

# GLOBAL REFUGEE SPONSORSHIP INITIATIVE

## SPECIAL 5<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY EDITION NEWSLETTER

### The Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative Turns 5!

Over the course of five years, the Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative has engaged with nearly 20 countries in four continents, connected with hundreds of civil society organizations, and mobilized tens of thousands of sponsors and supporters, with the ultimate goal of encouraging and supporting the adoption and expansion of refugee sponsorship programs around the world. New pathways for refugee protection are needed more than ever before: the UNHCR estimates that over **1.4 million refugees are in need of resettlement**. By mobilizing and empowering citizens, community sponsorship has the potential to increase the availability of resettlement as a protection option and provide access to complementary pathways for more refugees around the world, while also supporting their integration. The GRSI will continue to advocate for increased refugee resettlement opportunities and improved refugee integration outcomes by engaging governments, community groups, individuals, philanthropists and businesses in resettlement efforts around the world. Visit our [website](#) to learn more, explore our resources and follow our next steps.

### GRSI Partners and Supporters Gather to Celebrate the GRSI's Five-Year Anniversary

On December 9<sup>th</sup>, GRSI Partners held a 5-year anniversary event at the Chateau Laurier in Ottawa. With COVID-19 safety precautions in place, approximately 40 members attended the event, including senior partners of the GRSI, civil society representatives, refugee advocates, and long-time GRSI supporters. The event celebrated the significant growth of community sponsorship of refugees globally over the past five years, acknowledged unique cross-sectoral collaboration of Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative partners, and reinforced ambitions to increase protection spaces for refugees globally through the development and expansion of community sponsorship programs.



GRSI partner representatives Daniel Gonzales (Open Society Foundations), Ed Shapiro (The Shapiro Foundation), Jennifer Bond (uOttawa Refugee Hub) and Canadian Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Sean Fraser celebrate the achievements of the GRSI. © David Chan



Rema Jamous Imseis, UNHCR's Representative in Canada, addresses the audience. UNHCR is a partner of the GRSI. © David Chan



Dr. Nhung Tran-Davies shares her book, *The Doll*, inspired by her own experience as a child refugee in Canada, with the audience. © David Chan

# GRSI Through the Years

2016 – 2021



- DECEMBER 2016** ● GRSI officially launches in Ottawa, Canada!
- MAY 2017** ● GRSI YouTube channel launches
- SEPTEMBER 2017** ● GRSI publishes a Guidebook
- OCTOBER 2017** ● GRSI releases its first newsletter
- JULY 2018** ● Ministers from Canada, the UK, Ireland, Spain, Argentina, and New Zealand release a joint statement committing to pilot or implement community sponsorship programs in their countries & pledge to agree on a Global Compact on Refugees (GCR)
- NOVEMBER 2018** ● GRSI joins Twitter
- DECEMBER 2018** ● GRSI is mentioned in the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR)
- JUNE 2019** ● GRSI is identified as a successful partnership model in UNHCR's Three-Year Strategy (2019-2021)
- JULY 2019** ● GRSI creates a States Network to focus on improving and expanding community sponsorship globally
- NOVEMBER 2019** ● GRSI releases a training manual and online learning resource on community sponsorship
- DECEMBER 2019** ● The Community Sponsorship States Network is formally launched
- DECEMBER 2019** ● Ministers from six countries (Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, and Spain) declare their support for community sponsorship at the first Global Refugee Forum
- JULY 2020** ● GRSI convenes a high-level virtual dialogue on sponsorship, resettlement & complementary pathways
- DECEMBER 2020** ● The Shapiro Foundation becomes the newest GRSI partner
- FEBRUARY 2021** ● GRSI's Policy Design Workbook is launched
- DECEMBER 2021** ● GRSI turns 5! As of the fifth anniversary of GRSI, there are active community sponsorship programs in eight countries around the globe, with GRSI actively working with almost 20 total countries exploring, designing, developing, or implementing pilots and programs across four continents.



Partner representatives Gregory Maniatis, Jennifer Bond, Hon. Minister John McCallum, Frank Giustra, and Johannes van der Klaauw announce the launch of GRSI at a press conference in Ottawa.

© Andrea Campbell



Spanish sponsors and Caritas staff receive GRSI-led sponsorship training from Lucila Spiegelblatt (centre) in San Sebastian, Spain. Photographer unknown.



States receive recognition for their efforts in Community Sponsorship at the Canadian Mission in Geneva.

© Pierre-Michel Viot



Angham Yunes, a member of the first family of refugees sponsored to Ireland, and later a refugee sponsor herself, [shares her story with the GRSI](#).

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## About the GRSI

*The Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative was founded in 2016 to increase and improve global refugee resettlement by engaging private citizens, communities, and businesses in resettlement efforts; strengthen local host communities that come together to welcome newcomers; and improve the narrative about refugees and other newcomers.*

*Partners are the Government of Canada, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Open Society Foundations, the Shapiro Foundation, the Giustra Foundation, as well as the University of Ottawa Refugee Hub, supported by the generous contributions of philanthropic entities including the Robert Bosch Stiftung.*

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