

## Member Spotlight

Ruth Goldberg, a longtime Temple Sinai member, was inspired by the 2016 election to take concrete action, to do something positive in the world. A friend was involved in the Rochester Chapter of No One Left Behind, which helps Afghan and Iraqi military interpreters and their families settle into their new lives in Rochester. Ruth had a chance to interact with the refugee family her friend helped at a social gathering, as the refugee family had become part of her friend's social circle.

No One Left Behind is "...dedicated to the resettlement of military interpreters and support personnel who supported the U.S. missions in Afghanistan and Iraq, and because of their faithful and honorable service were targeted by the Taliban and ISIL. The Rochester NOLB Chapter works in partnership with Catholic Family Center in resettling these families. NOLB is the only charitable organization in the U.S. chartered with this mission...."

Ruth decided to volunteer. She says that the way NOLB functions perfectly suits those who want to get deeply involved and also those who want to temper their involvement. The goal is always to support families as much as possible in the short run and to make them independent in the long run. Ruth has taken a family to doctor's appointments, scoured Goodwill to find boots in a variety of sizes, donated towels for a family that did not have enough, weeded through her children's old book collection & passed those on, facilitated a friend's donation of a TV to a family, spent time playing SORRY with the kids in the family (and thus helping with their English), and taken the family to sign up for W.I.C.

Locally, Ellen Smith is the Rochester Chapter Head. There are chair people responsible for such broad categories as: furniture, driving lessons, jobs and employment, clothing referrals, and Caring Circles. A Caring Circle is formed for each NOLB family, so everyone shares the tasks and provides support. These are examples of Caring Circle activities:

- Help with mail when needed;
- Explain how to pay bills, use checks or a debit card, and use an ATM;
- Introduce the public library system, Post Office, and Bank/Credit Union;
- Instruct how to use public transportation, RTS schedules, and the Google Map interface with bus routes;
- Assist in a job search;
- Provide rides for appointments when public transportation is not feasible; and,
- Orient the newcomers to Rochester through visits to parks, museums, and points of interest.

Ruth said her latest Caring Circle began with a meeting at the family's apartment. (You can begin even earlier by meeting the family at the airport, and/or helping them move in.) At this first meeting, the Circle members reviewed the appointments the family had and assigned Circle members to facilitate these tasks. Most families are settled in the Bobrich Drive Apartments, where the Russian refugees had been settled here in Rochester. Theoretically, someone from the Circle should visit once a week, but there is so much to do, Ruth says, interaction might happen more often. Ruth added that many of these individuals are very well educated: in one family, the adults were both physicians, and in another they were engineers.

Ilan and Yoka Adar are also volunteers for NOLB. They housed a newly arrived family for 5 days before their apartment was ready. Ilan is interested in forming a Caring Circle though Temple Sinai. Ruth agrees that it can be more fulfilling to have friends that form a circle, but that is not absolutely necessary.

NOLB is headquartered in Washington D.C. with subordinate chapters in San Francisco, Boston, Chicago, and as the website says “Upstate NY.” That means Rochester is one of the few sites chosen for settlement of these refugees! Ilan explained that many families who were at first brought to expensive bigger cities ended up homeless. So, the organization decided that a smaller, affordable city like Rochester, would be more suitable.

Consequently, Rochester needs more Caring Circles. If you would like to participate in a Sinai Caring Circle, a group of Sinai people who help a family in Rochester that arrived through the No One Left Behind program, please contact the Social Action Committee at [socialaction@tsinai.org](mailto:socialaction@tsinai.org)

If you would like more information about NOLB, or to volunteer as an English tutor or in other ways, go to the Rochester Chapter Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/nooneleftbehindrochester/> or to [nooneleft.org](http://nooneleft.org)