

# GLOBAL REFUGEE SPONSORSHIP INITIATIVE

## GRSI AT A GLANCE

### UK Community Sponsorship Roadshow

Last summer, GRSI participated in a series of town hall events promoting community refugee sponsorship in the United Kingdom. The British Home Office, together with [Social Finance](#) and the [Good Faith Partnership](#), organized a roadshow from July 17 to 20 that stopped in six cities: Kingston-Upon-Thames, London, Manchester, Birmingham, Bristol and Aberystwyth.

The tour coincided with the first anniversary of the UK's [community sponsorship scheme](#). The meetings showcased Canada's Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program (PSRP) to mobilize people from various organizations who are interested in participating in community sponsorship.

The roadshow's official kick-off was hosted by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, at Lambeth Palace in London. The evening featured a panel discussion led by Professor Jennifer Bond of the University of Ottawa and Russell Rook of the Good Faith Partnership. Key speakers included Hon Ahmed Hussen, Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), Rt Hon Amber Rudd, UK Home Secretary, and Rt Revd Christopher Chessun, Bishop of Southwark.

A joint UK-Canada delegation then branched out across the country. Canada was represented by Mayor David Henderson of Brockville, Ontario, Yosief Araya of the [Refugee Sponsorship Training Program](#), Brian Dyck of the Canadian Refugee Sponsorship Agreement Holders Association ([SAH](#)), and Chris Gregory of IRCC's Refugee Affairs Branch.



*UK-Canada Delegation in Wales during the Community Sponsorship Roadshow.*

"Our British hosts did a great job organizing the tour," said Gregory. "At every stop the room was full of people keen to share their experiences and learn more. Community sponsorship has a bright future in the UK."

### Community Sponsorship Around the World

- Citizens UK visit Ottawa to learn about Canada's model. 🇬🇧
- GRSI leaders highlighted benefits of community refugee sponsorship at the 2017 Concordia Summit in New York. 🇬🇧
- GRSI spoke at the International Metropolis Conference 2017 in The Hague and ICMC seminar in Brussels. 🇬🇧
- UK community sponsor group's experience highlighted in GRSI UK video. 🇬🇧

## An Interfaith Experience of Community Sponsorship

Excerpt from an **interview** with Rabbi Stephen Wise, founding member of Abraham's Children Together (ACT), a community sponsorship group formed by a synagogue, church and Muslim community organization in Oakville, Canada. The full interview can be found in the **Case Studies** section of the online **GRSI Guidebook**.

*What is the experience of arrival and the refugees' first weeks like?*

Rabbi Wise: The arrival was very exciting and happened so quickly. One of the church members hosted the refugee family for the first few weeks until their new house was vacated and ready.

I remember meeting the family at the airport; they were very happy but still overwhelmed by what was happening. A special moment was the day we moved them into their house. We had the moving truck come and were moving in furniture and they were helping figure out what should go in which room. We finally took a break and all sat in the living room eating pizza. Breaking bread together overcame language barriers and we sat and laughed and were rejuvenated physically and spiritually.

*What is the best part of your sponsorship experience?*

There is something beautiful about helping another human being start life anew. Not only did we help bring the family over, we worked together to provide them with all the tools to succeed. With these pieces in place, we have a very strong feeling they will succeed in settling well into Canada and not only stand on their own two feet but thrive and give back to the country that helped them.

*The model of community sponsorship that Canada pioneered is a proven way to engage individuals, local organizations, and businesses to contribute to refugee protection and to channel their compassion.*

- George Soros, Open Society Foundations



Members of Abraham's Children Together.

## Suggested Reading

US Company Pledges to Sponsor Refugee Family (September 19, 2017) [👇](#)

Expanding Complimentary Pathways for Refugee Resettlement (September 2017) [👇](#)

Refugee & Migrant coalition welcomes Irish government's commitment to new Community Sponsorship (September 19, 2017) [👇](#)

One Year On (September 19, 2017) [👇](#)

## What is GRSI?

**GRSI is a partnership of five organizations: the Government of Canada, UNHCR, the Open Society Foundations, the Radcliffe Foundation and the University of Ottawa.**

**GRSI aims to help other countries set up their own community sponsored refugee programs. The ultimate goal is to boost resettlement capacity worldwide. Through this process it also strives to strengthen local communities and improve the international political narrative on refugees and other newcomers.**

**SUBSCRIBE    GRSI ONLINE    CONTACT US**