

# Refugee sponsorship group reaches \$30,000 goal to fund Syrian family

By **Melanie Hennessey**  
Special to The IFP

of multiple Syrian families approved by the Canadian government.

Through the coalition, groups of 15 families are joining forces and each committing to give \$1,000 to help sponsor one family and be involved in their resettlement process. A matching \$15,000 is then being raised through a GoFundMe page, corporate and individual donations and other fundraising efforts. All funds will be used to provide the necessities of life for the family for one year.



Currently the HHC4R's fundraising total is sitting at over \$36,000. Since the first group of families has fully funded its sponsorship, a second group has now started and is currently accepting members.

Brake— an associate pastor at Maple Avenue Baptist Church and founder of the online charity, [www.kutoa.org](http://www.kutoa.org)— used his knowledge of charitable operations to create a structure for the HHC4R so that it can

grow without creating a greater human resource load. Each of the groups of 15 will operate independently and contain an administrator, treasurer, application manager and resettlement supervisor.

The members will find a place for their sponsored family to live in advance of their arrival and assist them with enrolling in school and ESL programs, finding a doctor and a point of cultural connection, and accessing community amenities.

Individuals or groups interested in joining the HHC4R can contact the group through its new website, [www.hhc4r.ca](http://www.hhc4r.ca), or Facebook page, [www.facebook.com/hhc4r](http://www.facebook.com/hhc4r).

Brake acknowledged that the \$1,000 each group member is asked to contribute is "significant." Those who want to help with a smaller contribution can do so at <https://www.gofundme.com/HHC4R>. The HHC4R has also established a bank account at the Georgetown CIBC under the name Halton Hills Coalition for Refugees. The local branch will be offering free banking for two years to the refugees.

In addition, the group is accepting donations of gift cards from local businesses and new household items, with a particular need for mattresses, bedding, kitchen and bathroom items.

## Local residents displeased with mail delivery

The *Independent & Free Press* received a few calls from local residents last week to complain about sporadic or no mail delivery from Canada Post in central Georgetown.

A Stevens Cres. man said that he hadn't received any mail in a week before finally finding something in his Super Mailbox, which included three bills that were due in a couple of days.

Two other readers on Weber Dr. described similar delays and one said that the regular carrier was on vacation and no replacement could be deployed.

A call was placed to the Canada Post Media Relations Centre in Ottawa, where a spokesperson acknowledged delivery delays, but assures that service should return to normal this week.

"We experienced some unexpected short-term staffing issues in Georgetown last week, and as a result, some customers received delivery every other day," said Eugene Knapik of Canada Post.

"We have brought in additional employees to help out and as of this morning (Monday), all routes are being delivered by regular staff"

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Reader tip: From *The Independent & Free Press* Facebook page, reader Thelma Watt found her community mailbox frozen shut, "so I had to bang on it to make it open (key was also difficult to turn). Helpful reader Tamme Christiansen replied, "If you have hand sanitizer and put a little on the key before putting it in the slot, it can help when the lock is frozen."

A recently formed group working to help sponsor and resettle Syrian refugees in the local community has experienced its first success.

In less than a month, the Halton Hills Coalition for Refugees (HHC4R) has raised more than \$30,000 to cover the costs of resettling one family in the community. Housing for the family has also been secured.

HHC4R Communications Director Jennifer Tate reports that the group's application for the first family has been submitted and approved by World Renew, a local relief agency. Now, they're waiting to hear from the family and find out when they'll arrive in Canada.

"We are incredibly grateful for the outpouring of support Halton Hills has shown us, both in terms of financial contributions and volunteering time," she said. "Once again, Halton Hills has shown us what a big heart our community has."

What started as an idea from Georgetown resident Josh Brake to gather a few people and sponsor one family has now morphed into the HHC4R, which plans to continue co-ordinating the efforts of local residents and facilitating the sponsorship

## Correction

The founder of To Be Determined Theatre Co. was misidentified in the story, To Be Determined spreads Norval star's love for theatre, in the Jan. 7 edition of *The Independent & Free Press*.

Her name is Alexandra Lent. *The Independent & Free Press* regrets the error.

## Georgetown resident wins Honda in Christmas Wish draw

By **Eamonn Maher**  
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A Georgetown resident was rewarded for her generosity during the holiday season with a brand new vehicle thanks to Honda Canada.

Cathy Longhurst, who owns the Art Effects Gallery on Guelph St., brought in a

couple of toys last month to the Georgetown dealership of Honda Canada, which sponsored the 49th-annual CP24 CHUM Christmas Wish.

In a random draw held last week, Longhurst's ballot was pulled as the winner of a 2016 Honda Civic EX sedan for her donation.

"I've never had a new car before, so this

is exciting for me," said Longhurst on Monday.

The Christmas Wish program has become one of the largest distributors of toys to children in need in the Greater Toronto Area. It also provides financial assistance to hundreds of agencies, ensuring that hundreds of thousands of children across the GTA enjoy a holiday experience.

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