

Dear Temple Beth David Members,

My name is Barbara Friedman. My husband, Mark Friedman and I have been members of Temple Beth David since 1977. This is written to many of you who we know, and some we do not yet know, but it is intended to offer all of you an exceptional opportunity to do good, feel good, and help others. Admittedly this message is also an ask for your help in a rather herculean task, but one that will be very meaningful and extraordinarily important!

Mark and I have volunteered to be facilitators of the immigration group formed at Temple as part of the "What Do I Care About" survey. We are also representing a single specific project: to help relocate and assimilate a family of Afghan evacuees to the greater Westwood area. Let me briefly explain:

An organization titled Ascentria Care Alliance is a resettlement agency located in Worcester. They, plus 5 other Massachusetts organizations, have accepted the job of resettling the 400 Afghan families that MA is willing to accept now, and the 600 more that MA has committed to accepting. As I write this, the Afghan families are at US military bases and receiving healthcare (including Covid and other recommended immunizations), being vetted, and obtaining necessary documentation.

Mark and I have been well versed by Ascentria about the necessary formation of an NST - Neighborhood Support Team - that will help relocate one of these families and we have volunteered to try to form an NST within our Temple. The NST's are co-supported by a cultural mentor from Ascentria, but are tasked with all aspects of relocation including:

- fundraising
- housing
- housing set-up
- finding interpreters
- healthcare
- financial needs
- transportation / ride coordination
- community orientation
- children's education
- cultural orientation / ESL
- technology assistance
- legal access to benefits - application assistance
- resume and interviewing assistance

To do this Ascentria suggests a group of 20-30 people to form an NST. **Our ask to you today** is to decide if this is something you want to assist with, and if it is, we are asking you to also reach out now to others within the Temple community who you know. Feel free to recruit them to be part of this opportunity. Knowing that many Afghan families can include up to 5-6 children,

families would be a great recruit and would certainly create a teachable moment. Plus, if we can include about 25 people in this effort, the time needed from any one individual is lessened. **For now**, please email us with your name, preferred email address, best phone number, and your area of interest and/or expertise from the above list of tasks. Please also have those you recruit do the same. We will then hold a meeting (hopefully in-person) with everyone and Mark and I will explain in further detail our next steps. Time is of the essence so we need this information by **OCTOBER 18th**.

We are, and hope you are too, very eager and excited to be part of this incredible opportunity. Leaving a legacy of welcome and acceptance from the USA to a family in need not only feels right, but furthers the democracy that we all care about - and at this time all of that feels especially urgent.

Looking forward to hearing from you,
Barbara and Mark Friedman
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