



Fleeing home

Elon volunteers give a voice to refugees and help reunite families

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Not far from campus there are people who are fighting to see their family members again and trying to prove to the American government that they are legally married to their spouse without speaking any English. Students at the Elon School of Law have been volunteering with a clinic in Greensboro to provide a voice for these refugees.

It has been years since they have seen each other, but they aren't strangers. They are a family: a wife, a husband, a son or a daughter. They have been separated because of a conflict, a war or a political disagreement. After uncertainty about when and if they would ever be able to reunite again, they are hugging and planning their future together.

Reunions like these happen because of students and professors who volunteer at Elon

Law's Humanitarian Immigration Law Clinic.

A local family reunites

Recently, Victor and Louis Messan, a Goldsboro couple, were reunited with their six children after being separated for four years. The Messans lived in the Togo, a country in West Africa, before civil unrest started. While the parents worked with the immigration

clinic, the children stayed in Benin, a neighboring country, until their visas were approved.

Andrew Haile, the Humanitarian Law Clinic's immigration counselor, has worked on the case for the last two years.

"Victor was the petitioner in this situation and he was a political refugee that had been prosecuted by the Togolese government," Haile said.