

**Syria-Antigonish Families Embrace (SAFE) Society**

**Annual General Meeting**

March 13, 2024

6:30 – 9:00 pm

East Coast Credit Union Community Corner

Present: Sue Adams, Mark Ballard, Jack Beaton, Bronwen Cooke, Annette Daemen, Harry Daemen, Karen Fish, Anuj Jain, Jyotsna Jain, Heather Murphy, Mike Nearing, Sheila Sears, Maria van Vonderan, Peter Wade, Marianne Forbes, Marie Sewocka (PCSH), Daphne McCoy, Julie McCoy, Sue MacIntosh, Tim McCoy, Karen Briand

**Minutes**

We acknowledge that we are holding our meeting in Mi'kmak'i, the ancestral land and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaw people. We recognize that we are all treaty people. We thank the Mi'kmaw people for caring for and nurturing their lands and waters and for sharing with all people who live here.

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**Welcome and Introductions**

Mark Ballard

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**Financial Audit Report**

Sheila Sears/ Anuj Jain

Heather Murphy of MacDonald & Murphy

**Discussion:**

A full financial audit for the SAH was required for the 2022 fiscal year due to new requirements of IRCC's Program Integrity Framework. For 2023 MacDonald & Murphy presented

Heather Murphy of MacDonald and Murphy presented an Independent Practitioner's Review and Financial Statements. Heather Murphy told the AGM that the record keeping of SAFE is in accordance with standards and that internal controls have been followed appropriately.

A big thank you to Sheila Sears, SAFE's retiring treasurer, and Anuj Jain, our incoming treasurer, for their extremely caring and careful managing of SAFE finances.

**Actions:**

Sheila Sears moved to adopt the limited assurance report and financial statements for fiscal 2023. Seconded by Mike Nearing. Accepted unanimously.

Sheila Sears moved that MacDonald & Murphy Inc. be reappointed for the Financial Review or Audit (whichever is required by IRCC) for 2024. Seconded by Harry Daemon. Accepted unanimously.

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**Guest speaker: Tim McCoy—Matthew House Toronto**

Our new board member, a former house parent and volunteer with Matthew House in Toronto spoke about the organization that gives shelter, food and refugee support in a family atmosphere to refugees transitioning to permanent residency.

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**Committee reports**

Bronwen Cooke, Settlement  
Jack Beaton, Education  
Mike Nearing, Housing and Settlement Committee  
Mark Ballard, Employment  
Maria Van Vonderen, Medical and Governance  
Sheila Sears, Finance  
Anuj Jain, Treasurer 2024  
Harry Daemon, Applications  
Karen Fish, Housing advocacy

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**Year highlights 2023**

- 430,000 immigrants came to Canada across all streams
- 143,000 refugee claimants
- 10,000 were government sponsored
- 250 BVOR families
- 13,500 Private sponsorships across Canada
- 100,000 applications to IRCC from across Canada
- 3,000 ??
- 141 SAH's in Canada

The work of SAFE depends on the generous contributions of volunteers. The Steering Committee thanks the many volunteers who have given their time and talents to support families as they make Antigonish their new home.

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**SAFE AGM Business Meeting****AGM Minutes 2023 Approval****Actions:**

Sheila Sears moved to approve the AGM Minutes from 2023. Seconded by Tim McCoy. All in favour.

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### **Fundraising Goals for 2024**

#### **Discussion:**

Anuj offered a possible fundraising goal of \$250,000 for 2024. One effort would be going back to supporters. Another is to go to big local businesses. The committee has created a pitch template that explains how businesses are benefitting from newcomers, and how the businesses can support SAFE. Anuj said he'd like more board discussion about our vision for the future. Staff? Support more CG's? Should we draw people from other CG's together to discuss the future of the SAH.

The committee will organize a special fund raising meeting.

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### **Election of Steering Committee Members**

Jack Beaton

#### **Discussion:**

Sheila Sears and Jack Beaton have completed their second term as members of the Steering Committee. We thanked them for their service, leadership and care over the past 7 (?) years.

The Nominations Committee (Sheila and Jack) recommended Rebecca Wallace, Ellaheen Baloch, and Karen Briand as board members. Sheila called for nominations from the floor three times.

#### **Actions:**

On behalf of the Nominations Committee, Jack Beaton moved the nomination of Rebecca Wallace, Ellaheen Baloch, and Karen Briand to the Steering Committee. Seconded by Tim McCoy. All in favour.

We talked about ways the board can help bring new members onboard. Ideas included buddying, and creating documents that outline SAFE-SAH Mark: chair Rebecca Wallace, Ellaheen Baloch, and Karen Briand

#### **Adjournment:**

The meeting was adjourned at 9 pm.

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