

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

November 9, 2022  
7:00-8:30 pm  
25 Appleseed Drive Community Room

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

Regrets: Osama Sulaiman, Alaa Hadhad

**Minutes**

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**Agenda Item: Minutes and Business Arising from September 14, 2022**

Actions:

**Bronwen** will change the word “learnings” to “learners” under the Y-Reach update.  
With the above noted correction, Harry moved to approve the September 14 minutes.  
    Seconded by Mary.  
    All in favour.

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**Agenda Item: Treasurer’s Report**

Sheila Sears

Discussion:

Because of Hurricane Fiona and unusual circumstances related to power outages, the October RAP payments were made in October, instead of September, as they usually are.

Actions:

Sheila moved to accept the October, 2022 Treasurer’s Report.  
    Seconded by Jack.  
    All in favour.

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**Agenda Item: Sponsorship Applications**

Discussion:

- Almohamed family of 7, SAFE PSR application, Lebanon. Expected to arrive November 17.
- Ibrahim Balkis Bairouti, family of 2, had his interview November 6. Went well.
- Rowaida Hudhud family of 2 (linked), Lebanon, to settle in Halifax, application submitted June 2021. No update.

- Yazan Bayan, family of 1 (linked), Lebanon, to settle in Halifax, application submitted June, 2021—no update.
  - Abdulkader Mohmed Sabbagh family of 5, SAFE, PSR application submitted October 2021, Egypt. No update. Requested update from Cairo Migration, September 9, 2022.
  - Aysha Shoshara family of 3, One Year Window, Syria, application submitted February 2022. Application approved July 4, 2022 and sent to Amman for processing. Update requested October 19.
  - Abdalmajeed Al Sedawi family of 1, SAFE PSR application with co-sponsor Ammar Hudhud, submitted May 27, 2022. Received G# on October 14, 2022 after multiple inquiries to IRCC.
  - Mohammad Bairqdar family of 1, Syrian Family Reunification Project PSR application submitted November 7, 2022.
  - Bashir Hussein family of 2, CG: CARE, PSR application underway—requested update from CARE—slow progress.
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#### **Agenda Item: Sponsorship Requests Approved by SAFE**

Discussion:

- Ahmed Algoma Alhasan family of 3, Lebanon, request to sponsor from Shorook Alhasan. Lucille, Sheila and Alaa met with Shorook to discuss possibility of family coming through immigration route. Depending upon meeting English CBL Level 4. – Alaa following up.
- Osama Suleiman Al Talib family of 4 linked application with Ahmed Abdul Kader, Lebanon, request to sponsor from Bilal Abdul Kader, PSR application underway. Will submit once funding has been received. No update.
- Khoshbo Lodin, young Afghan woman. Sponsorship requested by Linda Darwish with support from group of StFX faculty. Approved by SAFE. Khoshbo is in Pakistan and we will proceed with application.
- Marie-Josée Nirere family of 4 linked with 2 adult children, Kenya refugee asylum, request from Safe Harbour. Request approved by SAFE. Sponsors contacted October 19.

#### **Agenda Item: Sponsorship Requests Paused to June 2023/Not Yet Approved**

Discussion:

- Raouf and his brother Mohammed family of 2, Zaatari Refugee Camp Jordan, request from Chris Temple. Costs will be covered by Chris. SAFE met with Chris and Natalie. Informed that SAFE has decided to pause applications until June 2023.
- Mowaffak Hodhod family of 7 with three adult children, Jordan, request from Issam Hadhad. Informed that SAFE has decided to pause applications until June 2023.
- Rasha Ghentawi is requesting 1 space for her fiancé. Informed that SAFE has decided to pause applications until June 2023.

### **Agenda Item: Sponsorship Request from CARE**

#### Discussion:

Hamida Hussaini is a young woman who is a women's rights activist from Hazara ethnic group, Afghanistan and is persecuted by the Taliban. She would be applying under the OAS stream. It may be difficult to get an OAS space. If it is not possible, we will submit an application as a PSR.

#### Actions:

Pete moved that we try to get an OAS space and that we agree to CARE sponsoring this woman, with SAFE as the SAH.

Seconded by Harry.

All in favour.

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### **Agenda Item: SAFE Sponsored Family Updates**

#### Discussion:

Almasri/Al Imam Family: update coming after the Month 13 check in.

Hosam and Adnan Sulaiman Family: Hosam is looking at a jobs.

Darbi/Hadhad Family: Ghassan is looking at some jobs as a mechanic.

It was suggested that we make a point of connecting families with Najlaa soon after their arrival so that she can act as a resource and an advocate.

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### **Agenda Item: Almohamed Family Arrival Preparation**

#### Discussion:

Pete has been in contact with Malak and Ali. They have done a wonderful job of setting up the house for their family.

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### **Agenda Item: Alqass Matte Family Sponsorship Breakdown Due to Secondary Migration**

#### Discussion:

The Alqass Matte Family was sponsored by FAIR Hearts, Westville (arrived July 29, 2022). They are considering moving to Hamilton.

Sheila discussed that RAP rates change according to what part of the country a family is living in. An increase in RAP payments could come out of the family's contingency fund.

Lucille explained that if a sponsorship breakdown occurs, IRCC will investigate to determine fault/reasons for breakdown.

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### **Agenda Item: Education Update**

Jack Beaton

#### Discussion:

Jack met with representatives from Y-Reach. The initial assessment process, that must take place before adult students begin their English classes, is backed up. The wait time is approximately 6-10 weeks. Y-Reach has agreed that students may act as observers in classes before their assessments. Usually, students start with one hour of class/day. The hope is to increase this to 1.5 to 2 hours of class each day.

Challenges for Y-Reach include limited teaching space that they are not charged for. In addition, there are challenges around recruiting teachers.

Trina Sampson will soon begin in the role of Provincial Y-Reach School Coordinator.

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### **Agenda Item: Whidden Street House**

#### Discussion:

It was proposed that SAFE approach the landlord of the Whidden St. house to ask that if a tenant moves out of one of the units, that SAFE be notified to be able to make a recommendation of who would go into the unit next.

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### **Agenda Item: Offer of Cloverville Road Property**

#### Discussion:

Affordable Housing is talking with John Graham-Pole and Dorothy Lander.

#### Actions:

**Pete** will connect with John and Dorothy to see how this is progressing.

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### **Agenda Item: SAH Organizational Assessment**

#### Discussion:

Form to be completed and submitted to IRCC by November 30, 2022.

#### Actions:

**Lucille, Mark, Sheila and Harry** are completing the assessment.

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### **Agenda Item: Joint Volunteer Recruitment Session**

#### Discussion:

A joint volunteer recruitment fair will be held January 12. Maria is part of the organizing committee for the fair.

This led to a short discussion about recruiting for the Steering Committee. We could invite 5-6 people to come to a Steering Committee meeting to orient and show them what would be involved in being on the Steering Committee. It was suggested that we recruit someone from CARE and from one of the New Glasgow/Pictou groups.

Actions:

**Jack, Lucille and Maria** will work on Steering Committee recruitment.

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### **Agenda Item: SAFE presentation to House of Commons' Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration**

Discussion:

Mark attended, and presented to, the House of Commons' Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration on November October 18, 2022. He shared the story of rural resettlement in Canada and talked about issues of backlogs and processes.

Actions:

**Mark** was asked to submit the Rural Resettlement Model to members of the Committee.

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### **Agenda Item: SAH Capacity Assessment**

Actions:

**Lucille and Mark** will meet with Frank Gallant on November 16 for a planning session for the next meeting.

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### **Agenda Item: Archiving of Documents**

Discussion:

As SAFE's first families approach their 7<sup>th</sup> anniversary of their arrival to Canada, members of the Steering Committee should safely dispose of all documents pertaining to these families.

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### **Agenda Item: Next Meeting**

Wednesday, December 14, 2022 at the Community Room of 25 Appleseed Dr.

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