



## Notes from CPN Seminar: Refugee Settlement Global Cafe Discussions Feb 18, 2016

### 1. What services or resources could your agency/community provide to newcomer refugees?

#### *ICA*

- A full complement of newcomer services including settlement, ESL, employment, youth programs, senior programs, child care, translation & interpretation services, links with the community, mentoring programs etc.

#### *Red Cross*

- Wealth of experience and a goal of specifically supporting Refugee Assistance Program

#### *GVPL*

- Arabic Collection (ESL/Children's books, newspapers, Arabic Database (Mango))
- Library tours
- Children's programming – storytelling
- Free library card
- Conversation classes
- Free internet & computer access
- Meeting rooms
- Teen programming
- Suggestions: offer reading out loud sessions in English (that ESL students could follow along with) and in Arabic (that people wanting to learn Arabic could attend)
- Streamline issuing library cards to refugees by allowing a letter from a sponsor to suffice

*Victoria Filipino Assn/Bayanihan Centre*

- Downtown social centre
- Kitchen/cooking classes
- Use of kitchen (weekday availability is good)
- Use of facility for fundraising
- Help with learning English

*Victoria Hindu Temple*

- Donations, fundraising (dinner or other vegetarian meals)
- Senior's support (there is a strong existing group)
- A place people can feel at home, that they "belong"
- Hindu & Syrian food is similar – invite to bi-monthly dinners/open houses
- Possibly housing assistance
- Household goods
- Music & speakers

*Unitarian Church Refugee Sponsor Group*

- Has a very active youth group that refugee youth welcome to join
- Unitarian Church open to all religions

*Other Refugee Sponsor Group*

- Any left over \$ will be donated
- Happy to work/network with other groups to share their knowledge & experiences

*WelcomeBC.CA*

- Useful website with many resources including information about renting & Arabic resources

*Westside/Saanich Parks & Recreation*

- A safe place to meet
- Recreation passes
- Open Houses

*United Church*

- Cultural education
- Volunteer drivers/escorts/conversation partners/networking

*Be Connected*

- Housing

*Camosun College*

- ESL courses

*Coastal Counselling*

- Subsidized culturally sensitive counselling
- Integration assistance

### *Victoria PD*

- Personal & home safety education
- “Police 101” to encourage trust
- Other presentations around one's rights & responsibilities
- Want to overcome the view of police as a negative entity
- A DAC presentation on policing

### *Girl Guides*

- School backpacks

### *Oak Bay Volunteer Services*

- Donations, driving, tax services

### *NexGen (and many other audiologists)*

- Offers free hearing tests
  - Some vision centres offer free vision tests

### *GV Police Victim Services*

- Support in the case of hate crimes
- Presentations

### *Cook St. Activity Centre*

- Age 55+ programs
- Meeting space
- Inter-generational programs, volunteer opportunities, fitness programs

### *Victoria Brain Injury Society*

- Serves those with injuries and their families
- Volunteer opportunities available

### *Art Gallery of GV*

- Cultural Access Pass
- Family Sundays (3<sup>rd</sup> one of each month)
- Studio program for kids
- Looking for specific ideas for newcomers – perhaps connecting artists with newcomer families

### *GV Police Victim Services*

- Support in the case of hate crimes
- Presentations

### *Maher Boudani (UVic WUSC)*

- Willing to share his experiences as a Syrian refugee with others
- Representing newcomers

### *Pulcherie Mboussi (Victoria African & Caribbean Cultural Society)*

- Volunteer to help with groceries & other day-to-day activities
- Help to connect with people and organizations to talk and share experiences

### *Royal BC Museum*

- Part of Cultural Access Pass program for new citizens
- Open Houses for newcomers
- Teacher PD session to help teachers & give them tools to interact with refugee families

### *Global Village Store*

- Opportunity to volunteer and get retail experience, improve English & learn Canadian values
- Help refugees become contributing members of the community

### *Temple Emanu-El*

- Bring Jews & Muslims together & share Jewish cultural experiences

### *James Bay Community Centre*

- Assist in facilitating introduction of kids to schools

### *These resources were noted but not attributed to a specific organization*

- Job placement, skilled trades, government, administrative
- Employment & job credentials assessments
- Meeting space
- Expertise supporting live-in caregivers
- Individuals can offer rides & donations
- Many faith groups & community centres have kitchens that could be shared
- Connections to legal services
- English language skills
- Support establishment of Syrian cultural group/association
- Transition Fair

## 2. What information or resources does your agency/community need to be able to provide services to newcomer refugees?

- #1 Suggestion from all groups – a central, online “hub” to exchange information, match volunteers & donated goods with refugee needs, provide lists of services – e.g. translators, medical, dental, counsellors.
  - Suggestion to approach a local IT firm to setup & maintain
- Strengthened referral process with community partners
- Fast-track ESL classes & access to conversation clubs
- Language support
- Finding out exactly what the newcomers need
- List of free community spaces for workshops
- Awareness & access to community programming for social belonging & well being
- Access to childcare, recreational centres
- Basic necessities – strollers, rain clothes etc.
- List of doctors/dentists accepting new patients
- Housing info
- Culturally sensitive programs to help women integrate outside the come
- Resources for LGBTQ2 people

- Trauma counselling (perhaps)
  - BRIDGES For Women provides trauma counselling
- Childcare resources
  - Ministry of Childcare & Family Development provides childcare funding subsidies
- GVPL would like the contact info of the private sponsoring groups in Victoria to provide information directly about the resources the library can provide
- Way for the Victoria sponsoring groups to connect and share information
  - Via a website/database?
- An evening “swim time” JUST for Syrian women & families
- Computer/internet access for families to remain in contact with loved ones left behind
  - GVPL offers this
- Support for the events/fundraisers that we are all organizing
- Central place to share information about events etc.
- Resources lists for medical & dental professionals
- A “street survival guide” to be shared with all stakeholders
- Demographic information about refugees arriving in Victoria so we have more insight into their potential needs
- An email list or website to provide ongoing information about arriving refugees
  - Expand the Tapestry email list?
- A community map that shows where and what resources are available specific to refugee needs
- Translators
  - Perhaps from existing Syrian’s in Victoria?
  - Access to ICA’s translators?
- Cultural sensitivity training re Syria & refugees
- Create opportunities for public to learn about newcomer culture
  - Arabic language courses at Community Centres & schools
- Cheat-sheet of basic Arabic terms
  - Suggestion –use a Translate App on smartphone (E.g. Google Translate)
- Donated cellphones for use by refugees (could use the translate app to go from Arabic to English)
- A website in Arabic listing services for newcomers
- Useful to have a contact list of the people in attendance at today’s seminar
- An indication of which Private Sponsor groups have their family already and share that with others
- Offer an information session at the Cook St Activity Centre about sponsorships (have interpreters on hand)
- Ability to connect with youth and follow up with Syrian newcomers in the latter stages of settlement
- A definition of "Job Ready"
- "Welcome" signs around Greater Victoria written in Arabic
- a regular get together/meeting space for all organizations/individuals working on refugee settlement
- Bus passes & orientation on how to use local transit
- A refugee "hot-line" to answer questions related to everyday life in Canada