



# PARWIZ & WIFE

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## ARRIVAL

When we landed at the Washington airport. . . I [Parwiz] was accompanied by three other families. Those three families had some families who lived in the US before them, and their families came to welcome them in the airport. They took them with them, and we had no one here except Allah. It was very disappointing for us and was very sad for me and my wife. . . It was a very heartbreaking scene for me. . . I became separated from families, from homeland and from countrymen. . . no matter what a human heart is , you and I are Afghans [speaking to the interviewer], there is a disappointment in the human heart. Their families took those families, and you are a new guy who has just come from your homeland, you are far away from your homeland and in a new country, a new culture, a new language with new people, everything made my mind so sad. . . When we came here, we didn't have good memories. . . because it was the first time we traveled far from our homeland.

When we arrived in Washington. . . my child was very sick. I [Parwiz] didn't think that this is America. My wife and I were only thinking about our child. We arrived at the hotel, and I was called by my case worker at that moment; we [asked to] take my child to the doctor. He told me one thing – that you must have health insurance here. Without health insurance, it is very difficult. That moment was very worrying for me.

We were in the hotel and my husband had depression; it was hard for me [wife].



Hosted by:

## WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY



Interviewed in Dari by:

## ZAKIA ANWAR

With the informed consent of participants, interview transcripts have been adapted here in narrative form for clarity and efficiency with a commitment to retaining the intended meaning.

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Believe me, I [Parwiz] personally could not sleep all day and night, I could not fall asleep. . . and lots of bad thoughts were coming to my mind; that moment made me sick, and I became depressed a little bit. But my wife always supported me. . . telling me not to think about [these things]. It is clear to all of us that it takes a while for the brain and nerves of a person to calm down because our thoughts were on our country, our families and everyone. I was thinking it will take a long time to get used to this new environment, these people, and my goal was how to find a job, and my mind was so busy with all the things at those moments. . . what will happen to our future. . . our minds were restless, but after some time had passed, we found ourselves [thinking]: “we must stop thinking of the homeland. Let's put those things away and think about it here.”

## NOT WITHOUT ITS CHALLENGES

There is one thing – everyone in this society is busy; someone is busy studying, someone is busy with work. . . everyone is busy with their own things. Sometimes it is very rare that you go to a neighbor or visit a neighbor, whether it is domestic or foreign, because everyone is busy, but our relationship with the people who are here, with our neighbors are good for now; at least if we don't see each other or there is no communication, sometimes when we do see each other, there is a respect between us, there is a greeting and a nice behavior.

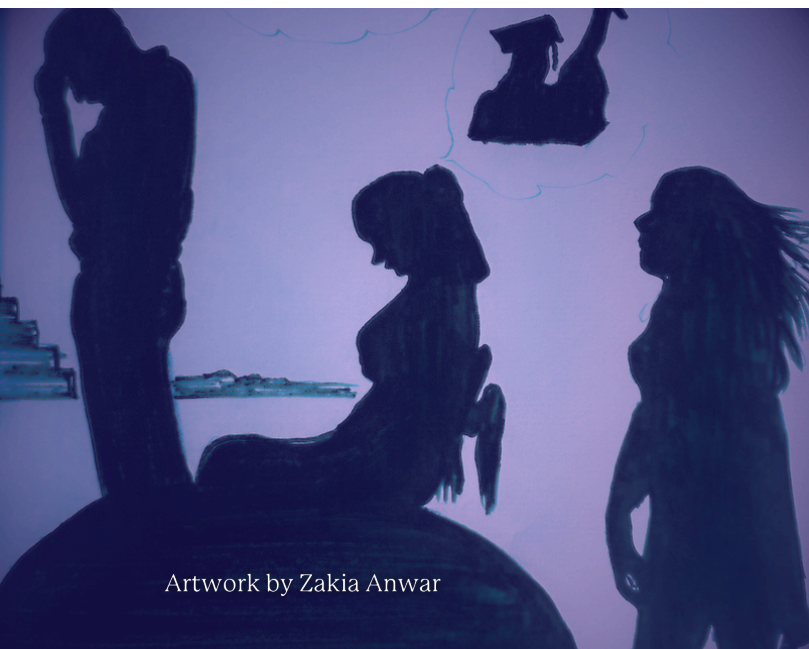
## SUPPORT ON CAMPUS

After three days living in a hotel, we got sponsored and that person called and said to come here [Washington State University in Pullman, WA]. . . I [Parwiz] shared with my caseworker that wherever you guys are taking us and wherever you are getting a house for me, just please remember to take me close to my own countrymen. That was my request from the beginning. . . the love and long conversations in the heart . . . the way you talk to your fellow countrymen, you can't talk to another person. Some people who do not have [the same] experience, they will say “oh this is nonsense – the hardships.”

When we came here, I [Parwiz] first wanted to come from Spokane to Pullman, and I was just trying to be in a place where there are my own countrymen because we had a language problem. . . If there is a countryman, at least he could accompany or help us. When we came [to Pullman], we did feel that we were in America; we saw Afghan families that came to welcome us. . . *We found a lot of love – from our people, from these people. We received a good welcome and love. Our sponsors . . . they welcomed us very graciously and kindly.* Especially from our Afghans and from the people who were in this campus and the person who sponsored us through their office, he and his wife were always calling us and were asking if we needed anything. It was not necessary for us to get everything. . . this person [the campus staff member] was the one who ensured that we did not need anything. And they were asking us if we wanted to go to any place.

In this college campus where we live, we found it very good, a very peaceful area and very nice people. It has many other advantages. For example, its security is very good. . . in terms of education, they are very good in education, and the good thing this place has for us is that everything is ten or fifteen minutes away from us.

*This place is a good place for learning and to get more life experiences.*



Artwork by Zakia Anwar



Everything was provided for us when we came here. It means that we did not lack anything, and they have accompanied us very well for a year. And when my [wife speaking] daughter was born, they cooperated a lot – like a family that can do a lot of good to one person. The person who sponsored us did lots of good things. Even they had a baby shower for my child and it was very nice, and they did help a lot.

Me [Parwiz] and my wife, we take our children and we walk around. . . there is an American football field close to us . . . five minutes from us. When the football season begins, we see it, and it is very enjoyable for us. We enjoy it a lot, and the excitement of the sound that is here. . . the fireworks. This is very pleasant for us.

They prepared English classes for us. They appointed English teachers for us from the university who said that it is important we should be taught the language and we should learn the English language. They prepared all of these and enrolled us in those.

I [Parwiz] work for this university [now]. The person who sponsored me, he prepared all the conditions for me and told me that if you want to study, it is possible to study. If you want to work, it is possible for you and your wife to work. We will prepare the conditions for you to take care of the child. We will prepare everything for you. Where I work and my relations with our colleagues, those who know me and those I know are very respectful and very kind people.

We in our Afghani culture have a famous saying that says “the flower gets its color from other flowers,” meaning if this is an educational environment and everyone is busy with studying, I [Parwiz] fall in love when I see everyone is busy with their education and telling myself that if it is possible I should also restart my education. *What I want to say is that this is an educational area or campus environment that makes anyone fall in love with studying. Education is something that does not have any end.* No one has finished education, and you can study as long as you can.



Artwork by Zakia Anwar

When my [Parwiz] child was born, the person who sponsored us told me that we will make “a baby shower,” and I was thinking “how will they shower this child.” I discussed it with our Afghan [community] and asked what this baby shower is? It is a totally new thing. Our child is not born yet, and they are talking about showering the baby. . . Then the office asked me if I was ready to do the baby shower, and I talked with my colleague: “What is this baby shower? My child is not born yet, and you guys are talking about a baby shower?” Then my colleague gave me some information about it, and then I said OK. They told me “tell all your Afghan fellows that they will have a small party and every family should make their own food and bring it to the place that we choose. Foreigners and Afghans will be there.”

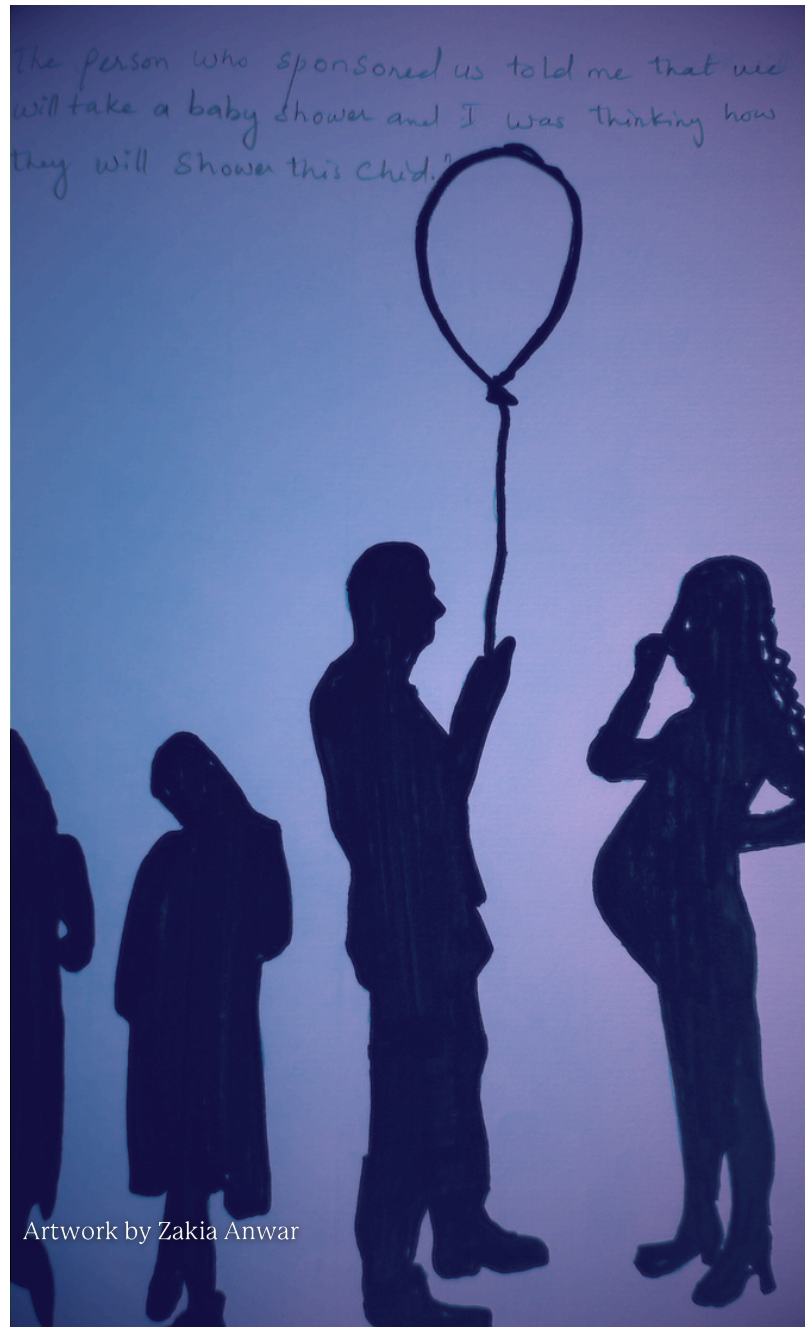
So I [Parwiz] said ok. They sent that place’s address to me, and we went to that place, and it was a really good place. Afghans that were with us brought their food, and the foreigners also prepped some foods and brought them to that party. I was waiting to see what would happen in this baby shower. So everybody ate their food and said congratulations to us and the party ended, and I was still thinking about what will happen in this baby shower. The person who prepared the party told me that the baby shower was over and that was it. That was so interesting for me.

## CREATING A LASTING COMMUNITY

*Among ourselves . . . our own countrymen, we have built a very good community here. For example, our country customs are popular here in the community that the campus helped to build. . . we are seeing each other on a regular basis.*

One good thing here is there is a large Muslim community. There are Muslims who sometimes hold Afghani ceremonies. There is a park. . . where all Afghans cook their own special food, for example, [and the] Indian or Pakistani or from any race [or] ethnicity. . . they all have their own different dishes there. People sit and they are all busy with their own countrymen with their sweet stories; everyone is enjoying life there, and that is very relaxing and pleasant for us .

There is something that calms our brains. In the summer times, once a week, we gather for the ceremonies/entertainment with other Afghans and walk until evening and our children play there and we chat with other Afghans and get comfort.



*The person who sponsored us told me that we will take a baby shower and I was thinking how they will shower this child?*

Artwork by Zakia Anwar



Their support ended with us and they told us that after this you have to do everything by yourself and have to find your way. . . [but] he [campus member] is still the same kind of a person for us, the same kind of friend he was at that time. He is here right now, and we are in contact with those people. Sometimes we see each other. For example, at a birthday party or we invite them to our house, and our love and friendship is still with us. They are very kind to us, and we love them. . . Personally, even if I [Parwiz] live in this university campus or live outside the university campus, or if I live in this state or in another state, I will always keep my relationship with these people while I am alive.

I [Parwiz] want to thank them from my heart, and I am sure that they will hear my voice and with my name. I want to mention their names too which are Paul and his wife's name is Diana. I wish they hear my voice, and I am thankful for them and their team and I hope they are happy wherever they are .

Artwork by Zakia Anwar

People sit and they are all busy with their own  
countrymen with their sweet stories.

