

Report on the Continuing Refugee Support Project

The idea that first saw light in September and October of 2015 for the sponsorship of a Syrian refugee family when the Summerlea Executive Board and the Outreach Committee started their talks is coming to fruition. Impossible to accomplish on our own, Summerlea, as you know, was joined by the Lakeshore Unitarian Universalist Congregation and the Merging Waters Pastoral Charge to begin the necessary planning and considerable fundraising needed with the formation of the Summerlea Refugee Support Coalition (SRSC) with Sheila Laursen of the LUUC as our chairperson.

Furniture and clothing and living essentials and well over \$30,000 were collected and stored in the time since late 2015. A three bedroom apartment was furnished by February 10 in time for their arrival on the following Saturday. Seven members from the three congregations were on hand for a truly joyful and emotional reunion between the family of six and the two brothers already here in Canada with their families. The two adults and four children (ages from 3 to 11 years) who had never experienced such a cold and snowy climate as ours were met with a complete set of properly sized winter coats and suits together with sets of new knitted mittens and scarves and hats

The newly arrived husband and wife (neither speaking any English or French yet) were at Summerlea on the following Friday choosing kitchen utensils, small appliances, dishes, cookware and many other donated new and used articles to complete their new home. The various sponsorship responsibilities of the SRSC (and hence the three congregations) continues for the full year following their arrival in Canada.

We can all be proud of the considerable efforts of many and be thankful to be in a position where we can offer such humanitarian assistance. Keep an eye on the Summerlea Website for further details.

Submitted by John Osborne