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Exclusive Electronic Stability Control helps prevent tipping

The So Lite™ Scooter is easy to transport and almost impossible to tip over.

Years of work by innovative engineers have resulted in a scooter that's designed with seniors in mind. They created Electronic Stability Control (ESC) that makes it virtually impossible to tip over. If you try to turn too quickly, the scooter automatically slows down to prevent it from tipping over. The battery provides powerful energy at a fraction of the weight of most batteries. With its rugged yet lightweight aluminum frame, the So Lite™ Scooter is the most portable scooter ever—but it can hold up to 265 pounds—yet weighs only 40.8 pounds without the battery! What's more, it easily folds up for storage in a car seat, trunk or even on an airplane. It folds in seconds without tools and is safe and reliable. Best of all, it's designed with your safety in mind, from the newest technology and superior craftsmanship. Why spend another day letting your lack of mobility ruin your quality of life? Call now and find out how you can get a So Lite™ Scooter of your very own.

The So Lite™ Scooter

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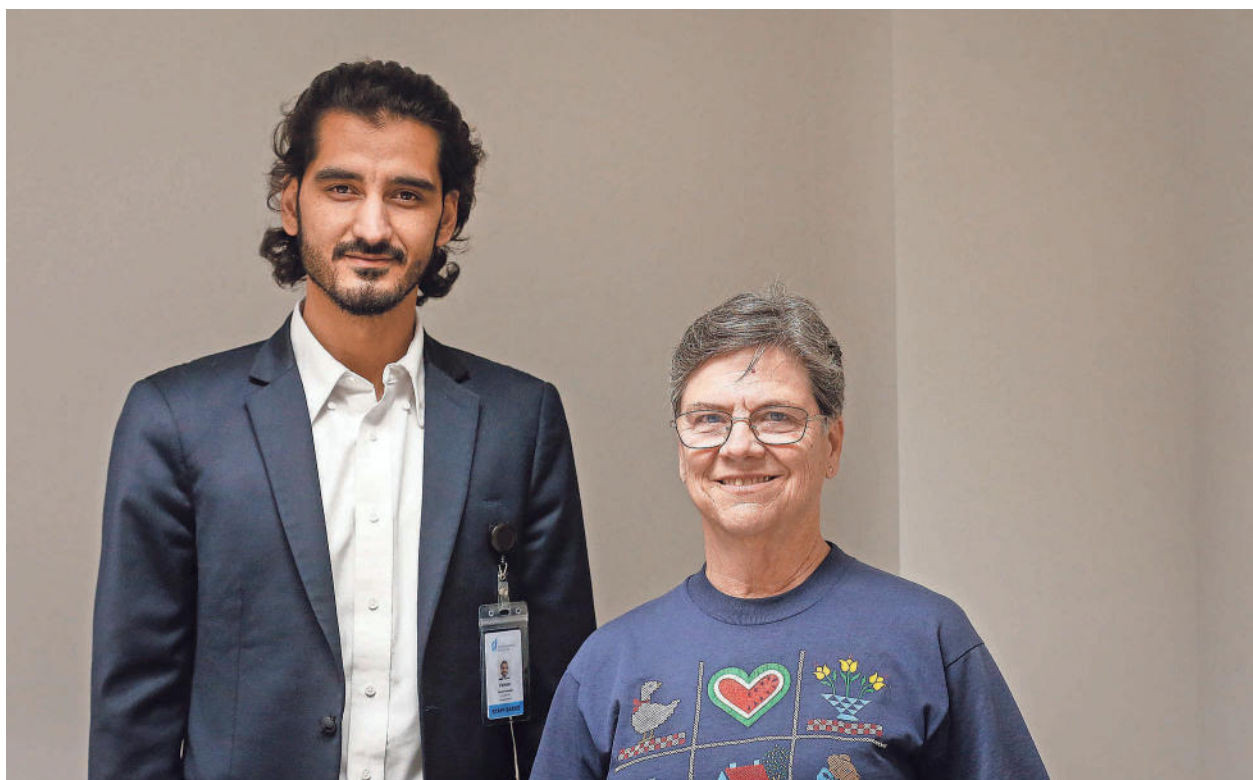


SPRINGFIELD NEWS-LEADER



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Mohammad Fahim Ahmadi, left, poses for a portrait with Linda Pegg, a retired nurse and volunteer with the International Institute of Southwest Missouri on Friday. The organization links sponsors like Pegg with refugees like Ahmadi resettling in Springfield. GRETA CROSS/SPRINGFIELD NEWS-LEADER

'They're very good people'

Retired nurses are helping Afghan refugees settle into Springfield

Ryan Collingwood

Springfield News-Leader | USA TODAY NETWORK

Stuck between two worlds and praying for a union, Mohammad Fahim Ahmadi is enjoying the American experience.

He's a graduate student at Missouri State University and a case worker at the International Institute of Southwest Missouri, helping refugees from his native Afghanistan resettle in the Ozarks.

Ahmadi understands the plight of those facing an abrupt cultural shift.

He was happy and comfortable in his home city of 4 million, and took pride in his job as a flight attendant with a major Middle Eastern airline, with hopes of one day becoming a pilot.

It's been nineteen months since Ahmadi was essentially ripped from his wife, family and career, following the Taliban's takeover of Kabul, Afghanistan in the summer of 2021.

Ahmadi, 29, saw everything go awry in a matter of days following the United States' military withdrawal of Afghanistan and the return of the resurgent Taliban regime.

Working on an airline that helped people flee the country amid the August chaos, Ahmadi, who expected to return to Kabul following a stop in United Arab Emirates, was told the Taliban had taken over the airport.

If he and the flight's crew returned, he said, they would likely face brutal sanctions for aiding the U.S. citizens.

Ahmadi, who earned his environmental science degree at Kabul University and taught English as a second language, had no choice but to take the refugee route and seek safety in America.

The transition was initially long and arduous, but he is beginning to find his footing in Springfield.

Local highway signs pointing toward of Cabool — the Texas County town many believe was named after Afghanistan's biggest city — make him smile.

"The main thing I am suffering from is not having my family," said Ahmadi, who talks to his wife on the phone every day. "I miss them. They're not in a safe situation."

Dozens of Afghans like Ahmadi have come to Southwest Missouri under similar circumstances. They appreciate the safety and U.S. aid, but miss a way of life that was stable before the recent conflict.

Several Ukrainians have also come to Springfield since Russia's 2022 invasion, but many were eligible for a reunification program because several Slavic families had already lived in the region for years.



Linda Pegg, a retired nurse, has helped several Afghan refugees settle into Springfield, including children Kawsar, Maryam, and Fatima Zahra Rahimi. PROVIDED

Rarely does an Afghanistan refugee in Southwest Missouri have a family tie in America to help ease their transition, so the International Institute of Southwest Missouri often finds local sponsors and volunteers to help.

It needs more help, supporters say — and soon.

Sponsorship provides labor of love

Linda Pegg and Becky Meadows spent much of their lives as nurses. Before their respective retirements, they felt a calling in helping others.

After shelving their stethoscopes, they found a

See REFUGEES, Page 2A

Ollis pushes back on planned MoDOT work for east Sunshine

Andrew Sullender

Springfield News-Leader | USA TODAY NETWORK

MoDOT is planning \$8 million worth of safety improvements over the next three years along Sunshine Street east of Glenstone Avenue. A group of business-owners on the street are raising concerns over impacts on their businesses, led by Springfield City Councilman Richard Ollis.



Ollis

From Glenstone east to Route 125, the East Sunshine corridor sees more cars than most other areas of Springfield. In their improvements, MoDOT hopes to limit the number of uncontrolled left-turns through the use of medians and signal improvements.

Ollis/Akers/Arney Insurance, of which councilman Ollis is CEO, is one of the businesses impacted by the improvements. Along with other professionals on the street, Ollis is asking MoDOT to reconsider the addition of a median along the throughfare.

"In those plans, they're doing a lot of positive things like sidewalks and repaving and even eliminating some access points which will improve safety," Ollis told the News-Leader. "The one additional

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COUNCIL OF CHURCHES OF THE OZARKS

Council unveils new headquarters facility this week

Greta Cross

Springfield News-Leader | USA TODAY NETWORK

The Council of Churches of the Ozarks unveiled its new headquarters facility this week, the first completed project of Greene County's Community Impact Program.

The new 57,000-square-foot facility is located at 3055 E. Division St. Previously, the Council of the Churches of the Ozarks was spread across five different buildings. The new facility serves as a "resource hub ... for families in crisis," CEO Jaimie Trussell said.

The headquarters houses the Crosslines Food Pantry, Ambassadors for Children, Diaper Bank of the Ozarks, Safe to Sleep offices and other services.

The Crosslines Food Pantry is the organization's

See FACILITY, Page 2A



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NATHAN PAPES/SPRINGFIELD NEWS-LEADER

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