

A first-hand connection story

by Kathy Vos

Pretty soon the fingers she'd kept jammed into her mouth for nearly an hour were free and she was running full speed after the giant blue ball, giggling and stumbling after it across the lumpy lawn.

Our new friend, 2-year-old Filsan, didn't say a word during the entire two-hour visit to our house, but everyone knew she was having a good time. Her squeals grew louder and more frequent as she and Ben and the neighbor kids raced around the yard together.

We've known Filsan and her mom, Quresh, for just a few months. We were matched up with them through the fellowship's social action committee's project to "adopt" Lincoln Community Center. Quresh, who is from Somalia, takes adult education classes at the center.

The relationship is an informal one. There are no minimum time demands, no required activities. Greg, 7-year-old Ben and I have visited Quresh and Filsan at their apartment, taken them to the International Festival and had them over to our house for supper. Another time, Quresh, who is practicing to get her driver's license, just needed someone to ride with her to the grocery store. Ben and I were invited to Filsan's birthday party and got to meet many of Quresh's friends and their children. Some weeks both families are so busy that we just connect with a phone call to see how they are doing.

Although the arrangement is described as a mentoring program, in reality this has become a new friendship with someone we probably wouldn't have otherwise met. We'd recommend it to other members of the fellowship.