

**Syria-Antigonish Families Embrace  
Steering Committee Meeting  
May 11, 2023  
6:30-9:30  
Riverside Estates Community Room**

Present: Mark Ballard (chair), Jack Beaton, Harry Daemen, Sheila Sears, Mike Nearing, Anuj Jain, Karen Fish (minutes), Bronwen Cooke, Eric Renaud

Regrets: Maria vanVonderan

**Minutes**

**Agenda Item: Meeting Minutes and Business Arising from April 13, 2023**

Actions:

Harry moved to accept the minutes. Bronwen 2<sup>nd</sup>. All in favour

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**Agenda Item: Treasurer's Report**

Actions:

Sheila moved report be accepted. Mike second

Sheila and Harry will work out with Credit Union which TD fund to cash to raise bank balance.

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**Agenda Item: Sponsorship Applications, Overseas Family Updates, and Pending Family Arrivals**

SAFE SAH Spaces for 2023:

SAFE has 19 people needing a space. We were assigned 10 preliminary spaces in early February but recently learned that we'd not received any additional for 2023. Harry is in communication with Becca ??? at [allocations@sahnavigationunit.ca](mailto:allocations@sahnavigationunit.ca) regarding additional points for consideration and/or clarification.

Being told only 5 spaces available (4 for Bilal's brothers)

We are short 5+9 spaces

Pictou Safe Harbour selected top family (1 out of 3 family application)

In summary: BVOR, OYW , & OAS applications are definitely not part of our allocation count. Clarification required if it is application submission or G# allocation that establishes the year to which it is allotted. Actions:

Harry and Mark will ask IRCC office to talk about Syrian family allocations for 2023

Harry will process the prioritized family from Pictou

Actions:

Mark will look for Frank Gallant's report looking at capacity to accept families

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**Agenda Item: YReach school support worker**

Discussion:

Background: In April, Anuj, Jack, Maria, and Karen met with YReach staff Setsu Kawahara (YMCA Provincial Small Centre Supervisor) and Trina Samson (YReach Settlement Coordinator) about the school support position and the LINC (Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada) centre coming to Antigonish. LINC funded by IRCC and will offer year-round 1-6 level instruction. 80% attendance expectation. 3-6 months after receiving citizenship, newcomers no longer eligible for teaching. 2 instructors. Looking for space.

Mary Larkin (School Support worker) and Trina attended our board meeting

Mary works with all newcomer children and families to have a PR application in process. Her position runs September to June. She explained that she has accompanied Syrian parents to parent teacher meetings in all schools, and is trying to get children into town and county summer camps. Day care crisis (very long waits to get in) has made camps very important. Working with Maria around getting dental care for families

Jack said he had booked library space for Syrian students to keep learning over the summer

Mark reported they had sought money from YReach to have a daycare in the mosque. SAFE told money all gone

Board suggested we add a question about help from school support worker on our family check-in form

Board concern that SAFE could be blocked through confidentiality as YReach gets into the schools. Concern province-wide that language assessments become more rigid. Concern about bigger picture of how language learning is being organized for newcomers

Actions:

Mark will notify Trina that Jack will be SAFE's contact person with Mary Larkin.

Jack requested of YReach staff that SAFE get a timely response to questions about families and services

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**Agenda Item: Newcomer play/event s**

Discussion:

Laura Teasdale working with 12 newcomers. Performance of "New in Town" July 18<sup>th</sup> at train station. New in Town. After there will be an event for newcomers who have gotten their citizenship . We might add something to recognize employers who have hired newcomers.

“Canadian Curling Club” play at Bauer Theatre this summer. wanting someone to play 18 yr old Syrian. Kate Bassile (theatre outreach/education) looking to create theatre learning events for Syrian community. Want to hold barbeque before 1<sup>st</sup> night of performance

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**Agenda Item:** SAH Workshops and Meetings Attendance/Report out

Anuj, Karen and Eric signed up for RSTP course IET 101 (Introduction to the Private Sponsorship of Refugees)

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**Agenda Item: Other**

Mark needs a vice-chair in order to continue in leadership position

Peter Wade sent list of donated items in the shed

Need to identify a housing point person to oversee finding of housing

Karen to contact Gord Cunningham about housing position

Next Meeting – June 1, 2023 Appleseed community room