

Refugee Announcement.....March 5, 2016.
From Paul Harrison

Our long wait is almost over. What began with Session's approval of our St. Andrew's Syrian Refugee Project in October 2015 is finally coming true.

Joanne and I received a phone call from Rob Shropshire at PWS&D on Tuesday this week about 5 pm. We had a match. Rob was able to "grab" a family for us which met all our criteria.

I have only a few details now but here is what we know:

- The family will arrive under the BVOR Blended Visa programme.
- Rob's information to us is as follows.....he doesn't have a lot.
- Our family is Syrian and is presently in Lebanon. The family consists of Dad who is 42; a Mom who is 31. There are 6 children....a daughter, age 13 and 5 boys ages, 12, 10, 7, 3 and 1.
- Arabic is their first language. Dad speaks "a little English".
- No one in the family has any special settlement needs or requires assistance (this means as far as I know, no significant physical or health problems.)
- They have no accompanying family members. i.e. they aren't part of an even larger family, some members of whom are approved but not travelling with them.
- They have no relatives or friends in Canada, according to Rob's document sent to us.
- The document also says "The family is afraid to return back to Syria as they fear for their safety. The father is seeking a better life for his family and would appreciate the assistance of a sponsor during their settlement in Canada".
- As yet we do not have their names—neither has Rob.

That's all we know about our family right now.

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

And here is some other pertinent information.

- The Application Forms which we completed in 2015 are no longer valid!!! So, as soon as Rob sends us the new ones by email attachment, we will get them completed and

return them to him. Rob at that time will know their names and they will be on our application.

- Rob verifies our application ---part stays at Presbyterian headquarters in Toronto and the other part is sent to the Federal Government in Ottawa.
- Once Toronto and Ottawa approve our documentation, the arrival time for families is between **one** and **three** months.

Our family is travel ready....all of their documents have been approved and are in order.

We just want to say that we are very fortunate to have Sara and Muhammad at the Water Street Mosque. They work with all of Jim Estill's families.

- Joanne has arranged a meeting with Sara at the Mosque for this coming Wednesday to find out how our 3 churches can tap into all their available resources. Rick, the McKinnie's, Arnold Bethune from Knox and possibly Susan Lodge from First Baptist (Susan teaches for a living!!), Joanne and I will attend.
- Sara and Joanne have already been discussing Guelph housing for a large family.
- Housing is a very big issue for a family of 8 and our housing group will be taking the lead here. We have already had one generous offer of temporary accommodation but we need to explore the whole housing question much further.
- If anyone has any information/suggestions re accommodation ---a townhouse or whatever, please let Rick know.

Joanne has contacted Red Car again to make sure the company will still give free transportation for up to 8 refugees from the airport to Guelph. Our family has 8 and Red Car will pick them up.

This has been a long announcement. I will try to tell you more about our family reasonably soon, I hope. There will be a meeting of all the 3 churches' volunteers when we can figure out a date.

Thank you for your prayers and your continued support.