December 2025

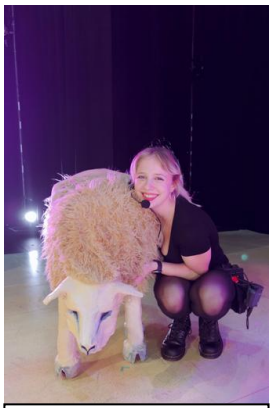
Dear Friends & Supporters,

Recently I've had conversations with a few supporters who requested updates on my family, so I've decided to devote my final Dear Friends letter for 2025 to doing just that!

Petra

Petra is now 15 years old and a junior in high school. 2025 has been quite an eventful year for her! Petra began the year with a school organized trip to Disney World in Orlando, Florida, with her orchestra (Petra plays the cello.) In the spring, Petra received her black belt in Soo Bahk Do (Korean martial arts) after two years of intense training. She is also an assistant for Saturday morning martial arts classes for younger students. In July, Petra received a scholarship for a study abroad summer program in Lisbon, Portugal, to study aquatic ecosystems & sustainability. She loved both the program and her amazing host family, and this experience helped Petra decide that she would like to pursue a career in aquatic animal medicine. Petra continues to study Italian (she was only eight years old when we left Italy and returned to the United States, so this has allowed her to progress in her Italian language skills), and is a part of both the Italian Honor Society and the National Honor Society. Petra also continues to volunteer her time at church every Sunday, serving as both the coffee time coordinator and sound technician.

Petra receiving her black belt in martial arts.



Sophia posing with one of the props for The Rivals.

Sophia

Sophia is 19 years old and in her second year as a Stage Management student at Rutgers University (Mason Gross School of the Arts). She loves it! This fall, Sophia served as assistant stage manager for the Rutgers production of "The Rivals," and Tim and I were able to attend one of the performances. At that performance, a major set malfunction occurred, endangering the safety of a few actors and causing significant damage to the set backdrop, but it was amazing to watch Sophia and the other stage managers handle the situation with professionalism and great care for the actors involved. Earlier this month, Sophia had an opportunity to shadow one of her professors who is working as a stage manager for the production of "Tartuffe" at the New York Theatre Workshop, which gave her an opportunity to work with some famous actors, including Matthew Broderick and Francis Jue. Over the summer, Sophia came

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home to Long Island and worked as a summer camp teaching assistant for a local nursery school, which was perfect because she loves working with children.

Both Sophia and Petra continue to coordinate a program through our church, where we collect backpacks, school supplies, reusable water bottles, etc. for a local faith-based refugee resettlement agency. They began this program seven years ago—shortly after we moved from Italy to the US—and are still going strong! (A big thank you to the deacons of the Community Reformed Church of Manhasset who gave Sophia and Petra an opportunity to share their idea, approved this program as a part of our church's ministry, and have continued to support Sophia and Petra and their love for refugees.)

Tim

Tim continues to serve as the pastor of the Community Reformed Church of Manhasset in Manhasset, New York. In January, we were blessed to celebrate Tim's 50th birthday, and to honor this special event, Tim created a list of 50 things to do between his 50th and 51st birthday, and has been working steadily towards completing these goals. This list includes items such as: take one overnight retreat, watch 12 sunsets or sunrises, bring baked goods to someone at least 6 times, and perform on a harpsichord at least once. A couple of loftier goals Tim set that he's accomplished include creating a brick labyrinth in our backyard (designed and constructed by Tim himself!) and returning to Naples, Italy, to complete an advanced pizza making course through the Associazione Verace Pizza Napoletana (The True Neapolitan Pizza Association)! Tim also served the RCA as a denomination in various roles this year, including president of Nassau-Suffolk Classis, clerk of the Regional Synod of New York, leader of the seminarian's seminar for General Synod, and as a member of the RCA General Synod Council.

Tim at 50!

Christmas Greetings

Friends, I am so very grateful for the ways that you have not only supported me and the work God has called me to as a missionary working with refugees & displaced people worldwide, but for the ways your support has blessed my family as well.

As we draw closer to the time of year when we celebrate the birth of Jesus, the Light of the World, may we remember to keep our own lights shining brightly every day, so that the world may know:

Because of the tender mercy of God,
the dawn from on high will break upon us,
to shine upon those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death,
to guide our feet into the way of peace.

Luke 1: 78-79

Wishing you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

JJ TenClay
Missionary
Refugee Ministries Coordinator
RCA Global Mission

RCA Global Mission does not receive denominational assessments or covenant shares. We depend on the faithful generosity of churches and individuals.