



### **RERA January 2024 UPDATE**

RERA is a refugee sponsorship group that is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization which is funded by donations. It is comprised of volunteers from several East of the river parishes and groups including St. James. Our Fiduciary is St. Peter's Episcopal Church in Hebron.

We began forming in October of 2021 and became an official organization in March of 2022. In May of 2022, we met "our family" comprised of mom, dad and triplet 17-year-old girls. We have been working with them ever since. They are a beautiful Kurdish family from Syria. With our help, they have accomplished so much in such a short time, such as:

- Getting settled in an apartment in Manchester
- The girls enrolled as seniors at Manchester High School and graduated with high honors with the class of 2023.
- Both mom and dad obtained jobs and both work full-time at the same company.
- Dad earned his driver's license, and bought a car.
- One daughter has her learner's permit
- All three girls worked last summer at a job at the church across the street from their house, as counselors at the church camp.
- And best of all, all three girls applied to and were accepted at several colleges and began college at Central CT State University in September! They had a successful first semester!
- In the fall, we helped them search for a new apartment in New Britain so they could live closer to CCSU for the girls. Looking at many apartments and completing rental applications was a major undertaking but we finally found the right one.
- We helped them move from Manchester to New Britain in mid-October and they have since settled in nicely to their new place.
- Mom & Dad now commute from New Britain to Manchester every day and the girls either walk or take a short bus ride to school.

There is much that a sponsorship group like RERA does to help a refugee family accomplish their goals, get through daily life, and work toward independence. It includes things like helping them open a bank account, obtain State Benefits, find employment, submit FAFSA applications, apply for college, find an apartment, furnish the apartment, provide rides, find and obtain medical care & appropriate vaccinations, learn English, and so much more.

RERA is considering helping another family but cannot do so without additional volunteers. If you have any interest in finding out how you can help a refugee family, please contact us and we would be happy to talk with you!

It has been so rewarding to get to know this family and see them flourish in their new country. It is not just a “volunteer opportunity” it is truly a life changing experience. Come join us and see for yourself!

Contact: Lisa Gleason, [gleasonlisa3@gmail.com](mailto:gleasonlisa3@gmail.com) or Amy Haynes, [ab.haynes@cox.net](mailto:ab.haynes@cox.net)

Visit: [River East Resettlement Alliance – Empowering Refugee Families \(reract.org\)](http://reract.org)

