

GCRC Refugee Sponsorship Team

Purpose: The Refugee Sponsorship Team is a group of volunteers formed specifically to assist with our church's sponsorship of a particular refugee family. It is our responsibility, as Christians, to respond in love and provide protection to refugees who have had to flee conflict and persecution.

Refugee sponsorship is considered a diaconal project with the GCRC sponsorship team primarily responsible for overseeing the sponsorship of a specific family, with guidance and assistance from World Renew in Burlington. The Refugee Sponsorship Team consists of a group of approximately eight people, who communicate regularly and work together to assist in the sponsorship process.

When Churches Sponsor Refugees

- They receive a wonderful opportunity to live out their commitment as Christians to welcome the stranger, feed the hungry, shelter the homeless
- They offer refugees a chance, that they would not otherwise have, to begin a new life in Canada
- They focus together on compassion and love, dialogue and respect, looking outside of themselves.

They change lives!

As a sponsoring group, GCRC is responsible for all material and financial support of the refugee(s) as well as providing orientation, settlement and emotional support during the sponsorship period (usually the refugees' first year in Canada) or until the refugees become self-supporting.

Financial support must be, at a minimum, equal to the current Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP) rates set by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC). Sponsors must provide one-time start-up supports upon the arrival of the sponsored refugee(s) and ongoing monthly costs during the entire sponsorship period.

World Renew provides resources, checklists and information to assist us in the settlement process.

What does Refugee Settlement involve?

- The goal is that the newcomers become self-sufficient (ESL, job readiness, school, employment)
- The church takes on all aspects of settlement (doctors, dentists, mental health)
- The church covers financial needs for one year (social assistance only possible after one year)
- The church assists the newcomers with cultural integration and learning about Canadian rights and responsibilities.

The Refugee Sponsorship Team:

- raises funds, as needed
- completes sponsorship documents, with assistance from World Renew
- finds suitable living accommodations and furnishings
- contacts local settlement services
- greets and welcomes refugees at the airport
- assists in integration and settlement (applying for OHIP, Social Insurance Numbers, Ontario photo ID card, Canada Child Tax Benefit, opening a bank account, signing up for English classes, finding a family doctor, finding out about mental health counselling, exploring education options for children and enrolling children in school, assisting in employment search, setting up a phone plan, arranging visits to dentist, optometrist, library and local stores, applying for driver's license, etc.)

In addition, the Refugee Sponsorship Team communicates regularly with the GCRC Council and congregation, providing regular updates on the sponsorship process.

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