



## UNITED WELCOME GROUP MEETING THURSDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2015

10:30 a.m.

Christ Church, Lyn

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The meeting was called to order at 10:40 a.m. by chair, Rev. Wendy MacLean.

Opening prayer by Rev. Kimberly Heath.

### **1.0 Additions to the agenda - None**

### **2.0 Brockville Refugee Assistance Committee Update -**

Rev. Heath reported that a Community meeting will be held on Monday, December 14<sup>th</sup> at 4:00 p.m. at the Fire Hall on Laurier Blvd. Members of the Agape Refugee Group will share information on their experience with bringing 2 Eritrean families to Brockville and status on sponsorship for another family from Syria.

The City Assistance Committee has started a fundraising campaign via GoFundMe.com. Although receipts are not issued using this online method to donate, it does bring in money with approximately \$20,000 raised to date. If a receipt is wanted, donations made directly to the City Fund or the United Welcome Group Fund is recommended.

The City Committee is attempting to assist individual groups by tracking supports such as language training, dentistry, housing, etc.

Area churches are informed of local initiatives via sharing information and reports at the Ministerial Association meetings.

### **3.0 Report on Actions from Previous Meeting:**

#### **3.1 Forms Completion Status for Al Sarakby Family -**

Doug Mather and Alex Heath are nearing completion of the forms needed by this group and the family. The forms will be sent to the UCC Sponsorship Agreement Holders for review and thereafter processing with Citizen and Immigration Canada. The family is currently living in Jordan but not in a refugee camp.

#### **3.2 Poster and Pamphlets -**

Copies were made available and the templates sent via e-mail to group members. It was suggested the pamphlet is included with Meaningful Gifts.

##### **3.2.1 Promotion -**

Promotion within the community was discussed and suggested an article by Doreen Barnes, with an invitation to attend the next meeting, and an interview on Cogeco tv as initiatives.

Action: Wendy will contact Harvey.

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**3.3 Furnishings, Collection of Household Items -**

A local couple has rented a storage unit for the collection of items that is available to groups within the community. Linda James reported that a storage area is available at Wall Street; however, people donating items are asked to keep the item(s) until needed, if at all possible. A vehicle and able-bodied people are needed to move items into storage.

Be prepared to say “no” to items that we cannot use or are not suitable, such as upholstered furniture and used mattresses. It must be noted that not all donated items are earmarked for the Al Sarakby family and may be offered to other sponsorship groups for their families.

Items of clothing are not being collected at this time as specifics on sizes and gender are not known. The Salvation Army and Good Will Store have committed to provide clothing.

A furnished house on Bennett Street has been donated, but there is no confirmation this will be set aside for the Al Sarakby family and could be offered to another family arriving sooner. Apartments are also being offered. Transitional housing is made available upon arrival and thereafter the family will find their own permanent living accommodations.

**3.3.1 How Do We Let People Know What is Needed?**

Contact information for each church is on the poster and the pamphlet. Linda James (613-342-7591) and Lynne Galvin ([galvin@ripnet.com](mailto:galvin@ripnet.com) or 613-348-3526) are retaining a list of items donated, description and contact information.

**3.4 Study of Islam -**

The UCC 2005 study, “that We May Know Each Other” includes seven chapters and 4 sessions. Eileen Doner reported that St. Lawrence College has an Islamic person presenting a course with guest speakers, contact is Bob Gollinger. It was agreed the UCC study would be a resource on how to build relations and can be offered by each church. It is available on the website <http://www.united-church.ca/files/partners/relations/twmkeo.pdf>.

**3.5 SLC Speaker - On hold due to exams. January agenda item.**

A recent event at the library was informal, informative and helpful with presentations and YouTube videos. Wendy agreed to provide YouTube video links.

**4.0 New Business:**

**4.1 Financial Update -**

Pastor Wendy reported the Syrian Supper at Christ Church was a successful evening of information sharing and good food. Free will donations and envelope donations raised \$2,637. (Envelope donors received receipts).

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Athens United Church UCW offers a community soup and sandwich once a month and directs 50% of these funds to community needs. Barb Lunman will request they give consideration to giving this portion to the United Welcome group.

Action: Dave Bremner will request a fund total from WSUC bookkeeper for the next meeting.

**4.2 Donation Envelopes and Donations to the Fund -**

Carolyn Matheson prepared and printed the donation envelopes for the Syrian Supper. It was suggested the Wall Street Church address is used on the envelope and identify the United Welcome Fund.

Action: Diane will assist Carolyn to produce more printed envelopes using the printing machine versus computer printer.

It is suggested information and how to make a donation is posted on all church web sites.

Action: Identified church contact listed on pamphlet.

**4.3 Sharing Information Within our Church -**

Electronic newsletter, bulletins, one-on-one within the congregation, posting posters and disseminating pamphlets.

Eileen Doner offered to retain a listing of people interested to help.

**4.4 Drawings -**

Pastor Wendy suggested using one of the two pictures made by Ahmad Khadra's daughter about refugees coming as a logo.

Action: Diane will forward to WSUC office manager for consideration and achievability without redesigning entire poster/pamphlet.

**4.5 Sponsorship for a Second Family -**

Are we ready to pursue sponsorship with the UCC for an additional family? It was agreed that given 48-hours' notice we can be ready with priority given to a single mother with up to 4 children, Syrian or Eritrean.

Moved by Carolyn Matheson, Seconded by Catherine Clow,  
THAT the UCC Sponsorship Agreement Holders are advised that the United Welcome Group is ready to accept a family of up to five, with priority given to a single woman with children of either Syrian or Eritrean origin. ....carried  
Action: Dave Bremner will consult with Doug Mather.

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**5.0 Additional Resources:**

[www.inmylanguage.com](http://www.inmylanguage.com) which is an excellent website introducing people to life in Ontario (getting a driver's license, having a baby, finding work etc.). The resources are available in Arabic, a common language for our new refugee families.

<http://cmascanada.ca/supporting-refugees/> which highlights the current situation in Syria, and the general cultural traditions of many Syrian refugees. It is worth a few moments of your time, and will help you learn more about the families who will be arriving here. It also includes some links to amazing resources such as: 100 Common Arabic Words; Resource Guide for Working with Children with Refugee Experience; and Arabic language resources for parents: 'Dressing for Winter', 'Swimming Safety' and 'Hand Washing' are some examples.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wGe2\\_GP-1jU&sns=fb](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wGe2_GP-1jU&sns=fb)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=3&v=ZuZ-VxhZrCA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=3&v=ZuZ-VxhZrCA)

Keep up to date with local efforts

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/537948216387611/>

**6.0 NEXT MEETING: THURSDAY, JANUARY 14, 2016 at 10:30 a.m.**

Closing Prayer by Rev. Wendy MacLean

The meeting adjourned at 12:20 p.m.