

Mission & Service support for refugees

Dear Mr. Retson,

The United Church has always worked with and for refugees. Through our gifts, our Mission & Service partners provide aid to refugees in camps, and together we work as advocates for refugee policy. Recently, congregations across the country have sponsored more than 50 refugees, with even more on the way. Our gifts for Mission & Service enable us to respond to the refugee crisis with sponsorship support for refugees and congregations, from application to arrival.

Congregations or individual groups can sponsor a refugee at any time, and our refugee program staff (who can be contacted at refugees@united-church.ca) can help you get started. You can also support our Mission & Service partners who are working with refugees overseas - visit www.united-church.ca/syria to learn more and make a gift. When we help protect one refugee from persecution, death, or wasted years in a refugee camp, we save the world for that one person—and just maybe for ourselves too.

There is also a one-minute video about refugee sponsorship available at <https://youtu.be/nJSYM6eKGls> that you might like to share with your congregation.

In addition, the amount that has been committed and raised by the generous people of the United Church is updated weekly at <http://www.stewardshiptoolkit.ca/weekly-givings-update-2015>. Approximately \$1.8 million has been raised or pledged for refugee sponsorship, and as of November 27, over \$500,000 has been donated to the church's Syrian emergency fund.

The response from United Church people to the refugee crisis in Syria has been enthusiastic, and the number of refugee sponsorships changes almost daily. In the future, we may be able to provide you with more specific figures on sponsorships.

Thank you very much for all you do to support the Mission & Service of the church!

Best—
Kathie Murphy
Program Assistant, Philanthropy
The United Church of Canada

How can I help Syrian Refugees?

The Social Justice Committee of St Paul's has been discussing ways that our congregation can get involved with helping refugees fleeing Syria and the destruction of their homeland.

As you know we have recently committed the entire contents of our refugee fund sponsoring our Rainbow Refugees. We anticipate the hands on commitment to our Rainbow Refugees will be intense for a few more months. While we are looking at hosting a fundraising event to replenish our refugee fund with the goal of using it again we estimate that it will be at least a year or more before we are ready to host more refugees. With this in mind we have compiled a list of resources for our friends at St Paul's and elsewhere to use so they can help the Syrian refugees who are already arriving in Edmonton and elsewhere in Canada to settle and restart their lives in our communities and also those who are still living in refugee camps.

- 1) **Catholic Social Services** catholicsocialservices.ab.ca
You can fill out a volunteer form online with exactly what you are able to offer with regard to ability, time, interest or donations and another form if you are able to offer temporary housing. There is a direct phone line for info about helping Syrian refugees arriving in Edmonton 780-391-3338.
- 2) **Islamic Family and Social Services** www.ifssa.ca
Under the Volunteer link on the website you can fill out a form with tasks such as driving, contributing to or delivering hampers, administrative help or working directly with a family.
- 3) **Muslim Association of Canada (MAC) Centre Edmonton**
(780-443-3200)
They are collecting household items, furniture, winter clothing and car seats for Syrians arriving in Edmonton. Currently they are also looking for storage space for items they are collecting.
- 4) Donate to the **Syrian Emergency Relief Fund**
This fund is set up by the government of Canada and they will match dollar for dollar until the end of 2015 any donations received. You can donate to the fund through www.oxfam.ca/syriacrisis and other registered Canadian charities.
- 5) UNHCR.ca
The UN Refugee Agency is directly involved with caring for and processing refugees in UN camps. You can donate directly on their website.
- 6) Webhostrefugees.org
This website helps match up Canadians willing to offer space in their homes with specific Syrian refugees