

# Beth-El Members Welcome Immigrants

By Vicki Witte, active member at Beth-El Mennonite Church



*Sewing group creations at the Beth-El Fair Trade Market.*

In the spring of 2019 Beth-El welcomed a **refugee women's sewing group**, which was no mere issue of building usage. Sara Branham and other volunteers teach monthly sewing projects; Vicki Witte and other volunteers drive around town to pick up the women who need rides and provide childcare. The sewing group provides a welcoming space for women from a variety of countries and cultures to work on sewing projects, to practice their English, and to develop friendships with other women. Volunteer Kelley McKinnon exudes, “[sewing teacher] Sara Branham shows great love for both sewing and people!”

The sewing group participated in Beth-El's 2019 Fair Trade market, where they sold products they created. Proceeds went back into the group funds to purchase fabric and other

supplies. Though we've had to take a break during COVID, we're all eager to get back together in the building soon!

Beth-El families and individuals have also been active in **sponsoring asylum-seeking families** new to Colorado Springs! Wilfredo and Damaris arrived from Guatemala in the spring of 2019, and several friends immediately agreed to join a sponsor team for them and their son, Braulio. The larger Beth-El family reached out generously with donations of furniture, household items, and clothing for the family.

Julie Carr writes of the experience: “Our family decided to step into the unknown and have Wilfredo, Damaris, and Braulio live with us for several weeks. We wanted to do what we could to make sure another family wouldn't be separated and interned. It was incredibly humbling and eye opening to navigate the immigration path with the family for a short time. We didn't share a language or culture, but we shared a hope for safety and family togetherness. We relied on others at Beth-El who carried lots of tasks and worries along with us and the family. I felt the Spirit in our teamwork and efforts.”

“Being part of the journey with Wilfredo and Damaris,” writes Annaken Toews, “has meant opening my heart to new friendship, finding opportunities for mutuality in a relationship that on the surface seems unidirectional, but actually has put me on the receiving end of a special love.”



*Julie Carr with Wilfredo, Damaris, and Braulio*



*Mobile Clothing Closet*

Beth-El's anti-racism group is excited to announce the formation of a **Mobile Clothing Closet** to serve local immigrants in partnership with the Accompaniment and Sanctuary Coalition. Jeanette Martin writes, "Someone offers a wall-to-wall shelving unit for the room. Another offers whatever we want from 5000+ pounds of NEW clothes donated from Walmart. Masked volunteers start to show up regularly to sort. A donor drops off dressers, desks, and cabinets that fit together for a valuable work surface. Did I mention all this took place in the last two weeks? With all these generous surprises it seems like the Spirit is saying, 'Let's clothe the immigrant community!'"

Indeed, let us continue to welcome and care for our immigrant neighbors.

[Click here to read online.](#)