

This is
WHO WE ARE  *This is*
WHAT WE DO

✦ ICSJ PARISH REFUGEE EFFORT ✦

It's hard to believe in our post-pandemic era, but one of our most recent refugee family from Burundi -- Alain, Gaelle and son, Ryan-- arrived in Chicago in September, 2020 after living TEN years in a Kenyan refugee camp, where their son, Ryan was born. Good news has followed their arrival in Chicago when in late March, 2022, a daughter, Kylie, was born to the family. Our ever-present, hands-on volunteer Lisa Dellagiardino Feriend, coordinated an online baby shower wishlist for the Parish last spring, enabling the family to receive the many basics required for a newborn.

Two Parish members—Barbara Leutz and Ellie Weyden—have worked with the family since they arrived, helping them adjust to their new life in Chicago. Barbara and Ellie visit the family on Saturdays for walks along the lakefront, one pushing the baby stroller and the other Ryan's wheelchair.



This past Saturday, Kylie celebrated her first birthday with her family and our volunteers, Barbara and Ellie, who brought Spring Baskets full of gifts, prepared by the ICSJ's Wisdom, Women & Wine Parish group!

The dad, Alain, works the third shift at a construction site, while Gaelle, his wife, works the first shift at Misericordia as a caregiver in the women's home.

Her day starts at 4:30am when she wakes Ryan to bathe, dress and feed him before his school bus arrives and Alain gets home to take him downstairs to send him off. Ryan is now 11 and although he is still non-verbal, a symptom of his Cerebral Palsy, the family is happy to report that he is progressing in his school!



ICSJ has recently helped secure home internet for them and gifted them with an air conditioner to battle the brutal summer heat in their apartment. Thanks to another ICSJ refugee volunteer, Prima Wilson, we were also able to help them purchase two new beds and frames!

Though you won't find the word "refugee" in the Bible, Matthew 25 points the way on this subject, saying that how we treat "strangers" shows if we are really the followers of Jesus. In his section on the Final Judgment, when Jesus will welcome into His kingdom those who welcomed Him in as a stranger, it is clear that the "stranger" is none other than Our Lord in disguise!