

A Family from Russia

Today I had the privilege of working in the clothing area at FUMC with two volunteers. We were doing our usual sorting and packaging clothing when we looked up and a family of four came down the steps. I greeted them and asked if I might help them. "No, where is the shelter?" the wife asked. I explained we had to move to a hotel because of the Corona Virus and that now only supplies were down here. She explained that in October of 2019 they were guests of The Inn. The husband had me come look at his phone. He had photos of them when they were guests. He pointed out the corner where they were assigned beds, and showed pictures of his daughter getting served food, and his son playing in the toy room. The wife, who spoke a little more English, said they were so grateful for the help they received. When they arrived, they were not sure what to do and were grateful that they had come here. They now live in California. They are asylum seekers from Russia. They said they had brought donations for The Inn. I asked if they'd driven all the way from California to bring donations. They said it was the first stop on their travels because they wanted to support the program that helped them. The family brought 35 pounds of fresh apples, a case of breakfast cereal, four bags filled with packages of cookies, and four garbage bags of clothing. Their daughter looked for her picture she had made when she was at the Inn. She found it and took it to the desk and wrote "Thank you very much!" She added her name and today's date. They walked around. It was an important visit for them as much for me, to see how they had thrived since their stay here almost two years ago. Before they left, they asked if they could take photos. I said of course they could. Then they wanted a photo with me. I also ask if I could get a photo with them. They said "yes". I had tears in my eyes as they left. These are some of guests that have stayed at The Inn. We so seldom know what happens to the guests after they leave and head to their sponsors. It was a joy and privilege to be at FUMC when a guest returned to express gratitude and say what it meant to stay with us here at The Inn. My heart is filled to overflowing. What we do matters, and we are remembered.

