

Media Release

Jewish and Christian Communities in Victoria to Sponsor Muslim Syrian Family of Six

Victoria, BC – August 16, 2022. A multi-faith project in Victoria, British Columbia has been launched to provide a refugee sponsorship of a Syrian family of six people. Members of Congregation Emanu-El Synagogue and Lutheran Church of the Cross are working to sponsor this family to start a new life in Victoria. The sponsorship team is applying on their behalf through the Inter-Cultural Association of Greater Victoria (ICA).

The Family

This family of six, including four children aged seven and under, are UNHCR-registered Syrian refugees currently in Southeast Asia, where they have been living for several years. Conditions for the family there are exceedingly difficult. The father is currently doing odd jobs to try to keep the family afloat financially. The mother is a teacher and has been focusing on helping the children with their education.

Before the family left Syria, they were in significant danger due to civil war. Their apartment building was shelled, and their car was blown up. The father had been personally targeted before the family fled Syria, so the alternative of returning to Syria would be extremely dangerous for them.

Fortunately, both parents have professional backgrounds, and the sponsorship team is confident they will successfully establish themselves in Victoria when they finally arrive.

A Multi-Faith Project

This refugee sponsorship project is a truly unique multi-faith effort with Jewish and Christian siblings helping a Muslim family find a new future in Canada. We cannot wait to meet this courageous young family, as they exit the airport at Victoria International. Once the family arrives in Victoria, the sponsorship team will be providing the financial and practical support for one year to help the family with resettlement.



Pictured: Sherry Coughlin, Rabbi Harry Brechner, Robert Oppenheimer, Rev. Lyndon Sayers

Rabbi Harry Brechner of CEE reflected, “I find it poignant that when we strip away politics and worldviews that are based on fear, we realize that Syrians, Muslims, and Arabs are not our enemy but in fact our siblings. I imagine from the point of view of the family, just knowing that there is a caring bunch of people on the far west corner of Canada who are working towards to bring them to a place to call home and to a new start pregnant with all sorts of possibility, must be a relief and a support.”

Rev. Lyle McKenzie of Lutheran Church of the Cross added, “The opportunity to join with our Jewish neighbours to support the sponsorship of a Muslim family is a witness to multifaith cooperation and shared work that continues to grow in Victoria. University of Victoria Multifaith and the Victoria Multifaith Society are other examples of this partnership. Joining together makes the critical work of compassion and justice like this sponsorship possible, and we are incredibly grateful!”

The Need

In order to be approved to sponsor this family, the team must raise at least \$40,000 and have already raised \$25,000. Another \$15,000 must be raised by the deadline of October 31, 2022, or the sponsorship space will be lost for this year. Thankfully, the family’s UNHCR registration allows the sponsorship team to apply on their behalf through ICA. All funds raised will be used by ICA to assist the refugees to settle here in Victoria.

If individuals or businesses would like to make a tax-deductible contribution to help this family, it can be done through one of the following links:

- ICA - [Inter-cultural Association of Greater Victoria](#) (Note “CG-173-22” in comment box)
- Charitable Impact - [Sponsor A Syrian Refugee Family of Six](#)

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