

WELCOME THE STRANGER

An Asylum-Seeker Helped by the NHCUCC and One of Our Local Churches Says "Thank You"

Among those released from ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) detention at the Stafford County jail through a bond paid by the Immigrant and Refugee Support Group of the NHCUCC was a man from Nigeria. Here is an edited copy of his letter to the IRSG, to be shared with you all:

It's been quite a journey, but Thank God it all ended in praise through the mercies and kindness of God.

It all began in the year 2017 when Ms. Nancy (that's Nancy Pierpont, Chair of the IRSG) showed up at Stafford County Jail that fateful day. After narrating my story to her, I didn't think she would be able to help me out, but little did I know she was a carrier of God's blessings for me and my family.

Fast forward to her next jail visit, she brought me good news; she said to me that she had found an attorney who was willing to take up my case but he would only be available after Christmas of 2017. Fortunately for me the attorney showed up at the jail before Christmas. After our lengthy conversations, he asked me if I would like my family to move to New Hampshire from Dallas Texas and I said YES because that has always been my desire to be around white folks and also to experience snowfall.

Fast forward to his next visit at the jail when he brought me good news. He said to me that Ms. Nancy had found someone who was willing to accommodate my wife and kids, so we began calling her Grandma S. The lawyer made arrangements for my wife and kids to move to New Hampshire and Grandma S. accommodated them and also came to the court for my release from detention in January of 2018. Grandma S. accommodated all of us together after my release from detention before I went back to Dallas Texas for my pending case and came back to New Hampshire a few months later, after the case was terminated. We all lived together at Grandma S's house and attended Madbury UCC together. Everyone at the church has always shown us so much love and kindness ever since.

Fast forward to the 1st of December 2021. After a couple of reschedulings of previous court dates the ideal day arrived. The judge finally granted our request to legally stay in the United States of America! We want to say a very BIG THANK YOU to everyone at Madbury UCC.

Being granted asylum is the crucial step on the journey but there are still more hoops to jump through, about 7 years' worth. One year from now the family can apply for legal permanent residency-and hopefully receive their green cards within 4-12 months. After having their green cards for 5 years, they will be able to apply for citizenship. Although they are financially independent now, the IRSG will continue supporting this family in many other ways as they work toward citizenship.

Presently, there is an urgent need to support our immigrant brothers and sisters in our area who have significant needs for legal support in order to advance their quest for asylum in the U.S. Your generous donations can make a real difference in these individual lives. **You can support the IRSG's Immigrant Bond and Support Fund by making a donation to the NH Conference United Church of Christ via their [online portal](#). Or send a check to NHCUCC, 140 Sheep Davis Road, Pembroke, NH 03275 with Immigrant Bond and Support in the memo line.** Our Fund helps to provide: support for immigrants in ICE detention in NH; payment of refundable bonds to secure a release from ICE detention; assistance with securing legal representation; and other post-detention or emergency support to cover basic needs.