

**Syria-Antigonish Families Embrace
Steering Committee Meeting**

April 13, 2021
6:00-8:30 pm
Online

Present: Mark Ballard, Mary Ballard, Bronwen Cooke, Harry Daemen, Marla Gaudet, Lucille Harper, Sheila Sears, Othman Soufan, Peter Wade
Regrets: Jack Beaton

Minutes

Agenda Item: Minutes and Business Arising

Lucille

Actions:

Marla moved to accept the March 9, 2021 minutes.
 Seconded by Othman.
 All in favour.

Agenda Item: Treasurer's Report

Sheila

Actions:

Sheila moved the adoption of the March financial report.
 Seconded by Pete.
 All in favour.

Agenda Item: Vice Chair Position

Lucille

Discussion:

Lucille is the only member of the Steering Committee who knows the process of submitting applications. It would be good if the Vice Chair can learn the process from Lucille.

Actions:

Lucille will ask Harry if he is interested in becoming Vice Chair.

Agenda Item: ISANS and Career Connections Partnership

Mark

Discussion:

Samir and Abed met with ISANS and Career Connections so that both men could begin to establish a relationship with both agencies. ISANS and Career Connections are beginning to work together and so are working out the details of this partnership. Mohja Alia represents ISANS and Allison Bell represents Career Connections.

Actions:

Mark will clarify, with Mohja and Allison, who the clients should initially be referred to.

Marla will refer those interested in finding employment to Mark.

Mark will create a translated e-mail to send out to family members to find out who would like to be connected with ISANS/Career Connections.

Agenda Item: ISANS Settlement Support Programs

Jack

Discussion:

Through the Learn English Nova Scotia program, students can be assessed, receive online instruction, follow the Canadian Benchmark system, access an English in the Workplace program (3 hours/wk) and skill specific language instruction for the trades. The LINC home study program provides 3-8 hours/day of learning.

ISANS is very open to including Antigonish students in their online instruction.

Actions:

If you have any questions please contact Jack, who will be the contact person for these programs.

Agenda Item: Sponsorship Applications Underway 2021

Lucille

Discussion:

SAFE PSR application to sponsor Ibrahim Balkis family of 2, residing in Egypt. Alaa Hadhad, co-sponsor. Funds committed. Application submitted March 11

SAFE PSR application to sponsor Abdulkader Mohmed Sabbagh family of 5, residing in Egypt. Yaser Almashhoud to co-sponsor. Funds committed. Application in progress.

CARE PSR to sponsor Charles Munyampara and his two children (East Congo). Faida Fiki to co-sponsor. Funds committed. Application submitted by CARE.

CARE PSR to sponsor Guelord Mwamba (DRC). Gracia Mwamba to co-sponsor. Funds committed. Application in progress by CARE.

Mark has been in touch with Sean Fraser's office to inquire about the Azaiza Family's status.

Actions:

Mark will contact the Azaiza family to ask if they have their PR status yet.

Agenda Item: Sponsorship Requests (for reference to spaces for 2021)

Lucille

Discussion:

Request from Riyad Ibrahim to sponsor parents, Rouwayda Hodhod and Ahmad Ibrahim, and cousin, Yazan Bayan. Application has provisional approval, through the Universalist Unitarian Church of Halifax (Marilyn Shinagi)

Request from Riyad Ibrahim to sponsor parents and brother of Yazan Bayan. Sponsorship costs can be covered privately.

Request from Abu Al Hawa, family of 8 (brother of Alaa Al Hawa). Funds are available from Tri-Heart.

Actions:

Members of the Steering Committee will need to meet with Marilyn to discuss the details of the sponsorship.

Regarding the request from Riyad to sponsor Yazan's parents and brother, it is clear that SAFE does not have the space to sponsor them in 2021. It can be explained to Riyad that he can resubmit the Sponsorship Request Form in future years. It can also be suggested to Riyad that he approach other SAHs in the Halifax area.

Agenda Item: Eid Gifts

Bronwen

Actions:

Sheila moved that SAFE give cash gifts to the children of each of the families that are having their first Eid in Canada. In addition, the two families will receive a gift that Bronwen will buy.

Seconded by Mary.

All in favour.

Agenda Item: Al Hariri Arrival

Lucille

Discussion:

Abdul Razak Al Hariri family arrival could be as early as September 2021. However, IRCC is not yet bringing in new families. Need to meet with Esmaeel.

Agenda Item: Al Hariri Family House Search

Marla

Discussion:

The Al Hariris have received notice that their house is being sold. They are looking for a new house to move into. Few rental options are available in Antigonish.

Actions:

Lucille will send out an e-mail to the SAFE membership and speak to Harry and Brenda Rose about having a notice put in church bulletins.

Agenda Item: Grant Proposals

Discussion:

Municipality of County of Antigonish Community Partnership grants for 2021 (Othman): the proposal was delivered. Awaiting response.

Building Vibrant Communities Grant, EAL to the Workplace (Jack): Grant approved. Program starting this month.

Diversity and Community Capacity Grant (Jack): Grant approved.

Agenda Item: Refugee Run/Walk

Kristian Rasenberg

Discussion:

Kristian joined the meeting to describe the Refugee Run/Walk that he is organizing as a fundraiser for SAFE. The plan is for it to run from May 21 to June 20. Kristian is weighing the options around using an automated donation site to make it a bigger, more geographically inclusive event, versus the organizing committee doing the legwork to collection donations, etc. and keeping it a more local event. Using an already established event site would cost between 15-30% of the amount raised.

Actions:

Harry agreed to join the organizing committee for the event.

Agenda Item: Policies and Procedures

Lucille

Actions:

Policies and Procedures will be discussed at a special meeting on April 27 from 6-7pm

Agenda Item: Auto Insurance Survey for NS Superintendent of Insurance

Mark

Discussion:

Every seven years the NS Superintendent of Insurance produces a report for consumers of insurance. The last one was completed 11 years ago and one is being worked on now. Mark spoke with the NS Superintendent of Insurance about the high costs and accessibility of insurance for immigrants to Nova Scotia. This issue was not explored in the last report.

Mark has sent an informal survey to families asking about their insurance rates. He hopes to compile this information to present to the Superintendent of Insurance to demonstrate the inequities for immigrants in the NS insurance system. Mark is waiting responses from families.

Agenda Item: Ghentawi and Altaieb Family Updates

Marla

Discussion:

Both families are awaiting CCB. Bronwen is following up on this.

Both Ghentawi children in high school are picking courses for next year.
Marla is applying to service clubs to help cover cost of some dental work.

Agenda Item: Next Meeting

April 27, 2021 from 6-7pm, by Zoom.
