

THE STORY OF HUSSAM ALROUSTOM SYRIAN REFUGEE

(Recently Resettled through CWS in Jersey City, New Jersey)



Hussam Alroustom fled Syria on March 23rd, 2013. After his house was shelled by a missile from the Syrian Army, he escaped his home city of Homs and moved to a neighboring district. Then, the house he shared with 5 other families was shelled and destroyed as well. He next moved to a nearby district, and barrel bombs were being dropped on that district.

Realizing that no matter where he moved to in Syria was not safe, Hussam, together with his 1 year old daughter Maesa, his son who became autistic due to the war, and his wife Suha all fled Syria. To escape, it was necessary to pay a smuggler to take them to the borders with Jordan. They first boarded a pickup truck with 20 other Syrian families and were dropped off in the middle of the night in the desert.

With their children in one hand and luggage in another, their journey was long. Trekking through the desert and climbing and descending upon mountains, the families decided to leave their luggage behind. Hussam, a supermarket owner and metal worker, knew that life in Syria was never going to be the same; even before he was taken to Zaatari Refugee Camp, where they lived for a number of months with thousands of other similar refugee families.

He eventually paid a smuggler to take him and his family out of the camp, in order to work to support his family in conditions better than those in the camp. He worked in Jordan for over a year, until the Jordanian military found out about his working without a work visa. After he fled the Zaatari refugee camp, he also applied to the UNHCR in Amman, Jordan, and began interviews with the UNHCR for resettlement in the United States. The process took about a year--until he arrived in the United States on June 16, 2015. Hussam now works two jobs to support his family; working as a mover and at night at a bakery.

He also has been sharing his family's story with legislators and other Americans, to help us understand the personal face and lives of Syrian refugee families.

*For more information on how you can ADVOCATE to support and RESETTLE Syrian and other refugees, contact:
Contact Disciples Refugee & Immigration Ministries, Rev. Dr. Sharon Stanley-Rea, Director,
ststanley@dhm.disciples.org, or 202-957-7826 (cell), 5 Thomas Circle, NW, Washington, DC 20005*