

Guelph Chamber Launches Corporate Challenge Supporting Syrian Refugee Families

By Kithio Mwanzia

With the recent activities and mobilization efforts now in full-swing to support the 76 Syrian refugee families that will be coming to Guelph and area, there is a natural opportunity for local businesses to contribute and support the refugee settlement in our community.

As an organization we are here to foster community prosperity, which is why we have launched a Corporate Challenge to connect businesses to the joint Syrian refugee campaign efforts. As part of the initiative, the Chamber will lead the outreach and coordination of corporate donations and connect individuals and businesses that are interested in making donations.

We have had many conversations with business leaders on the opportunities for collaboration on this initiative and there remains a readiness and willingness from people to assist in all aspects of the settlement support activities, which is a true testament to how welcoming our community really is. Our intention is to trigger a wave of solidarity from businesses to join in the effort.

Joint discussions are also in the initial stages around skills-based training and employment opportunities to ensure the families can integrate into the economy, and I will be asking our member businesses to think about hiring refugees into their workforce.

HOW GUELPH'S BUSINESS COMMUNITY CAN CONTRIBUTE

The Chamber is currently outreaching to businesses to meet immediate donation requirements. Additionally, we are encouraging businesses to mobilize donations around items such as gift certificates with a recommended value of \$50 for grocery stores, restaurants, and retail outlets.

For more information on the Chamber's Corporate Challenge and to request donation information, please contact Adam Stewart, Guelph Refugee Forum Corporate Challenge Coordinator, by email at adam@guelphchamber.com.

For information on how to make a cash donation, please contact the Muslim Society of Guelph, by email at info@msofg.org. Please note: The Chamber will not be accepting cash or monetary donations.

ABOUT THE SYRIAN REFUGEE CRISIS AND RESPONSE

- Guelph and area is anticipated to welcome 76 Syrian families through a mix of private sponsorship and blended government sponsorship
- 50 families have been sponsored under Jim Estill's initiative and 26 families through other private sponsorship groups based in Guelph and area
- The total number of refugees to Guelph is estimated to be between 350-400 people

- Families began arriving in Guelph from Syria in December and will continue into the Spring
- Nearly 600 volunteers have registered to support the families and sponsorship groups
- Up to 10,000 refugees will arrive to Ontario
- 165 communities across Canada are preparing to welcome refugees

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES & SUPPORT

[The Guelph Refugee Sponsorship Forum](#)

[The Muslim Society of Guelph Refugee Lifeline](#)

[The Salvation Army Guelph Corps. Syrian Refugee Support](#)

[Upper Grand Learning Foundation 'Free To Achieve Fund'](#)

[Government of Ontario – Syrian Refugees: How You can Help](#)

[Government of Canada - #WelcomeRefugees Initiative](#)

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