

The mission field is here; the time is now!

Volunteer's Story

Hello, my name is Arne Fockler. I am a member of Redeemer Lutheran Church in Rochester. I worked for IBM for 31 years, first as a programmer, then as a manager, and finally, as a teacher in leadership and management development. I retired in 1999. After retirement, I continued to do technology work for nonprofit organizations. When I first heard Cynthia Kahn speak about POBLO, I knew this was something that I wanted to be involved with. I knew so little about Islam and about Somalia. The few things I did know were all negative. I was filled with fear and apprehension. I felt that there must be another side to this, and I wanted to learn about it.

I have worked almost exclusively with Somali people. But I have been introduced to other nationalities as well (Palestinian, Jordanian, Chinese, Egyptian and Syrian). It amazes me how big God's world is.

I first attempted to do computer classes with 2 to 4 people. This did not work very well. Most of the time was spent trying to interpret what people wanted to know about technology (Three people -- Three different needs). Everyone I have worked with has been gracious and extremely thankful for my time. You cannot help but feel good yourself when people are so appreciative of the attempt.

While technology transfer has not happened to the degree I had hoped for, this has been a good experience. I have a strong relationship with one man. He wanted to learn how to fix PCs and he has made progress at learning how to do that. I have known him for over a year. Our time together is now largely nontechnical. He believes in Islam. I am a Christian. We talk about God/Allah. We have exchanged books on Islam and Christianity. I am learning patience. In God's time...

Wants & Needs...

- Gas cards
- Gift cards for sewing supplies (Jo-Ann Fabrics, Kelly's Quality Sewing Center, Pine Needles Quilt and Sew)
- Drivers to transport families to Redeemer for Sunday services
- Gift certificates for office supplies (Walmart, Target, Staples, Office Max, etc)
- Money for English as a Second Language books
- Volunteers for our ESL classes – we now have about 55 students and are holding 15 classes a week.
- Volunteers to be receptionists! With the expanding classes, we are in need of more receptionists to be present in the office. Consider giving 2-3 hours per week of your time!
- Volunteers to help at the sewing classes! 2 hours per week on Wednesdays!

To find out more about POBLO....

If you are curious about what POBLO is and does, call to **schedule a time to observe our ESL classes and sewing classes.**

Missionary John Gayed's Update

In trying to accommodate the requests and needs of our students and to involve more students in our programs, we are in the process of starting cooking classes. These classes will help our students learn how to make American dishes and will be held at Holy Cross Lutheran Church.

Other great news is that we are growing. Twelve new students have joined our classes and because of this new number, the center can no longer provide room for everyone. Trinity Lutheran Church has given us two rooms in which we can hold classes beginning in June. Trinity Lutheran Church will also host the 4th pot-luck supper on April 11th.

We heard from a friend about an Orthodox Egyptian family who have lived in town for almost eleven years. We contacted them and within a month had a good relationship. We invited them for dinner at our house and got to know them more. We found out that a member has been looking for spiritual encouragement and doesn't have American friends nor is she attending any American churches. Mariam invited her to our Arabic Bible study. After some hesitation in the beginning, once we started the Bible Study, she never missed once as we see the hunger and the thirst of the word of God and love of Jesus. *Pray that God keeps this fire in her and also in our Bible Study.*

The Human Care program is going great and bringing people asking for help as we are working/helping the Saudi's community. God is opening new ways to get closer to them and hear their problems and needs (especially the spiritual and emotional needs) in order to share the Gospel. We helped a Saudi family by translating for them at the dentist and at Mayo Clinic. They are amazed of the care we give and the free service we offer and they have a lot of questions of why we do this service. Because of our help and advice we were able to meet them three times at the Mall. Mariam now has a very good relationship with the mother and her daughter and was able to meet more ladies at the Mall as this woman introduced her to other women. Also I was able to take her son with me to the Wednesday Lenten service at Redeemer Lutheran Church. He couldn't stay for the worship service as he had an English class but he had pizza with us at the church. Before leaving I gave him a tour of the church and he had some questions about the cross and the altar. It was the first time in his life to be in a church building. *We pray for the opportunity to keep talking to them about Christ.*

Mission Success Story

The husband of one of the sewing instructors passed away recently. The obituary was brought to the sewing class and shared with all the students. Every single student was saddened to learn about the husband's passing. A sympathy card was passed around, and the students signed it, in English or her native language, each one expressing her sympathy and sharing in the instructor's loss.