

## Refugee Program Update

- There has been a recent call for more volunteers to help with the settlement tasks once the refugees arrive in Victoria. Currently we have 6 persons identified within the parish that are interested in volunteering. We are still anticipating a potential December arrival of the families.
- There is some recent concern regarding government caps on immigration numbers for 2016 and those allotted to Private Sponsorship. The numbers now include Syrian and Iraqi refugees who no longer have any preferential status. There is some hope that since our applications were in before the end of March that our family will be among those to come to Canada in 2016, but concern continues.
- A volunteer information meeting is planned for Wed. May 25 at 7:00pm in Holy Cross Parish Hall to provide some new information.
  - The Constituent Group team members will be introduced and the 4 broad areas of the Settlement Plan they are responsible for: Trudy Holden (overall coordination and reporting), Carol Tyshynski (housing), Gary Skabeikis (budget), Sheila Wall (forms) and Anna Mendonca (adult education/community integration).
  - Each CG member will describe their area of the Settlement Plan, the kinds of tasks involved, and the need for short term help that will extend over the first year that the family is here.
  - A short Q & A session will follow.
- The refugee families are receiving weekly Skype ESL lessons from a retired teacher at St. Pats.
- A congregational Skype call is tentatively scheduled for June 05 between the morning masses at Holy Cross. Confirmation of the date and time will be provided through the bulletin once confirmed.

Gary Skabeikis

May 6, 2016