

From There To Eternity

“We remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.” 1 Thes. 1:3



Those of you who have been around Sports Outreach Institute for any length of time are aware of the thousands of refugee lives that have been touched with the hope of the gospel in Africa. Most people, however, are not aware that there are thousands of refugees from hundreds of countries residing in the Charlotte, NC area. Just two years ago people from our Charlotte staff walked into the Briar Creek community and encountered 6 apartment complexes that housed hundreds of families with needs from 25 nationalities. We were forced to ask how to give life to the lifeless. How do we restore hope to the hopeless? This is our story.

To establish a presence and meet people in the community we assisted with a weekly help desk, providing help to refugees with daily tasks such as understanding their bills or looking for employment. Through this we met Hlup, a refugee from Vietnam. After meeting with Hlup in her family's home it was clear she had little income – even nutritious food was a luxury at times. How is hope restored when the basic necessity of food is questionable? You find the food.

So...we partnered with Angel Food Ministries (www.angelfoodministries.com) to provide the community with monthly groceries for roughly half of the retail price. As visits with Hlup continued and the weather turned colder we recognized a need for additional clothing and blankets for her family. What does it look like to restore hope to a family with little warm clothing? You provide warmth.

We set up a clothing closet in the community that is now open two days a week and benefits approximately fifty families. The most encouraging aspect is seeing families who have received assistance give back to the service. They see hope in helping. With a growing number of relationships established among many different nationalities, English communication became an evident need. How do you restore hope to a family that doesn't speak English in America? You find a teacher.

✂ Tear Here

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Through the support of volunteers, we provide two weekly English as a Second Language (ESL) classes. The free instruction has been well received and visibly beneficial, not just for Hlup, but for all participants. With basic needs met Hlup can now focus on finding lasting employment. Her next obstacle became learning a marketable skill. How is hope restored to a refugee without an American education? You teach the skills.

Hlup and nine other refugees are participating in the Plywood Project (www.plywoodpeople.com) this winter where they will be taught sewing skills. Through learning a new trade these self-trained workers will be equipped with a marketable skill set for possible future employment outside of the Plywood Project. Although Hlup has experienced the hands and feet of Jesus caring for her and her family, she still doesn't know Jesus personally. How do we show Hlup a restored hope in the Creator of the universe? You share the truth.

We started a church for refugees (see March 2010 SOI newsletter) in order to meet them where they are and provide a welcoming environment to hear the truth of Jesus. The gospel is preached weekly in her native language of J'ari. Eagerly we pray for the day when Hlup and others will be brothers and sisters in the kingdom of heaven. They will then have hope in God that will be restored for all eternity.



God's gift of eternal life to people such as Hlup is priceless. Ministering to them is not. For example, \$500 per person is required to participate in the Plywood Project, \$35 is needed for a box of food for a family, \$25 for Bibles for the church, and the list continues. As you pray about this month's donation please consider a gift for these Charlotte ministries. It will reap eternal rewards.

*Blessings,
the SOI Charlotte Staff — Dustin, Amanda,
CC, Maria, Eric & Rebecca*





P.S.: For more information about the Charlotte staff and their exciting ministries please visit our website at www.sportsoutreach.net. While there you can also view an exciting video update on Phiona, the "Queen of Katwe" at this same website.



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