

## CONTINUED...

## Family flees Afghanistan, receives help in Rochester

By Liza R. Mugnolo  
Editorial intern

Mohammad Humayoon Shinwari sadly recollected the turmoil in his homeland of Afghanistan. Coming from Haska Maina, near the border province Nangrahar, his family had been the target of political attack and sought refuge in the United States.

Shinwari has long served in the Afghan National Liberation Front, a political party he said promotes a stable Islamic government. But his involvement evoked animosity toward his family, he said.

He told of how one day his eldest son, Kamran, was kidnapped while walking home from school and had both of his arms broken by rebels known as members of the Taliban. He was just 7 years old.

The family eventually emigrated to Pakistan with hopes of seeking peace away from the chaos of the Taliban, the Islamic fundamentalist faction that currently rules most of Afghanistan.

Shinwari noted that the Taliban have imposed a strict code of laws, which have done away with several traditional Afghan customs and holidays. In the meantime, Afghanistan remains one of the world's poorest countries and millions of people are starving.

"There is no education, no life, no food, no rules, no help, no water," he remarked.

After about 14 years, Shinwari fled from Pakistan's instability as well. He explained,

"there is no life in Pakistan, especially for people who do political work."

Through the Immigration and Naturalization Service, Shinwari and his extended family of 12 were able to take political refuge in the United States. Catholic Family Center, affiliated with the U.S. Catholic Conference, made their living arrangements and helped Shinwari find work.

Shinwari and his stepbrother Jahangir support the family — Shinwari's wife and children, father, stepmother and stepbrothers — through their employment at Liquitane in Rochester.

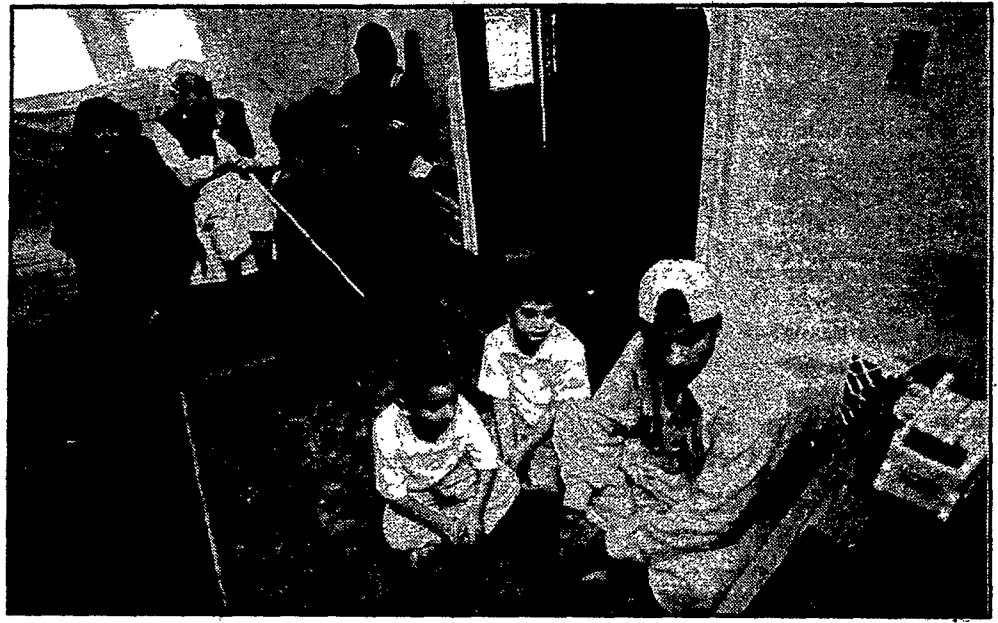
He also is working to gain refuge for a brother who remains in Pakistan.

Still active in the Afghan National Liberation Front, Shinwari serves as director of its foreign relations and has maintained communication with his compatriots.

CFC resettled Shinwari and his family last April in a house on Melville Street in Rochester. His five children range from ages 4 through 18, and most are enrolled in Rochester public schools. Each school offers refugee outreach such as the English as a Second Language Program.

"They appreciate it dearly," Shinwari noted on the children's success with an American education, adding, "They're happy because we have no problems."

The former political leader himself is registered at the Westside Learning Center on Chili Avenue, a school/day care that assists refugees.



(Front, from left) Qais Shinwari, 4, and his brother Kamel, 6, and their stepbrother Ismail Shinwari, watch TV as their grandparents Lalbib Khan and Malik Gulalam Khan and their sister Rabia Shinwari look on in their Rochester home.

Help also has been given his family by Saint's Place, a four-year-old refugee outreach ministry of St. Louis Parish in Pittsford. St. Louis launched Saint's Place as a collaborative effort with Catholic Family Center after sponsoring a Somalian family in October 1998.

Saint's Place, directed by Colleen Knauf, became the largest provider of furniture to the center's refugee department, with local parishes donating much of it. Thanks to the agency, the Afghan family arrived at a house well-stocked with necessary furnishings, appliances and other household items.

"I have no words to explain (my gratitude) to her," Shinwari commented on the generosity of Knauf and Saint's Place. "On-

ly that we appreciate it."

"The family is so grateful," Knauf said. "We learn from them, they learn from us, it's a mutual thing. It's really been very, very rewarding."

Now Shinwari and his brothers are reaching out to other Afghani families arriving in Rochester and are assisting Knauf at Saint's Place with furniture moving as well. Shinwari has also applied for a position with the CFC's Refugee and Immigration Department to help other refugees.

"It doesn't matter where they're from, they are our brothers and sisters. We are all created by one God, we're here to help each other, not just think about ourselves," Knauf added.

## Refugees

Continued from page 1

Greater Rochester Community of Churches officials hope this arrangement will be devoid of organizational problems that led to their discontinuation of the Refugee Resettlement Services Project.

The Rev. J. Paul Womack, former GRCC president, said he had commissioned a task force to reevaluate the project in the months prior to its closing.

"We felt there were some management issues, and some kind of change was going to be necessary," said Rev. Womack, co-pastor of Covenant United Methodist Church in Rochester. "Was the system we had in place skilled enough to provide ongoing

oversight?"

"I had some concerns about our ability to recruit churches and support people who were settling refugees," Rev. Womack added. "I personally thought we had lost some of our energy around that."

Rather than make changes to the existing structure, GRCC's board of directors opted to shut down RRSP.

"Due to the fact that we're an all-volunteer organization, there was no responsible way we could manage the program. It was a very painful decision," said Sister Beth LeValley, SSJ, who succeeded Rev. Womack as GRCC president in January.

The GRCC board's decision meant that the longtime director of its refugee program, Gail Maureen, was out of a job. Rev. Womack said that Maureen had a "pas-

sionate commitment to the settlement of refugees. She gave a lot of her life to that."

However, Rev. Womack, Sister LeValley and Delaney declined to comment specifically on how much Maureen's job performance had played into the program's woes.

"Everybody's been trying to leave that behind," Delaney said.

### Collaborative climate

Following the closing of RRSP, Delaney said, Catholic Family Center officials contacted Church World Services about picking up CWS refugee services locally. Delaney said he was spurred to explore this avenue because CFC's annual influx of new refugees is expected to slow from 325 to 250 in the upcoming year, due to cuts in federal funding to CFC that would go toward resettlement of refugees.

"It became a numbers thing. We would have had to lay off staff here," Delaney said. "So we had to jump out of the mold and do the unthinkable, and go to CWS."

Rev. Roberson said that CWS was open to collaboration, because of CFC's strong reputation for resettling refugees.

"The leadership of GRCC had spoken to us about the work of CFC and recommended their program very highly," Rev. Roberson remarked.

Sister LeValley said that GRCC is comfortable with the collaboration as well. "It just seems CFC has a major staff and infrastructure," she said.

Delaney also pointed that this development enables Church World Services to once again have a local presence. "I think they were trying to make the best of a bad situation and show they were still interested in a ministry here," he commented. "It's unfortunate the way it happened, but I think it's an exciting project."

Delaney said that Church World Services

plans to send approximately 100 refugees to its new facility at Catholic Family Center during the first year. In addition, the center will oversee a new CWS program for about 50 Cubans.

Delaney said that some refugee cases formerly handled by the now-defunct RRSP have been picked up by a CWS agency in Syracuse. Delaney added that he will likely add one part-time employee to his staff come January.

The refugee caseload will cover a 50-mile radius. Delaney noted that a new national law went into effect Oct. 1, cutting the radius of areas in which organizations can settle refugees from 100 miles, to ensure better management of the resettlement process. Refugees through CWS will come mostly from Africa and eastern Europe; that is also the current trend for CFC.

Though RRSP had some organizational woes, Delaney acknowledged that overall support of refugees by the Protestant community is quite high.

"The history of the Protestant churches is they're going to do what's needed, and do it well," Delaney said.

Delaney predicted that the distinction between Catholic and Protestant will become blurred as CFC's new format of refugee resettlement solidifies. Already, he said, 80 percent of CFC's current pool of volunteers are non-Catholic.

"In effect, we've been as ecumenical as ecumenical can be," Delaney commented. If anything, Delaney said, he hopes that more Catholic churches and volunteers might now step forward.

"Part of the membership of GRCC is Catholic, so I think this could spark some life into the Catholic involvement," he commented. "In the old days, Catholics were the foundation of the sponsorship effort here."

## COURIER CLASSIFIEDS

### GENERAL

#### Announcements

**ADOPTIONS** The Catholic Courier does not publish adoption advertising. To obtain a list of agencies that serve birth mothers and adoptive parents, call 716-328-4340. Agencies wishing to be included on this list may send information to the Catholic Courier.

### Drug Store

**W.A.B. DRUGS**  
COMPLETE  
SURGICAL-OSTOMY SUPPLIES  
Free Delivery in Monroe County  
Phone 323-1470  
4358 Culver Rd., Rochester, NY 14622  
FAX LINE 323-2810

### Merchandise

We buy all antiques & household goods for highest cash prices. One item or entire estate. Complete estate services. Appraisals, sales conducted.  
**Marilyn's Antiques**  
716-647-2480

Need a classified? **e-mail**  
ads@catholiccourier.com

### SERVICES

#### Ceiling Repair

**TEXTURED/SWIRED CEILINGS:** 9' x 12' ceiling only \$59! Water damage, drywall, plaster repairs. Any size patches or repairs. Quality work; reasonable prices. 716/392-5076.

### Computer

**MICROWORX DIRECT, INC.**  
Computer Sales & Service  
Networks. Upgrades. Peripherals  
www.microworx.com  
793 S. Goodman St.  
716-271-0050

### Masonry

**MASONRY REPAIRS:** All types, brick steps, sidewalks, basement wall repairs. Reasonable. 35 years experience. 716-323-1007. Al Meyvis, Sr.

### SERVICES

#### Moving & Hauling

**K-D Moving & Storage, Inc.**  
Experience in office, household moving and deliveries.  
Big or Small, We do them All!  
473-6610/473-4357  
23 Arlington St. Rochester NY 14607  
NYDOT#9657

### Painting & Wall Covering

**AL MEYVIS, JR.:** Ext./Int. painting. Basement walls repaired/painted. "Wet basement problems." Carpentry. Drive-way sealing. All types small jobs welcome. Sr. discount. Certified. 392-4435 or 323-2876.

**BURG-MASTER PAINTING/PAPERHANGING,** textured ceilings, walls, ceilings repaired, rugs shampooed. Insured, powerwashing. Dan Burgmaster, 716/663-0827.

### Plaster Restoration Wallpapering Painting

Free Estimates  
716-482-3243 • 716-703-8245  
Terry & Nina McCullough  
A Couple That Care

### Volunteers sought for refugee resettlement programs

Catholic Family Center has an ongoing need for volunteers in its Refugee Resettlement Services department.

Volunteers are needed to welcome new arrivals, secure and prepare lodgings in advance, and provide transportation for routine medical, educational and social services appointments. Those interested in volunteering may

call 716/262-7070.

Volunteer assistance is also sought at Saint's Place, a joint program of CFC and St. Louis Parish in Pittsford. Saint's Place provides refugee families with clothing, household items and furniture. To learn more about volunteering for Saint's Place, or to donate cash or goods, call Colleen Knauf at 716/596-5675.