

GLOBAL REFUGEE SPONSORSHIP INITIATIVE AT A GLANCE

Sponsor training for Community Sponsorship Program "Somos" in Tudela, Spain



Approximately twenty volunteers and professionals in the Community Sponsorship Program of Navarre received training between March 22 and 25. The course was conducted over four days by the GRSI and two representatives from Spanish and Argentinian civil society, with sponsors, government, and civil society personnel in attendance. The training was delivered in preparation for the first arrivals under the program, which are planned for April. The "Somos" initiative aims to welcome two refugee families to Tudela, Navarre through community sponsorship. This initiative makes Navarre the third region to implement a community sponsorship program in Spain. The DG of Migration Policy for Navarre says that community sponsorship "turns the community into an active agenda of reception, accompaniment, and inclusion" and is "an effective way to channel the solidarity of Navarrese society".

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"After I tried skiing, everything changed" First Syrian refugee in Canada earns ski instructor certificate



(Photo taken pre-COVID) Ghaibour with his sponsor Laurie Cooper, recipient of MOSAIC's 2020 human Rights Award

A refugee welcomed to Canada through community sponsorship has discovered a **love of skiing**, resulting in his becoming the first Syrian refugee in Canada to earn ski instructor certification according to the Canadian Ski Instructors' Alliance.

Murhaf Ghaibour had his doubts when he first attempted to ski in Whistler, BC. He had never skied before January 2019. "I cannot live in any other place," says Ghaibour, who had initially considered moving to another city before discovering his passion for skiing. "But after I tried skiing, everything changed."

Learn from the experience of Canada and Japan: Toward the acceptance and diversity of refugees and migrants



On March 3, the Embassy of Canada in Japan and UNHCR Japan co-hosted an **event** on refugee resettlement in Canada and Japan. Participants in this event discussed the challenges faced by refugees and migrants and possible solutions. Jennifer Bond, head of the University of Ottawa's Refugee Hub, noted the importance of citizen engagement in resettlement and integration. Other participants noted the importance of collaboration between the private and public sectors for successful integration. Participants also had the opportunity to hear from resettlement support organizations in Japan about their work and experiences in this field.

Concert for Hope – An evening with Syrian musicians in the UK

A **special online concert** on March 23 in the United Kingdom was held to show how community sponsorship is an opportunity to enrich communities. Organized by *UK Welcomes Refugees*, the concert showcased Syrian music and included Syrian musicians who have resettled in the UK, along with testimonials from those involved in sponsorship. *UK Welcomes Refugees* hopes to raise awareness of community sponsorship and celebrate the role of communities in welcoming refugees.

Comox Valley, Canada walkers raising money to bring Syrian family to Ireland



The **Cléire Community Sponsorship** group in Cape Clear Ireland is working to raise the necessary funds to sponsor a family from Syria. Community members from Cape Clear reached out to friends in Comox Valley, BC, Canada to team up for a virtual 5000 kilometre walk. After successfully completing the initial

5000 kilometres, the participants agreed to do another 5000km, representing a roundtrip from Cape Clear to Damascus. Participants from British Columbia, Alberta and Ontario have been named the Canadian Capers and have participated in the weekly hikes along with those from Ireland.

Cape Clear is the first Irish island to be accepted as a destination for sponsored refugees and the community looks forward to welcoming a family later this year.

Final group of refugees arrive in Italy through 2016 humanitarian corridor set up between churches and Italian government

Eight Syrian refugees arrived in Rome from Lebanon on March 29th. Daniela Pompei, director of migratory policies for the Community of Sant'Egidio, explained this is the last group from the protocol signed between the Community of Sant'Egidio, the Federation of Protestant Churches (FEP), and the Italian government. "Since 2016, a total of 2,024 refugees have arrived from Lebanon with humanitarian corridors through these two protocols signed with the Federation of Protestant Churches," **said Pompei**. The humanitarian corridors initiative assisted vulnerable refugees—such as single mothers and those with health issues—who are identified in host countries like Lebanon. Once refugees arrived in Italy, they were provided with 6 months of housing, a stipend for food, language training, psychological support, and legal assistance, while local volunteers and church members helped with needs such as enrolling children in schools and job counseling.

What is GRSI?

The Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative is a partnership of six organizations – the Government of Canada, UNHCR, Open Society Foundations, the Giustra Foundation, The Shapiro Foundation, and the University of Ottawa. It aims to help other countries set up their own community-based refugee sponsorship programs, strengthening local communities and improving the narrative on refugees in the process.

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