



NOVEMBER 2021

del &
jeannie
penner



WELCOMING THE FOREIGNER,
ENCOURAGING THE CHURCH,
EQUIPPING THE NEXT GENERATION

Dear Friends and Family,

After spending 4 weeks traveling, mostly in Indiana and Michigan we are writing this letter from Oklahoma. It has been wonderful catching up with many of you the last weeks! We're now going to be spending a few weeks with our children before we fly back to Germany the beginning of December. If some of what you read sounds familiar, it may be because we've recently talked about it or you have read it in our updates. If you do not receive our e-mail updates and would like to, please send us an email at djpenner@web.de. Now a bit to what has been keeping us busy the last months.

Welcome Culture to integration culture

In our work with refugees in the last 6 1/2, years there has been a shift in the emphasis of our work. With the large influx of refugees in the first several years we sought to create a welcoming culture. With fewer new refugees now coming into the city our efforts have shifted to helping them integrate into German life. For us, true integration means mutual trust and respect, getting involved in all areas of life, including socially and culturally. It also means helping our foreign friends realize that there are not only benefits but also obligations that come with their new life in Germany.



Maria, our friend & bridge to the Somalis



Jeannie and members of our city integration council from Colombia and Indonesia

Bridge people.

During the Covid epidemic, we have sought to invest in what we call "bridge people". We look for refugees that are fairly well integrated, have learned German and are either learning a vocation or have already found work. Their ability to understand both their home culture as well as the German culture and their heart for their own people is invaluable. As we influence and reach them, they in turn can influence and reach their people.

Maria is a bridge to the Somalis. A 22 year old practicing Muslim, her narrow shoulders have had to carry a lot since she arrived as an orphan in Germany 7 years ago. She's studying to be a geriatric nurse which in Germany is a 3 year process and not easy. She doesn't earn a lot of money, but she tries to send a bit of what she earns to her orphaned siblings who are in a refugee camp in Ethiopia. She's also trying to get a German driver's license and has run into some troubles with the officials. Del has spent time trying to iron out some of the problems; writing official letters and doing what any father would do standing up for his daughter. We've even given her a few dollars to help, money which some of you have given us to help our refugees. So it is a team effort to express God's love to her. We often pray for her for which she is always thankful. Our prayer is that Jesus will reveal Himself to her and that she will learn to know God as her loving heavenly Father.



Ibrahim, our friend and bridge to the Syrians. An advertisement encouraging vaccinations

Vaccination campaign in our city.

Another example of working with our bridge people has been helping our refugees to get vaccinated. Together with the city health department and other local relief organizations, we worked hard making both translated information about the vaccine as well as the shot easily assessable. What we found to be the most effective was having our bridge people inform their own people. Ibrahim (Syrian), Maria (Somalian) and Arthur (Russian-German), all members of the integration council in which Del is chairman and Jeannie a member, were key in helping to reach their people. One fun



Winston and Marnie, the pastor couple from Suriname we are supporting in our new church.

thing we did was sponsor a fun and games event for children, coupled with an opportunity for adults to get vaccinated. It was quite successful with over 100 children attending and around 40 adults being vaccinated.

ARTUR
WOHLFAHRT
AUS RUSSLAND
VAKSINATSIIYA SPASAYET ZHIZNI
VACCINATING SAVES LIVES
IMPFFEN
RETTET LEBEN
INFO-TEL. 116 117

Arthur, our friend and bridge to the Russians.

Changing churches

Twenty-four years ago, Winston and Marnie Tjong Ayong and their two young children, moved to Idar-Oberstein from Suriname to help us in Idar-Oberstein. After working together for six years, we sent them out; first, to help with our church plant in Kirchberg and then a year later they planted a church in Kastellaun, which is about an hour from where we live. That was 17 years ago.



On the bank of the river where 5 believers from our new church were baptized.

When we were together in June, we made a decision to help Winston and Marnie build the local church in their area. Since our main ministry in the last years has been outside the church, our involvement in local church leadership has been limited. We are excited about this new opportunity, which brings with it a new commitment and new responsibilities, although it is somewhat challenging at our age. This change has been very encouraging for us as well as for those in our new church home. They have welcomed our presence and our leadership with open arms. Among other things, Del is organizing the small groups and Jeannie will be helping to lead the welcoming culture.

Although the church is nearly an hour drive from Idar-Oberstein, this does not mean we will neglect our love for the city where we live or our work with the refugees. It may mean we will not have as much time to help with many of their physical needs, but we want to invest our time more strategically, spiritually, and through relationships. We hope to divide our work in half between bringing change locally to our city through relationships and our integration work on one hand and helping build the church an hour away on the other. Looks like retirement will have to wait a few years!

We wish you all a Blessed Thanksgiving and a Merry Christmas!

- del & jeannie penner

Reach out to us and donate at globeintl.org/Penner