

## Asylum Seekers Ministry

by Pastor Jonathan Hauze  
St. Paul's UCC (Lionville), Exton

I met the Baceanu family last summer outside my local grocery store. They were standing on the corner, begging for food. They told me that they had come from Romania to seek a better life in America. Desperation was written on their faces.



*The Baceanu family, July 2018 (from left, Mirabela, Suraj, Gustavo, and Marin)*

The Baceanu family are Roma (“Gypsy”). In the 1800s many Roma in Romania were enslaved, even by the Orthodox Church. In the 1900s they were targeted by the Nazi regime, with hundreds of thousands of Roma dying alongside the Jews in concentration camps—a memory preserved in the Roma proverb: “our ashes were mingled in the ovens.” Today, despite the good intentions of the European Union, most Roma in Europe are still treated as second-class citizens, victims of discrimination and worse simply because of their ethnicity. This is why the Baceanus have risked so much to seek asylum in the United States.

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I believe that the Holy Spirit brought the Baceanu family to my congregation, so that we might have an opportunity to practice the loving welcome of Christ in our midst, an opportunity to learn what it truly means when he says, "I was a stranger, and you welcomed me."

Last winter I wrote to PSEC churches to make a mission appeal on behalf of the Baceanus. After helping the Baceanus move out of their dilapidated home in a dangerous neighborhood, my dream was that together we might bless them with the gift of one year of full rental assistance in their new home. At that time, we needed to raise an additional \$8,000. I am delighted to tell you that we are less than \$2,000 away from reaching this goal. Your generosity has made a tremendous impact in the life of this family!

The Baceanus often tell me that they do not have the words, in Romanian or English, to express their gratitude for the church's love and support over these past months. Please keep them in your prayers as they anxiously anticipate their next immigration hearing in September, and know that your gifts have made a vital difference in the lives of these dear people.

#### **How to Help**

You can support this ministry by:

- Writing a check to "St. Paul's UCC" with "Roma Family" in the MEMO section. Checks may be sent to St. Paul's UCC, 101 Worthington Road, Exton PA 19341

AND

- Keep Marin, Mirabela, Gustavo, and Suraj in your prayers.

#### **Learn More Online**

[www.saintpaulsucc.net/ministry/asylum-seekers-ministry](http://www.saintpaulsucc.net/ministry/asylum-seekers-ministry)

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