Dear friends,

River Falls has decided to reach out in welcoming love to a refugee family after a year or more of discussion, prayer and research. Beginning this fall, things moved rapidly forward as we learned of the possibility of reaching out to a family from Guatemala.

Thus, at an ecumenical meeting on the 12th of January at First Congregational Church, River Falls, a group was formed to join us in sponsoring a Central American refugee family. The family consists of a young mother and four children, ages 9, 7, 5 and 2. What can be told is that the family's plight is very similar to the plight of other families who are fleeing from the violence in Central America.

Representatives of the following churches were present: United Methodist, Catholic-St. Bridget, Hope Lutheran, Ezekiel Lutheran, and Assembly of God, and since then the Unitarian church has asked to be included.

This family is expected to cross the border in the next days and when authorities have examined their papers, they will be bused to a bus terminal near us. We have found a place to rent including utilities at $800 per month and donations of clothes, furnishings, and household needs are coming in daily. So much enthusiasm and love being shown in River Falls delights us.

Financial donations will be needed for at least a two-year commitment for the family speaks no English and it will be some time before this mother is able to support her children if and when she receives her asylum papers. We have an excellent lawyer working on the case but at this point the finances of this project worry us.

We are enthusiastic but realize this is a serious and long term responsibility as we reach out in Christian love to this young family to bring hope to them for a better and safer life. GOD IS STILL SPEAKING!

Barb de Souza, Bobbie Kuhn, Dave Oserdorf

Editor's note: If you or your congregation has an interest in supporting this mission, checks can be made out to: First Congregational UCC River Falls. Address: 110 N 3rd St, River Falls, WI 54022-2302. Indicate that the check is for Refugee Family Support.