



A Year Apart; Reunited in Rochester



The Habibi family reunification is nothing short of a miracle combined with herculean efforts to reunite this family torn apart by war and a broken visa system.

In February 2021, Mr. Abdul Habibi, a retired Afghan Army Colonel and cultural advisor to the U.S., was granted his U.S. visa, after his initial application in 2007. His son Walid served the U.S. at Camp Clark, and then became a women's rights activist in Afghanistan.

The problem: Mr. Habibi was given only two days to get to the U.S., and he had to leave his wife and son. The other family member visas were still "in processing" but everyone was sure the visas would arrive quickly.

In May, his son Walid was issued his visa, but Mrs. Habibi still did not have her visa. A decision was made that Walid would join his father, and they would await the visa for Mrs. Habibi. KOP agreed to help the family resettle in Rochester.

In June of last year, KOP volunteer and Board Member, Deb Abell, helped Walid file a family reunification petition with the U.S. government for his wife and children. KOP Director Ellen Smith advocated for Mrs. Habibi's visa and filed for an expedited petition with the help of Congressman Joe Morelle's office.



Time Ran Out When The Taliban Took Over Kabul; Leslie Meral Schick Makes the Life-Saving Connections

The family tried to get into Kabul airport during the evacuation, but the chaos was overwhelming for the family and a decision was made to try another day. A KOP supporter in Boston, Leslie Meral Schick, was able to make connections to get the Habibis and three other women from

local KOP families on a private bus to the airport, but then the suicide bomber struck as the bus sat at a gate.

Leslie did not give up her coordination efforts with those on the ground in Kabul and KOP. Through her connections, she found a way to get the families into Pakistan. They were then flown to Albania. The Habibis and three other KOP family members remained in Albania for seven months while their paperwork was completed to be able to come to Rochester. The other three women, one of whom was also an SIV applicant, were granted asylum by the Canadian government.

KOP would like to thank Leslie for her sleepless nights, constant contact with KOP, and the three families in coordinating their rescue from the Taliban. She is truly an inspiration for all of us.

Help us resettle more families like the Habibis to the Rochester area!



Join us for "All In For Afghan Allies" Virtual Race June 20 – 30, 2022

Help us reach our goal to resettle 50 wartime ally families this year!

There are 4 ways you can participate:

1. You can [register](#) to race in the event. The signup deadline to receive the race t-shirt is May 20, 2022, but supporters can still register after that date to participate.
2. You can start your own [individual or team fundraising page](#). Your team does not need to race together to fundraise together.
3. You can ask your business or employer to become a [sponsor](#).
4. You can make a [donation](#) to support this fundraiser

Whichever way you chose to move to honor our Afghan Allies, we encourage you to sign up today so that you are registered in time to get a race t-shirt. The t-shirt deadline is May 20, 2022, but participants can sign up through the race period of June 20–30, 2022.

Participants who need assistance setting up a personal fundraising page can email: info@keepingourpromise.org.

[Click here to sign up today – All In For Afghan Allies Virtual Race](#)

Thank you to our sponsors:



www.keepingourpromise.org

888 Pittsford Mendon Center Road, Pittsford
NY 14534 United States

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