

Refugee Committee Report

November 2025

Over the past 9 months, members of UMC have given leadership to and participated in the State College Interfaith Group (SCIG), consisting of representatives from UMC, UBBC and Congregation Brit Shalom. Here is a summary of our activity:

In March, we welcomed two young women from Afghanistan through the Community Sponsorship Hub (CSH). We were connected with CSH by Church World Service - Harrisburg. With a team of 15 volunteers from our three congregations, we provided help with finding housing, health and public benefits advocacy, job search, transportation and finances among other things. We used funds raised from the 3 congregations and from direct donations to supply bus passes, help with rent, provide clothing and food, household goods and more while they remained in State College.

With the support of the SCIG, the women obtained stable housing; developed resumes, found jobs and started bank accounts; received the medical assessments and treatment they needed; took language classes, obtained their green cards, and generally got off to a good start with their lives in the US.

Both women eventually chose to relocate out west, primarily in search of better jobs, but also to be with Afghan friends and larger Afghan communities. One woman left in July, the other at the end of October.

Currently, the SCIG is working with a young Afghan woman who found her way to State College and does not have a sponsoring organization. We'll meet in January to decide if we are able to support other refugees who may need a sponsoring group.

Members of the committee are also involved with Centre County Rapid Response Network and the support for individuals at Moshanon Valley Processing Center.

Members of the Refugee Committee include: Mary Derstein, Paula Droege, Joyce Hall, Kathleen Stehouwer, and Jim Rosenberger