



Syrian Refugee Bulletin Number 7

March 30, 2016

Update on Rouge Valley Co-op Homes

Rouge Valley had their first family of Syrian refugees move into the co-op on February 1. They are a young family with three children under the age of four. The parents are learning ESL (English as a Second Language) with their sponsoring group, which is COSTI Immigrant Services. The co-op has found the whole process very positive. They are looking at bringing in three more families of Syrian refugees.

Norris Crescent Co-op moves in a Syrian refugee household

Norris Crescent Co-op had been experiencing a number of vacancies over the last few years. The board decided to move in a household of Syrian refugees sponsored by a church group. Staff and directors met with the church group and talked about what each side expected. The group and the co-op signed a housing agreement for a two bedroom apartment. The church group took the unit on February 15. They have been painting, decorating and furnishing the apartment in anticipation of the household's arrival. The co-op board and staff are impressed with the group they have chosen to work with. The board will be taking the refugee by-law to the next members' meeting for ratification.

Swansea Village Co-op is almost ready for move in

Some members of Swansea Village Co-op asked the board to consider sponsoring a family of Syrian refugees. The staff made sure that all directors were sent the Syrian Refugee By-law before their next meeting. The board approved it unanimously and recommended it to the members who also approved it. An ad hoc committee made up of two directors, one member selection committee member and the manager interviewed four sponsoring groups. They were impressed with all of the groups and selected a sponsoring group called Humanity First because they seemed the most organized and already had the necessary money in a trust. The group has taken a two-bedroom apartment for a maximum of four people. The



family is not in Canada yet. The co-op is working to host “a pot luck bring food from your culture” welcome party for the family once they have moved in.

Harbourside Co-op Update

There was an information meeting for the co-ops in Bathurst Quay in January. CHFT attended and answered questions from members. Representatives from Harbourside Co-op took the information back to their co-op and asked that the refugee by-law be passed at a members’ meeting.

The Harbourside general members’ meeting was in early March and the by-law was on the agenda. There was discussion and the members asked to vote by secret ballot.

Members were very impressed by the presentation and the commitment of the sponsoring group who attended. The group also showed a video of what life was currently like in Syria. The final vote was unanimous to accept one Syrian refugee household. The co-op believes they can use this experience as a template for the future.

Next Steps

If your co-op is thinking about or discussing allocating a unit to a Syrian refugee family, please contact Michelle Arscott, michelle@coophousing.com or 416 465-8688 extension 207 and let her know.

Other resources

The City has set up their housing registry. Go to this City of Toronto website, www.toronto.ca/refugees, and then click on Housing.

Other information sources are –

Lifeline Syria www.lifelinesyria.ca

The Government of Canada website www.canada.ca



The City of Toronto, COSTI and other settlement programs use H.O.M.E (Housing Opportunities & Marketplace Exchange), an online portal that allows businesses and individuals to post available housing, as well as goods and services they wish to donate, to help Syrian refugees arriving in Toronto.

More information on H.O.M.E. can be found here

<http://www.woodgreen.org/homeportalhelp.aspx>

Thank you

Thanks to Harbourside Co-op, Norris Crescent Co-op, Rouge Valley Co-op, Swansea Village Co-op and COSTI.