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A breakfast meeting with guest speaker:

John Stanton

Founder and CEO of the Running Room

October 13, 2015
7:00 am to 10:30 am

Breakfast Seminar Series

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Council support for refugees limited

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"It's not just a matter of stepping on a plane," she said.

And the money still needs to be raised to get them here, which according to Lovatt is about \$30,000 for a year, for a family of four.

People have already contacted the councillor offering up rooms in their homes for refugees and Lovatt told The Sun-Tribune he is not worried about getting them clothes and food because "we live in one of the most generous communities".

In a post to his blog last week, Lovatt wanted to know what the mayor and region could do to help Syrians.

"I believe we have a moral obligation to respond and take whatever action we can to extend an invitation to those who are living in hellish conditions as they flee for their lives," Lovatt wrote, in part, in an email to Mayor Justin Altmann, York Region Chairperson Wayne Emmerson and federal election candidates.

The Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) is challenging its member municipalities to donate at least \$100 to aid in the resettlement of Syrian refugees into safe countries.

AMO hopes to raise a minimum of \$40,000, which will help save two families, its president wrote in an email to cities and towns.

AMO will donate all proceeds to Lifeline Syria, which is a community-based initiative looking to re-settle and integrate 1,000 Syrian refugees into Ontario over the next two years.

The province has provided seed funding to Lifeline Syria to support its work, but it is reli-

ant on public donations to fulfil its mandate, according to the email from AMO.

Whitchurch-Stouffville council approved a \$100 donation Tuesday night.

Lovatt told The Sun-Tribune Wednesday morning he was disappointed that was all council did, but added they were limited in their response by the Municipal Act.

The Act's sphere of jurisdiction dictates what property tax money can be spent on, which is the municipality, according to Marc Pourvahidi, CAO for the town.

The contribution came from the town's grants and donations fund, which Lovatt told The Sun-Tribune is being depleted. It started the budget year with \$10,000 available.

"It's the responsibility of the municipality to spend those dollars within the municipality," Altmann told The Sun-Tribune yesterday, adding the Syrian crisis is a federal issue.

"Our responsibility with taxpayers' dollars is providing infrastructure and services," he said.

He also told the Sun-Tribune if they were to donate more to this cause, it would open "Pandora's box" and they could be approached by many other places affected by "poverty and crime."

Every week, two to three people come to the mayor's office seeking assistance with rent, clothing and food, he told The Sun-Tribune.

"We need to take care of our own," he said.

Altmann encourages members of the public to come together to help the refugees and he would provide a letter of endorsement.

The City of Ajax, which also received the same request from AMO, donated \$5,000.

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