



St. Elizabeth Parish Refugee Sponsorship Project Working Group Meeting Notes

Meeting #2 - October 28, 2015

The meeting was held in the parish hall and commenced at 6:47pm.

Attendance:

- Brent Lafreniere
- Cecilia Bowie
- David Darwin
- Emily Lafreniere
- Fr. Daryold Winkler
- Jan Golanowski
- Joanne Spanton
- Joyce Lundrigan
- Linda Darwin
- Lourdes Villena
- Maisie Sirois
- Marlene Pignat
- Mary Dicks
- Nancy Kennedy
- Susan Boyce
- Susan Taylor
- Ed Bolton
- Mariza Arellano
- Mohamed Bilal Alnajjar
- Denis Therrien.

Regrets:

- Diane O’Gorman
- Lindsay Moore-Chung
- Patti Latreille

Fr. Daryold opened the meeting with a prayer.

Presentations:

David introduced Denis Therrien, Chair, Refugee Sponsorship at St. Augustine’s parish. Denis provided insights on his experiences with the settlement of five refugee families at various parishes in the region. He kindly provided some packets of information on refugee settlement. He made many suggestions and observations based on his experiences, including:

- Use the Services Canada outlet at Ottawa City Hall for OHIP, SIN and other registrations.
- Arrange banking as soon as possible (day 3).
- Arrange for a moving team to handle transferring household goods from storage to the new residence.
- As soon as the arrival date is known, make an appointment with the CCI (Catholic Centre for Immigrants) for the initial orientation for the family.
- At the LINC language evaluation appointment, arrange for immediate language training placement as the interviewer has access to all the locations and availabilities which may not be the case if the team does it itself.
- Sign up for food bank support immediately.
- The Syrian community churches are in the Vanier/Overbrook area. Linkages made through these communities were key in finding employment.

- Dental care is an essential service needed by the family.
- Arabic doctors are available at a clinic at Baseline and Merivale.
- It is not necessary to speak Arabic in order to communicate - other ways work quite well.
- The lease for the housing will have to be cosigned by the parish (pastor).
- Consider setting a policy for in kind donations from businesses and individuals.

The presentation was followed by a question and answer period. Denis participated in the rest of the meeting as well.

In attendance was an ex-Syrian national, Mohamed Bilal Alnajjar. He graciously consented to providing some insight into Syrian background, culture and experiences.

Meeting notes:

The notes of the September 23, 2015 meeting were approved for distribution.

Team reports:

The submitted team reports were reviewed.

- The Finance Team noted they would be looking for input from the other teams for budget preparation. The budget would be presented at the next meeting.
- There was considerable discussion around the Shelter Team's findings and concerns about accommodation size (number of bedrooms) and costs. Denis advised paying attention to the Ontario Works guidelines for accommodation as the family may have to access the program following the sponsorship support period.
- The Health Team noted that some services (such as those at the CCHS) are backlogged or restricted due to overwhelming demand.
- The Communications Team distributed a mock-up of the proposed website in support of the Project's internal communication needs. It was hoped to have the site operational in November. A communications plan will be presented at the next meeting.

Next meeting:

Some topics for the next meeting were presented. The dates of November 18 or 25 were suggested based on the availability of presenters.

Meeting evaluation:

There was general agreement that the presentations and discussions thereafter were informative.

The meeting concluded at approximately 8:30pm with a prayer.

Approved for distribution November 25, 2015.