

Cosponsoring Welcome

BY BLAKE COLLINS

On April 12, a group of PC(USA) national staff members gathered in the lobby of Louisville International Airport holding signs of welcome for their new friends Mohamad, Lena and Noir Al Ramli, who were arriving from Egypt. The Al Ramlis had spent seven years in Egypt after being displaced by the war in Syria. For weeks, staff prepared to welcome the Al Ramlis. They furnished their apartment, stocked their refrigerator and collected donations, as part of their pledge to cosponsor a family in partnership with Kentucky Refugee Ministries.* Groups of volunteers commit to walking beside a refugee family through a three-month program. Staff from PMA and OGA helped transport the Al Ramli family to and from medical appointments, language classes, licensing agencies and more, assisting with their transition to life in the U.S. The sponsorship ended with a luncheon on August 4 and a basket auction to raise funds for the family (PW staff contributed a basket; a total of 22 were auctioned). Many local Presbyterian congregations have been partnering with KRM for years. "Local congregations influenced the national office's participation," Ruth Gardner, director of human resources for the PMA, said. Staff members "received an unbelievably hospitable response from Mohamed, Lena and Noir that will lead to a long-term friendship," she added.

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*Kentucky Refugee Ministries is a 2006 Birthday Offering recipient.

