



JUBILEE PARTNERS REPORT

Fall 2021

***“Give to others, and God will give to you. Indeed, you will receive a full measure, a generous helping, poured into your hands—all that you can hold. The measure you use for others is the one that God will use for you.”
Luke 6:38***

Ka Bruce Moon and Eh Hser Wah arrived at Jubilee in late July with their two young children. They are members of the Karen ethnic group in Burma (also called Myanmar). As you know if you've been reading our newsletter for a while, we have hosted a large number of Karen refugees at Jubilee over the past 15 years, and our town of Comer now includes a significant population of Karen folks who have settled here permanently. This summer, though, was the first time in several years that we have welcomed a Karen family as new arrivals in the U.S., coming directly from the refugee camps.

There has been war in Myanmar for many decades. The military dictatorship that took control of the country in the 1960s continues to carry out brutal campaigns against many of the ethnic minorities in the country. In 2015, a pro-democracy government led by Ang San Suu Kyi was elected to power, but the military retook control of the country earlier this year in a coup d'état. Even under the leadership of the democratically elected government, there were campaigns of ethnic cleansing against minorities, particularly the Muslim populations in the west of the country.

Eh Hser Wah was born in Myanmar, but he fled to the refugee camps in Thailand when he was 16 years old. Ka Bruce Moon was born in the refugee camp and lived there for 23 years before they came to the U.S. Eh Hser Wah describes life in Nopo refugee camp where they lived:

In the refugee camp, it's really difficult to survive. If the UN did not provide anything, it would be very hard for everybody. Living in the refugee camp — if you have a big family, it's difficult. You have to sneak out of the camp [to survive]. You have to have bamboo to make a house off the ground — steal it, or sneak out to get it. Thai people bring bamboo in the camp to sell, but you have no income and no job. How are you going to buy it?



**Eh Hser Wah and Ka Bruce Moon
with their sons Tha Dae Say (2)
and Hgay Ser Thwet (6).**



Ka Bruce Moon & Eh Hser Wah hosted the community for an early breakfast on the morning of their move to Comer. We enjoyed noodle soup with pork, and there was plenty of hot pepper available on the side.

When they arrived in the U.S., Eh Hser Wah and Ka Bruce Moon knew no one here. "I was the only person that came to Georgia," Ka Bruce Moon explained. "Many people lived in the Nopo camp and left but did not come to Georgia. I prayed that God would prepare something for me." Here at Jubilee, Ka Bruce Moon and Eh Hser Wah soon made connections in the Karen community in Comer. Friends from Comer visited them in their house at Jubilee, invited them to the Karen Baptist Church, and helped provide transportation for the family. With help from these new friends, Eh Hser Wah was able to find a job in this area and the family is now living in a rented house nearby.



Eh Hser Wah often joined Russ and Tracy along with our volunteer group for Tuesday morning garden work. He shared his expertise with Russ, including tips on a new (to us) cover crop often grown in Asia.

One of the blessings that we have experienced at Jubilee these last ten years has been to see up close how people who came to the U.S. as refugees have reached out to welcome others coming after them. That's a story that we've told before, and will continue to tell as we celebrate God's work of hospitality in our neighborhood. Our good friend Eh Kaw has helped a great many new families get settled into life in Comer. We asked him to explain why he has put so much of his time and energy into helping other families in the community. Here's what he said:

Jesus said he came to bring the kingdom. I feel like I need to do something. The rich young man asked, "I want to go into the kingdom, what should I do?" "Give it

all away," [Jesus said]. In heaven you have to give away, and he will give it back to you. It's like fishing: you have to give the bait away. If you want love, you have to give love. If you want peace, you have to make peace. Jesus said, "Peter, you have the keys to the kingdom. If somebody is poor in your congregation, it's your fault. You have to teach him to unlock the door."

Many people who come to the U.S. as immigrants do not have the support of a well-established community with shared language and culture like the one that exists for Karen people in Comer. Many immigrants are culturally isolated when they arrive in this country, and those who have been victims of domestic violence may be cut off from their family and ethnic community. The example of Karen refugees caring for one another in our town is an example that is meant for all of us, immigrant and U.S.-born alike. This fall, as Afghan refugees began arriving after the U.S. military withdrawal from Afghanistan, two former Jubilee residents set everything aside and traveled to Texas to help welcome and provide for this wave of new immigrants. One is our Afghan friend Haideri, who came to Jubilee as a refugee himself 16 years ago. The other, Chance, is a recent Jubilee volunteer from the U.S. who spent time in the Middle East as a soldier years ago. Now they are both working to receive Afghan refugees in this country as the U.S. military involvement in Afghanistan comes to an end.

There are many different ways in which we see people reaching out in love to immigrants in this country. We know couples who have become legal guardians to teenagers from Central America who came here as unaccompanied minors. We know church congregations that support asylum seekers with housing and other needs during the course of the long asylum process. We think of our good friends at Casa Alterna in Atlanta who provide short-term hospitality to people released from immigration detention centers, and our friends at El Refugio who offer support to immigrants in detention and their families. Here in Comer, a community center called The Perch has just started a new afterschool program serving middle and high-school students in the refugee community. The list goes on.

In Eh Kaw's words: "If you want to approach the kingdom, you have to give away. If you want love, love someone. It is what Jesus tells us to do. The kingdom is right here. The kingdom is here in the heart."

from the people of Jubilee

Tatiana and a young friend share a quiet moment on the swing. We've enjoyed having Tatiana with us since January — her Russian soup, her sense of humor and love of gardening. We're also celebrating with her now, after months of waiting, she received her work authorization, started a job and —thanks to a longtime pastor friend of Jubilee — has a car. Tatiana's little friend spent his first few months at Jubilee with his mom, from Haiti.





Jubilee Camp 2021

Jubilee Camp brought together a joyous mix of 15-25 children from Welcome Center families, Jubilee staff, and from families in the Comer community for a half-day program of nature exploration, crafts, field trips, and outdoor fun. Our free program ran for six weeks during the summer holidays, and explored themes of animals, plants and rocks. Led by Jubilee volunteers, the program also gave some of our older kids an opportunity to gain leadership experience as Teen Leaders.





Above left: Caylynn and Ka Bruce Moon pose at the river on Jubilee property.

Above: Campers gather on the last day with a sign that reads "Thanks camp leaders!" The vans pictured behind transported the group to several state parks for swimming and exploring.

Left: Camille teaches an introductory level English class, observed by several new volunteers. Many of our recent classes have been held outside on this shaded porch.

Who we are

Jubilee Partners is an ecumenical Christian service community in northeast Georgia. We offer hospitality to refugees, asylum seekers, and other immigrants who have fled violence or persecution.

We are a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization; donations are thus tax-deductible. Your donations and support of our work are most appreciated.

Jubilee Partners Box 68 Comer, GA 30629
706-783-5131 www.jubileepartners.org



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Jubilee Partners
P.O. Box 68
Comer, GA 30629

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Summer (left) and fall (above) volunteers. Our program has recently been blessed with many participants, including several volunteers who have lived and worked with us for a full year! More information about our resident volunteer program is available on our website at jubileepartners.org/volunteer/resident-volunteer-program