

PRESS RELEASE — REFUGEE ACTION

SYRIAN FAMILY NEARS NEW LIFE IN KINGSTON

A young family who fled Syria to Beirut after their house was bombed is expected to be soon on its way to Kingston thanks to a local refugee sponsorship agreement.

The UN-registered Al-Salkhadi family — Oussam, Nawar and their two daughters, Aya (3) and Retaj (1) — should reach Kingston in February or March. Oussam has been studying English Literature at university.

Working in collaboration with the Kingston Islamic Centre, and with The United Church of Canada as Sponsorship Agreement Holder, five churches and others from the community are raising money and attending to the paperwork involved in the relocation. The Islamic Centre of Kingston has pledged 25% per cent of the money needed to bring the Al-Salkhadi family to Kingston.

Local supporters formed the West Kingston Refugee Partnership (WKRP) in late September intending to bring at least two refugee families to Kingston. It is now a 29-strong working group.

Edith Rankin Memorial United Church led the formation of a coalition with four other west-end United Churches: Crossroads, Cooke's-Portsmouth, St Andrew's By-The-Lake, and Cataraqui, and other interested people from the community

Spearheading the group is the Rev Dr Jean Stairs, Minister of Christian Education, Outreach and Pastoral Care at Edith Rankin Memorial United Church.

“Once funds are in hand for the Al-Salkhadi family, WKRP will set about sponsorship of a second UN-approved family that has been classed as “travel-ready” for several years on The United Church of Canada’s Blended Visa Office Referral list (BVOR),” she said.

The group will select its second family by giving consideration to the cultural, spiritual, language and community support systems Kingston can provide.

Individuals wishing to support WKRP through Crossroads United Church can go to its website at www.crossroadsunited.ca and click on the “Canada Helps” icon. Donors to the WKRP refugee project should select the “4-Refugee Fund” option from the list of the church’s available funds.

For further information:

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