

## Reflection by Hakafa member, Sara Kurensky, on the experience of greeting the Renovat Family

Yesterday I brushed up against what "refugee" means: It means being a 28 year old mother with a husband, four young children, two small suitcases, and trust in an international system. It means leaving the camp you have lived in for a decade and getting on an airplane without any idea where you are going. It means landing a half a world away, where you are met by a group of smiling strangers who speak a language you don't understand. It means your children falling asleep in a car and being carried by strangers into a 2 bedroom apartment, where there are beds and clean floors and more smiling strangers. It means fighting through your exhaustion and learning about gas stoves and refrigerators and lamp switches and how to lock doors. It means opening closets and cabinets and being awestruck to find that strangers have put clothes and food there for your family. It means knowing that now it is up to you and your husband - that you have to learn the language and figure out how to pay rent for this place the strangers call "home". It means that tomorrow you will have to go outside in air colder than anything you have ever known and learn how to get on a train and begin your new life.

Yesterday I brushed up against what "refugee" means. It means an international community where people help people pick up lives destroyed by violence and evil. It means a landlady from Bosnia who remembers what it was like for her 20 years ago and a delivery man from South Sudan who remembers what it was like for him 10 years ago. It means people donating money, food and clothing for strangers. It means friends cleaning and making beds and cooking a meal and putting a picture on the wall so a place feels like home for a 28 year old mother with her husband and four young children - because that is humanity and that is where hope comes from.