

Welcome House Raleigh

Spring Newsletter

**Baptist News Global reported on an event
that happened this week. Please click here
to read the article.**

Recently, a guest shared her story...

I am a girl from Afghanistan—a war-torn country, yet rich in culture, literature, poetry, and art. A country that could never truly be my homeland. A country where being a girl can feel like the worst fate in life.

I remember well—just five years ago, I was free and happy. I was a journalist. I could work, travel, and dream without fear.

But everything changed in a single night. August 14, 2021—a day I will never forget. That night, my goals, my dreams, and the life I had built were destroyed.

I lived under Taliban rule in Afghanistan for more than a year. I know, firsthand, how suffocating and brutal it is. I remember the day a Taliban soldier stopped me on the street—because I wasn't wearing a mask. He insulted me and warned me to cover my face.

I remember the day they stormed our office, forcing me to hide in the bathroom, trembling in silence.

But all of these humiliations, insults, and threats came down to one thing: I was a woman. And worse than that—I was a female journalist.

It was there that I first felt the deep and piercing pain of discrimination.

Eventually, the threats became unbearable. I had no choice but to leave. To escape. I left Afghanistan with a thousand fears and dangers chasing me, seeking refuge in a foreign land.

Immigration has its own struggles, but it is also an opportunity. A chance to meet new people, learn new cultures, embrace new languages, and walk through the pages of history in new places.

In the last two years, I have traveled to many countries—Pakistan, France, Germany, Spain, Netherlands, and Belgium. I lived in France for over a year, collecting some of my most beautiful memories in the most beautiful city in the world—Paris.

But even in this new life, something weighed on me heavily. One thing hurt more than I expected. Discrimination.

Yes; more than anything else, it was discrimination that made me suffer in a country like France.

It may be unfair to say this but it is my personal experience.

The way many French people looked at me—as if they were always above me. As if I could never truly belong. I was constantly made to feel that I would never be like them, that no matter how hard I tried, France could never be my home. Even in the newsroom where I worked as a journalist, I saw the differences in treatment.

Time and time again, I noticed how my employer treated me differently from my French colleagues. The subtle looks. The unspoken barriers. The silent message that I was not one of them.

And then, one day, I asked myself: Why not become an immigrant in the land of immigrants?

The opportunity to come to America presented itself, and I knew—I had to take it. I had to start fresh, in a place where so many others had come to rebuild their lives.

Even though I had an official position as a journalist in France, I made my decision. I chose a new path.

And for those who wonder why I left France for America—this is my answer.

When I arrived in America, my hopes became reality. When my confidence grew, so did my belief in myself, my talents, and my abilities.

When I saw a Christian raise his hands in prayer for me, a Muslim, I felt a new kind of acceptance.

When I saw that the church gives me a place to live and the mosque gives me food, I felt the true meaning of honor and humanity.

When I heard an American say, “You have the right to live and find peace in this land,” I felt a sense of belonging.

When I realized that Americans saw me not as an immigrant, but as a human being, I felt valued.

When I saw people moved by my suffering, saddened by the hardships I had endured, I knew I’m not alone.

When I saw kindness, compassion, and a willingness to help in any way possible, my heart felt lighter.

When I saw women who were from different nationalities and even from different races, but we had common pains, I felt understood.

When they promised me solidarity, I felt a sense of strength and unity.

When I saw that they wanted me to integrate into society, to grow, to improve—I found the motivation to move forward.

Now, the situation has completely changed. The land once built by immigrants has now closed its gates to them.

Whether Ukrainian, Arab, Afghan, Hindu, or any other nationality.

And unfortunately, I sense the familiar scent of discrimination once again.

But this time, I am relieved to know that it is not among the people. It lingers only in the halls of power, where a few make decisions that shape the fate of many.

And this time, I am counting on those people believe in democracy and freedom of speech—those who will stand with me, step by step.

1 CORINTHIANS 15:58
People who value authenticity and humanity.

People whom the world will one day recognize and appreciate for their kindness and integrity.

The joy of a kid's consignment sale

By Matty Grace Gilliam

Every fall and spring Hayes Barton Baptist Church has a kid's consignment sale. At the end of the sale, there are lots of extra clothes and toys because many consigners decide to donate their items that did not sell. HBBC allows our refugee families to look through all of these toys and clothes and take what they want for free.

I took a mom of four little boys to the sale. She was so excited to see all of the toys. She picked out toys for each of her boys. For her 18 month old she picked out a toy work bench. She was so excited to take it home for him to see. As I helped her bring all the toys and clothes into their home, the boys were full of excitement. They played and played and played and played. The mom was filled with joy watching her boys play with their new toys. The toy work bench was the perfect size for her toddler and he loved it.

Many of our refugee parents were able to provide toys and clothes for their children before they had to flee their country and leave everything behind. I am so grateful for HBBC's Kid's Consignment because it allowed many refugee parents to, once again, feel the joy of giving their children toys.



March 23-29th: Week of prayer for the offering for global Missions



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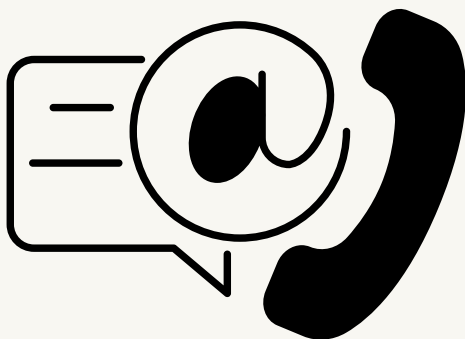
**WEEK OF
PRAYER**

BEHOLD...A **NEW** THING
Isaiah 43:19



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