

APPLICATION FOR OUR SYRIAN FAMILY MOVES FORWARD

The Immigration process

Jennifer Irish, Karen McClure, and Gina Watson have recently completed the necessary, detailed and numerous immigration application forms. The required paperwork includes the Church's own application as sponsor and the outline of a settlement plan for the family. These forms have now been sent for signature to the Anglican Diocese of Ottawa, which is our Sponsorship Agreement Holder. After that the papers will go to the central processing office in Winnipeg. From there the application will be sent to the Canadian visa office in Lebanon. The family will then be interviewed and undergo medical and background checks. Once an application is filed there is currently an 11 month processing time in Beirut, but that can change. For planning purposes the Committee has decided to use end of 2016 as an arrival assumption.

Housing

The search for suitable and affordable accommodation is at a preliminary stage. Penelope Muller is in charge of this work. With the family not likely to arrive for another year, we are not yet in a position to secure long-term accommodation. The lead time we have now, however, means we can research neighbourhoods and associated amenities. Two other Ottawa churches, St. Aidan's and St. Peter's, are sponsoring the immigration of our family's sister's and brother's families. The brother's family is expected to arrive perhaps as early as the end of this month. Our hope is to locate the three families as close to each other as possible. To this end we are holding meetings with the two other churches to discuss housing and schooling considerations.

We wish to thank you for the many thoughtful and generous offers of furniture items received to date. We have taken note of these offers, but are unable to take action on them at this time since we lack storage space and wish to avoid commercial storage costs. For the time being, we would be grateful if you could hold on to potential donations until we are able to accept them. Since we do not know what type or size of accommodation we will be able to secure, we would also be most appreciative if you could send a

photo and provide the dimensions (H, W, D) of the furniture item you wish to donate. This will help us enormously in determining how well the furniture might fit into the future home, once acquired. We are drawing up a list of needed furniture items and hope to share that list with you shortly. Please get in touch if you can offer, or know of, significant non-commercial storage space within the parish.

Eventually we will also be seeking donations of household effects (housewares, electronics, linens, etc.) and clothing. We will circulate a list of needed household effects and clothing items in the months to come.

Volunteers

There are many important tasks which will need to be accomplished in the months ahead to prepare for and settle our family. We are in the process of drawing up a detailed list of these tasks. We will be posting this list in the church hall and you will be able to sign up to work in areas where you feel you can best help.

Rosemary MacDonald, Coordinator, Refugee Committee