be willing to work with me on this. When World Renew said yes, I began connecting with Canadian faith leaders from the Reformed Church in America and the Christian Reformed Church in North America, trying to find a church willing to sponsor the family for resettlement. However, as fall turned to winter, winter to spring, and spring to summer, I began losing hope that we would find a sponsor.

However, I'm grateful to report that on June 26th I met with leaders of a church via Zoom interested in learning more about this opportunity, and, in July, they said yes to exploring sponsorship for this family! They are now working with World Renew to complete the sponsorship application and training process. Once they are approved, World Renew can petition the Canadian government for permission to resettle this Afghan family in Canada.

Please join me in thanking God for keeping this family safe, for the RCA family who is advocating so fiercely for the Afghan family, and for World Renew and the church who have said yes to pursuing resettlement for the family in Canada.

Please join me in praying for the ongoing safety of this family, and that God will remove all obstacles on the path towards resettlement for them.

I also want to thank you—my friends and supporters—as YOU have played a vital role in the stories I've shared from the Summer of Yes! I couldn't do this work without your encouragement, your prayers, and your financial support.

If you're not currently supporting this work financially but are interested in meeting me and learning more about my work as a missionary and refugee ministries coordinator, please contact me at [jjtenclay@rca.org](mailto:jjtenclay@rca.org).

Stay tuned for two more stories from the Summer of Yes next week.

In Christ Alone,

JJ TenClay