

REFUGEE READINESS FUND NEWSLETTER #3

DECEMBER 31, 2015

اهلا وسهلا بكم في بريتش كولومبيا

Welcome to British Columbia (Ahlan wa sahan beekum fee British Columbia)

British Columbians' response to the resettlement of Syrian refugees has been overwhelming. Since ISSofBC's call to action was launched on November 10th, we have received thousands of inquiries about how to help whether through volunteering, offering accommodations, donating money, contributing welcome baskets, etc. Some of the most heartwarming welcomes have come from British Columbia's children and youth, three of these groups are highlighted below:

Meadowridge School in Maple Ridge sent welcome cards (pictured above) with heartwarming messages inside, including:

"Welcome to Canada! Canada is land of freedom and with no wars and nothing bad happens in Canada and peopel care about each uder and Canada has good familys"

"Welcome to Canada! I am so happy you are staying here because here we do not have war! We have a good education. We have good shelter and good food. We stay healthy! We have good freedom."

"Welcome to Canada! We are students form Meadowridge School. We are feeling very blessed, too. Canada is a very safe place because there are a lot of pepol (sic) that is good in Canada. You will have good shelter and food. Thank you for coming"

"Welcome to Canada! We are so excited to have come to Canada! You can believe any thing. You can ask many, many questions. We will take very good care of you. Anybody can go to school. You can go to get help from pepol any time. I hope you have a good time in Canada for the rest of your life"

The Global Issues Club from Frank Hurt Secondary School – an inner-city school in Surrey – ran a donation campaign for two weeks in October to raise awareness and money for Syrian refugees. Their efforts raised \$1,000, half of which was donated to ISSofBC and the other half to the Canadian Red Cross to help with refugees overseas in Europe.

On Christmas Eve a seven year old boy and his family visited Welcome House to drop off



cards for Syrian families, each with a \$20 inside (photo above).

Thank you to everyone who has reached out to ISSofBC or other groups across the province to Welcome Syrian refugees. Your generosity and warmth of welcome is incredible.

شكراً
Thank you
(Shokran)



CONTEXT



Historical Arrivals: GARs to BC

BC receives approximately **10-12%** of government assisted refugees (GARs) resettled to Canada. All GARs to BC are destined to Vancouver, and settle across Metro Vancouver.

Settlement patterns are largely dictated by the ability to find affordable housing. Over the last 5 years 85% of GARs have settled in Surrey, Coquitlam, Burnaby, Vancouver & New Westminister.

Privately sponsored refugees settle in communities across BC, wherever their sponsors are located.

WHERE ARE WE AT: TARGETS* VS ARRIVALS



166%

British Columbia surpassed the IRCC target of 240 Syrian GARs, welcoming 399 Syrian GARs between November 4, 2015 and January 1, 2016.

22%

1,800 Syrian GARs are anticipated to arrive in BC between November 4, 2015 and February 28, 2016. Arrivals to date account for 22% of the overall target for this period provided by IRCC.

OPERATION SYRIAN REFUGEES

Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCCC) is providing regular updates (Monday to Friday) on Milestones and key figures associated with Operation Syrian Refugees (see <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/welcomeme/milestones.asp>)

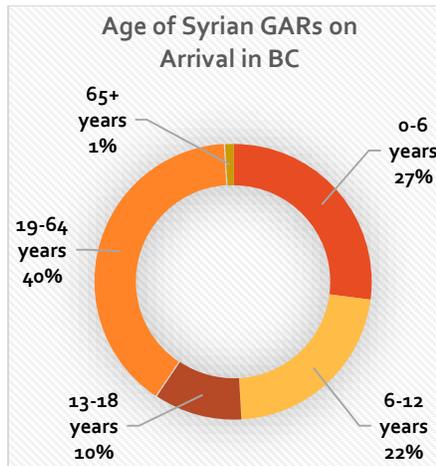
As of December 20, 2015, Canada has welcomed 4,420 Syrian refugees, including: 1,463 Government Assisted Refugees, 272 Blended Visa Office-Referred Refugees and 2,685 Privately Sponsored Refugees.

Updates on Syrian GAR Arrivals

To date, ISSofBC has welcomed 399 Syrian GAR individuals / 95 family units since Operation Syrian Refugees began on November 4th, 2015.

Over the last week (December 28- January 1) British Columbia welcomed almost 350 arrivals. On December 28 and 29 over 200 Syrian GARs arrived in Vancouver, representing one-quarter of BC's annual target for all GARs!

Although initial arrivals were comprised largely of adults, more recent arrivals are comprised of larger family units.



To date, 32% of Syrian GAR arrivals are of school age (6 – 18 years). Over one in four arrivals are children under age 6.

Permanent accommodations have been found for 6 family units. To date, Syrian GARs have settled in Surrey and Burnaby.

Of the arrivals to date, the vast majority of Syrian GARs (389 individuals / 89 family units) remain in temporary accommodations located in Vancouver and Richmond where they are receiving Resettlement Assistance Program services.

The housing search process continues. The preponderance of larger family units – many with six or more individuals – has created a need for larger units.



BRITISH COLUMBIAN'S RESPONSE

On November 10th, 2015 ISSofBC held a Call to Action to encourage people across the province to aid in the resettlement of Syrian refugees through offers of housing, employment and volunteering. We are humbled by the response. To date,



1,131 housing leads, plus over **105** units offered by developers, property managers and owners for temporary and permanent accommodation

5,767 people have come forward to offer their time and talent.



207 job leads have been submitted to our survey

SYRIAN GAR ARRIVALS: NOV 4 – JAN 1



399 Syrian GAR individuals

95

Syrian GAR family units



Permanent Accommodations have been found for 6 family units, in Surrey and Burnaby.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Additional information, resources and training materials are available on our website (<http://www.issbc.org/prim-corp-nav/our-work-with-refugees>), as well as the Refugee Resettlement Hub (www.issbc.org/refugee-readiness-hub). For further information please contact:

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* Please note: targets are estimates only and should not be considered factual