

**UNITED WELCOME
MEETING HELD NOVEMBER 19, 2015**

Present:	David Bremner	Rev. Wendy MacLean
	Rev. Kimberly Heath	Diane Daub (Recorder)
	Joan Tallon	Eileen Doner
	Carolyn Matheson	Barb Lunman
	Harvey Loyst	John Hanson
	Ruth Carter	Fred Gilbert
	Sylvia Foxton	Bev Delaney
	Lynne Galvin	Catherine Clow

The meeting was called to order at 10:35 a.m. by chair, David Bremner

1.0 Opening prayer by Rev. Wendy MacLean

2.0 The agenda was approved as circulated with the following additions:
6.1 Finances and 6.2 Involving Youth

3.0 Report on City Steering Committee -

Rev. Heath reported that the committee held a fundraising reception by invitation to business owners and select individuals. Presentations were made on the purpose for the committee and to solicit donations to the city refugee sponsorship fund.

4.0 Community Training Session -

United Welcome group members reported much useful information was presented in detail on the process for sponsoring refugees.

- Refugees now in European countries cannot come to Canada under the current sponsorship program.
- Government assistance applies to people in refugee camps in Jordan, Lebanon and possibly Turkey.
- Refugees must describe their living situation on the application form prior to screening clearance for the BVOR list.
- It is best to have temporary living arrangements in place and not to sign a lease. The refugee family/individual may seek their own permanent living location once settled, should they wish to move to another community. However, financial responsibility follows relocation to completion of one year.
- If the father arrives first, we are responsible for the family for one year after their arrival date.

5.0 Action items from previous meeting:

5.1 Forms Coordinator - Doug Mather will assist Alex Heath with forms preparation. Doug has previous experience in this area and is an excellent resource. Work is progressing on processing forms for Ayman Al Sarakby and his family.

5.2 BVOR List Selection - Carolyn reported on 7 profiles listing gender, family size, language, summary and other information from the October 13th list. It is noted this list reflects the previous Federal Government's position with no Syrians listed. At this time, there are many unknowns with the new Federal Government's plan to bring 25,000 refugees to Canada by year-end.

It was agreed to concentrate efforts on bringing Ayman Al Sarakby and his family to Brockville as a private sponsorship and wait to select another family until further information is made available by the federal and provincial governments. The City is keen to have a group sponsor the Al Sarakby family as they are friends with Ahmad Khadra, a local business owner, who had indicated he will provide employment for the father.

5.3 Publicity - Harvey provided additional information on the Al Sarakby family which will be used on the poster and pamphlet.

5.4 Poster and Handout Pamphlet - Diane presented a draft poster and pamphlet for comment and input. Revisions will be made and copies sent with the minutes.

Diane will make 50 copies of the pamphlet that will be available at the Syrian Supper on November 28th at Christ Church. Ahmad Khadra, local Imam will be attending. Carolyn will prepare envelopes designated to the Welcome Fund available at the dinner.

5.5 Furnishings/Item Donations - It was suggested the collection of items is delayed until we receive notification that the family is coming. People who are donating items now need to be informed that these items may go to another family if they are placed in the central storage space, and if possible, items specifically for the Al Sarakby family should remain with the donor. Diane has created a central data base and can be contacted at wdaub@explornet.com to add items to the list.

5.4 Study of Islam - Some time ago, Wall Street United Church, under the auspices of the United Church, presented a 7-session study on Islam, "*That we may know each other.*" WSUC held one additional session, inviting a local Muslim to share information and answer questions. It was suggested the study is scheduled in the New Year with an open invitation to the community (25 participants per group). Eileen will contact the General Council Office for information.

A "Did you know" minute at each Sunday service was suggested to facilitate information and education, using YouTube or other means. Contact Eileen at rdoner1@cogeco.ca with your suggestions.

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A Vietnamese family who came to Brockville some years ago as sponsored refugees could be an excellent resource to share their journey.

5.5 Speaker from SLC - Carolyn reported this is in progress. It was noted the local school board has indicated they will also be involved.

6.0 New Business:

6.1 Finances - Cheques are payable to Wall Street United Church, attention United Welcome Fund. Your church can also collect funds and make one cheque payable to WSUC or donations can be made directly to the City Fund.

6.2 Involving Youth - Ruth has connections with the schools and reported that students are interested in becoming involved but at a loss how to do this. The local school board has indicated they will also become involved and it was suggested raising awareness is a key starter.

7.0 Other - Our group, United Welcome, and the wider Brockville group need to work together, e.g. collecting items for families, fundraiser to the city fund, etc. We do not wish this group to become a United Church group," as other groups need help as well and need to extend invitations to the community for studies, dinners, etc.

Next meeting date: Thursday, December 10th at 10:30 a.m. If no further information is available from the Governments on the sponsorship process, the meeting will be cancelled.

The meeting adjourned at 12:10 p.m. with a closing prayer by Rev. Heath.

Action Items:

1. Poster and pamphlet design and printing
2. Donation Envelopes
3. Study of Islam
4. Did You Know?
5. Speaker from SLC
6. Involving Youth

Assigned to
Harvey & Diane
Carolyn
Eileen
Anyone
Carolyn
Ruth