

Dear Friends and Supporters,

On November 12, 2017, a terrible earthquake in north-western Iran struck the homes of our friends, Ahmad and Nasrin, who, with their children, Nader and Nadia, had been in Canada for only two years. The earthquake killed many people, many of them close family members, and left even more without homes or adequate shelter. Even now, those who survived are struggling to re-establish some kind of normal life during a hard winter.

When people here in Peterborough, friends and strangers, heard the news, they wanted to help. A bank account was set up, and donations poured in – from Ahmad and Nasrin, from Ahmad’s colleagues at Crayola, Canada, where he works, from churches in Peterborough – United, Anglican, Lutheran – from students at King George and Armour Heights Schools, which Nadia had attended, and from more individuals than we can name. These gifts have enabled Ahmad and Nasrin to send more than \$12,000 back home to help their village, their surviving family members, and anyone else in the surrounding communities who needs help.

The money was sent to Nasrin’s brother, Abadolah, whose truck was still operating, and who was able to organize a relief effort on the ground, using the money from Peterborough as it came in. Abadolah devoted himself to buying food and supplies in nearby towns that were less hard-hit, bringing them back home, and organizing distribution of food staples, warm clothing, and rudimentary materials for temporary shelter to anyone in need. He and some friends rented the facilities at a nearby bakery and spent a day baking bread for those who were hungry, using flour and ingredients bought with the money we had sent. He gave cash allowances to those who needed money to pay for medical care (which is not free to all, as it is here in Ontario), and, more sadly, to those who needed cash to pay for the burial of their loved ones who had not survived. Abadolah has sent pictures of his work to Nasrin, so she could see how the money we had sent was being used. We are sharing some of those pictures with you in this letter. Abadolah continues to devote himself to relief work as more money becomes available.

Ahmad and Nasrin, here in Peterborough, Nasrin’s brother Abadolah and her sister Samira in Iran, want everyone who has helped them to know how grateful they are. They beg forgiveness that they do not know everyone who has helped

them individually, and that they cannot thank you by name. As you will see, their gratitude is heartfelt nonetheless. They have written the following letter, which a friend has translated into English. It expresses their thanks better than anything their Canadian friends could say.

IT IS IN A SPIRIT OF GRATITUDE AND RESPECT, THAT WE GREET YOU.

THE UNPARALLELED CONCERN AND EFFORTS WHICH YOU HAVE SHOWN IN YOUR FUNDRAISING AND IN THE HELP YOU HAVE OFFERED TO THE KURDISH EARTHQUAKE VICTIMS IN WESTERN IRAN ARE WORTHY OF THE HIGHEST PRAISE.

WE WILL NEVER FORGET YOUR UNCEASING EFFORTS ON OUR BEHALF; THE THOUGHT OF THEM WILL ALWAYS REMAIN WITH US. AND WE HAVE FAITH THAT GOD WILL REWARD YOU FOR YOUR GOODNESS.

ON OUR OWN BEHALF AND ON BEHALF OF ALL OF THE KURDISH EARTHQUAKE VICTIMS, WE OFFER YOU, DEAR FRIENDS, OUR HEARTFELT GRATITUDE AND APPRECIATION, AND OUR BEST WISHES FOR YOUR HEALTH AND PROSPERITY; WE PRAY TO GOD THAT YOU WILL ALWAYS BE HAPPY AND HEALTHY. WE ONLY WISH THAT WE COULD REPAY YOUR UNFAILING CARE AND SUPPORT WITH THE LIFE OF HAPPINESS THAT YOU DESERVE.

WITH MUCH GRATITUDE.

FROM AHMAD AND NASRIN AND HER SISTER SAMIRA AND HER BROTHER ABADOLAH.



Abadolah and his wife Fariba holding a traditional commemorative banner of thanks.

“Dear Friends

This appreciation tablet [banner] is presented to thank you for helping earthquake victims in Kermanshah. It is filled with a gentle sorrow of the people who are hurt by the wrath of nature and the fury of earth and have lost their loved ones and all their property. Definitely your courage and self-devotion came to our rescue in those sad moments and soothed our upset souls.”

[At Abadolah’s request, Nasrin sent pictures of some of the original refugee sponsor group for inclusion on the traditional banner.]



Tracking the distribution of blankets and ten-kilo bags of rice from the back of the truck.



School supplies for students in a makeshift school in a neighbouring mountain village.

Abadolah and a friend baking bread for distribution to villagers.



Villagers built temporary huts of branches and covered them in plastic. Rugs salvaged from the rubble cover the ground.

This young woman holds a small parcel of lamb distributed to households.



Many villagers were injured or died in the earthquake. Abadolah gave funds from your donations to survivors to help cover medical and burial expenses.



More recently, unprecedented flooding has hit the earthquake zone. A few trailers have arrived to provide some storage and shelter. The villagers hope for spring and drier weather in order to begin rebuilding in earnest.

But there is good news too. Nasrin's mother was badly injured in the quake and had been transported, in a coma, to an intensive-care unit in Tehran. Last week she awoke for the first time and was able to speak with her family. There is still a long road ahead, but there is now new hope.

March, 2018