

In November 2017, a young mother with 3 children left everything she had known behind in Afghanistan to follow her husband to safety and a new life in the United States. Their lives were in danger because of the work her husband had done to support the American military.

In the 3 years since she has arrived, Mahnaz has learned to read, and speak English. She has made their apartment into a home, decorated with traditional Afghan decor that connects to her what she has left behind. Known as a great cook among her extended family of 40+, she has been catering events in the Westchester area and, during COVID, has been selling Afghan meals with “no contact delivery”

In addition, she has made thousands of masks during COVID. Through Neighbors for Refugees, she’s been paid for them, but has insisted on continuing to sew them during times when funding has dried up.

You can imagine the culture shock a woman from a traditional home in Afghanistan might experience- but Mahnaz has always been eager for new experiences- she now has her driver’s license, attends school conferences and bakes cupcakes for her children’s classes, has taken yoga classes and even gone swimming at the beach.

Does she miss her family and other things about Afghanistan? Of course, but she is working hard to build a new life here and above all, she knows her family is safe.