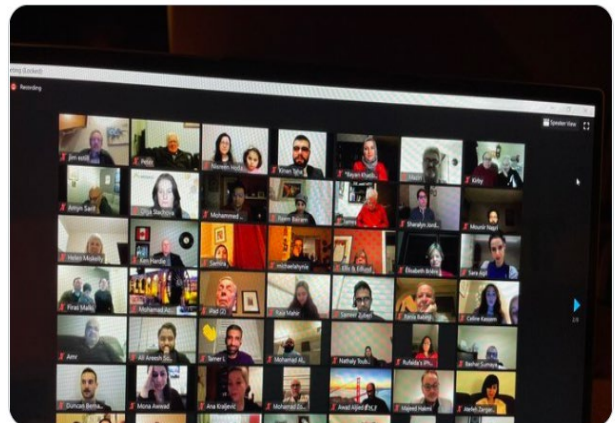


WE LIP Success Story - January 2021

SYRIAN REFUGEES MARK 5 YEARS IN CANADA

As we celebrate this significant milestone - five years since the first wave of Syrian refugees were welcomed in our community, we reflect on the journey and the ways that WE LIP played a part in making Windsor Essex a welcoming community for all.



SUPPORTING THE ARRIVAL OF SYRIAN REFUGEES TO WINDSOR-ESSEX

December 2015 - January 2016

The Windsor Essex Local Immigration Partnership staff and council members worked with community members to raise the awareness of Syrian refugees settling in Windsor and Essex County. The following is a summary of initiatives the WE LIP has been involved with over the first two months of Syrian refugees arriving:

Leadership:

- The WE LIP team was at the Municipal and community discussion tables since the onset of the refugee resettlement plan was announced; over 95 organizations in the WE LIP worked together to expand capacity in the community and build on existing work as community collaborator;
- Been a participant on provincial and national teleconferences related to Syrian Refugees, including with the Minister's office, Emergency Management Ontario and most recently Provincial Syrian Resettlement Team Network;
- Met on a regular basis with Multicultural Council of Windsor and Essex County (MCC) for communication on number of refugees arrived in community, family composition, service delivery issues.

Communication:

- WE LIP staff created the City of Windsor Welcome Refugee website page, a refugee definition page and worked with 211/311 to develop system and response to community inquiries and donations;

- WE LIP worked on a Positive messaging campaign in partnership with Syrian Canadian Council and the Windsor Islamic Association. The partners developed a video campaign that consisted of a variety of stakeholders and community members across Windsor and Essex County holding up a multilingual WELCOME sign – English, French & Arabic. Here is the link to the Welcome to Windsor-Essex Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jewmZDxKGok>
- Worked with University of Windsor Project Syria group. This student group organized a collective plan to fundraise, volunteer and also participated in a positive messaging campaign with the WE LIP- #WE WELCOME social media campaign.



Awareness:

- Worked with Orientation Advisory Committee (OAC) to develop a service inventory that could be posted on the City of Windsor Welcome Refugees page and the County of Essex's www.welcometowindsor-essex.ca website to assist immigrants, refugees, sponsors and community stakeholders to locate services and learn about eligibility, etc.;
- Worked with the City of Windsor to include locations of settlement services providers and language assessment on mappmycity.ca app;
- In partnership with the Windsor Essex Food Bank Association, WE LIP developed and distributed a Cultural Food survey to help ensure food provided at local food banks are responsive to the cultures in Windsor Essex;
- In partnership with Syrian Canadian Council and Windsor Islamic Association, planned Cultural Awareness sessions on the Syrian culture and Muslim faith.
- Participated in South Essex Community Council Community Information session with Windsor Islamic Association and Syrian Canadian Council representative to provide background on Cultural Awareness Training session. Responded to inquiries from local employers expressing interest in hiring Syrian refugees and referred to local Employment Ontario Service providers to assist.

Planning:

- Assisted with the organization and attended the 'Planning for Syrian Refugee Resettlement Community Stakeholder' meeting hosted by the City of Windsor and the Multicultural Council of Windsor and Essex County. The meeting consisted of informative presentations facilitated by Jelena Payne, Community Development and Health Commissioner for The Corporation of the City of Windsor and Kathleen Thomas, Executive Director of the Multicultural Council of Windsor and Essex County and RAP Manager Marcela Diaz.
- Chaired Welcoming and Community Supports table. Recommended actions included working on an organized approach for donations; Cultural Awareness sessions; and volunteering. As a result, United Way hosted community groups who have expressed interest in collecting, storing and distributing donations of clothing, furniture and food for Syrian refugees;



- Co-hosted Syrian Refugee Resettlement Community Stakeholder Healthcare table with the ESC LHIN. Attendees had the opportunity to participate via conference call or in person. The meeting resulted in
- the creation of a healthcare contact list – including holiday hours, languages spoken, locations, etc. Responded to request from the Windsor Police to work with the Windsor Essex Children's Aid Society to educate newcomers on child welfare laws and appropriate child behavior management techniques.



THREADING COMPASSION THROUGH THE HEART OF WINDSOR-ESSEX

Windsor Essex Local Immigration Partnership 2016 Annual Forum

March 3, 2016

The 2016 WE LIP Annual Forum showcased work done by WE LIP and partners between 2015 -2016. This was an opportunity to highlight the Syrian Refugee Crisis and the Compassionate Community Response that had been shown. The Keynote address was centered on the Windsor Essex Compassionate Community Coalition and delivered by Carol Derbyshire, Executive Director Hospice of Windsor & Essex County.



INTERIM FEDERAL HEALTH PROGRAM REGIONAL CONVERSATION

April 28, 2016

In response to the restoration of the Interim Federal Health Program, the Windsor Essex Local Immigration Partnership partnered with the Erie St. Clair Local Health Integration Network to host a ground-breaking regional conversation on April 28, 2016.

The Interim Federal Health Program (IFHP) provides limited, temporary coverage of healthcare benefits to resettled refugees, refugee claimants, rejected refugee claimants and certain others who are not eligible for provincial or territorial health insurance. The primary purpose of this program is to provide limited, temporary coverage of health-care costs for specific groups of people, such as protected persons (including resettled refugees), refugee claimants, rejected refugee claimants and certain persons detained under the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act during their period of ineligibility for provincial or territorial health insurance.

The 2-hour conversation provided opportunities for participants to hear directly from Immigration Refugees Citizenship Canada and Medavie Blue Cross representatives on how changes to the program affect local access to equitable healthcare. After a presentation, the speakers provided responses to both questions submitted in advance of the conversation and new questions arising from the presentation content. All participants received electronic copies of the presentations, helpful website links and contact information for the presenters.

Erie St. Clair LHIN

Join the Interim Federal Health Conversation
April 28, 2016

You are invited to join the discussion with Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) and Medavie Blue Cross to discuss the Interim Federal Health Program (IFH)

IFH restoration has simplified the program for clients and providers. This discussion will highlight the changes and provide details about how it affects local access.



When: Thursday, April 28th 9:30 to 11:30am
Where:
Option 1, via teleconference: 1-888-289-4573 Access code 6706088#
No registration is required to join the teleconference

Option 2, in person: You may participate in the webcast in person at:
Workforce WindsorEssex
880 North Service Road, Unit 201, Windsor Ontario
To attend in person, register with Gaby.Rojas@lhins.on.ca or at 519-351-5677

Questions for IFH
Please send in your questions to sarahmay.garcia@lhins.on.ca by April 21, 2016. This will allow for collation and presenters to prepare for the conversation.





ESTABLISHING THE VON IMMIGRANT HEALTH CLINIC

May 2016



Due to an established partnership between the ESC LHIN and WE LIP, planning was able to take place in an organized way for the arrival of the Syrian refugees. One of the outcomes of the planning was the establishment of the ESC LHIN-funded VON Immigrant Health Clinic in May 2016. The clinic works in tandem with the MCC's nurse practitioner and Refugee Assistance Program, as well as providing services to newcomer clients referred by all settlement agencies in Windsor-Essex. Additionally, the VON IHC provides outreach to every settlement agency in Essex County, for those clients that are not able to access services at the Windsor location. In the Fall of 2016, a mental health worker was also funded by ESC LHIN via

Family Services Windsor-Essex to enhance the team, reduce mental health stigma and seamlessly provide support and navigation for clients into the broader health system and community.

LEAMINGTON SYRIAN REFUGEE WELCOME DINNER

May 26, 2016

The South Essex Community Council Leamington Syrian Refugee Committee hosted a welcome event for Syrian refugees who have recently settled in Leamington. The event was held at Faith Mennonite Church and was attended by private sponsored refugees and their sponsors who prepared a potluck meal for all to enjoy. WE LIP Council members, Windsor Islamic Association and the Syrian Canadian Council representatives, travelled to Leamington to support the event and personally welcome the families.

Sponsors shared stories of how the refugee families have introduced them to traditional Syrian foods and together they have been able to find establishments in Leamington where ingredients can be purchased. The families and sponsors have enjoyed spending time together and learning from each other.

In addition to enjoying a good meal together, the potluck event provided opportunities for some of the Syrian families to meet for the first time and make plans to connect again soon.



SETTLEMENT PARTNERS INFORMATION COMMUNICATION EXCHANGE (SPICE) PROFESSIONAL LEARNING CIRCLE

June 17, 2016

Settlement Partners Information Communication Exchange (SPICE) is a committee led by WE LIP and made up of representatives from Newcomer Service Providers and City of Windsor Employment and Social Services.

The goal of the committee is to develop a coordinated approach on service delivery challenges and improve upon the ways newcomers receive information.

The committee hosted a Professional Learning Circle on June 17 at All Saints' Church in downtown Windsor. The event provided an opportunity for a larger complement of front-line staff to meet face to face, share information and provide opportunities to seek clarification on specific topics that effect the successful settlement and integration of immigrants and refugees. Topics included: Initial settlement process - First days in Canada for refugees



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COMPASSION FATIGUE WORKSHOP

July 15, 2016

In light of the large numbers of immigrants and refugees that Windsor Essex has received over the past year, WE LIP, together with the Canadian Mental Health Association hosted a Compassion Fatigue workshop. The purpose of the half-day session was to provide frontline staff working with newcomers/refugees tools to help reduce the risk and/or mitigate the impact of Compassion Fatigue. Over 40 individuals from 7 different agencies participated.



**Canadian Mental
Health Association**
Windsor-Essex County
Empowering Transitions to Wellness



MULTICULTURAL COUNCIL OF WINDSOR-ESSEX RECEIVES \$35,000 FROM WELCOME FUND FOR SYRIAN REFUGEES

July 19, 2016

WE LIP member, WindsorEssex Community Foundation announced a \$35,000 contribution to the Multicultural Council of Windsor Essex from Community Foundations of Canada's Welcome Fund for Syrian Refugees in support of local settlement efforts. As Canadians join together in welcoming refugees from Syria, the Welcome Fund provides an important community-driven investment in assisting families to transition into suitable permanent housing. Special thanks to Manulife, CN, GM, and Community Foundations of Canada for this exciting opportunity!



**WindsorEssex
Community
Foundation**



COMMUNITY FOUNDATIONS OF CANADA
FONDATIONS COMMUNAUTAIRES DU CANADA
all for community. ensemble pour tous.



**Investing
in People**
**MULTICULTURAL COUNCIL
OF WINDSOR AND ESSEX COUNTY**

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LEAMINGTON MAKES COMMITMENT TO CULTURAL DIVERSITY

July 20, 2016



WE LIP council member, Municipality of Leamington, together with key community partners, met to show their leadership and commitment to cultural diversity in the community as part of the Community Development strategy.



The announcement signified the launch of this initiative by first participating in training aimed at understanding diversity and how it impacts service delivery and customer service. This training is being delivered by WE LIP council member, South Essex Community Council.

By leading this initiative in their respective organizations, the Municipality of Leamington and its community partners anticipate both not-for-profit and for-profit organizations will follow the lead and consider cultural sensitivity as part of their orientation and professional development.

HYGGELIG TRANSITION: EMPOWERING YOUTH FOR A CHANGING WORLD SUMMER CAMP

July and August 2016

For six weeks during the summer, an ambitious group of Newcomer Syrian youth worked hard to enhance both their community and their personal development while participating in a summer camp called: Hyggelig Transition: Empowering Youth for a Changing World. WE LIP council member, Lina Chaker, helped to organize the camp. The project was led by Hiba Hijazi and was meant to aid in the youth's integration to Windsor through personal development, volunteerism, and community engagement. The Windsor Women Working With Immigrant Women welcomed the camp by providing space and staff support.

On August 19, 2016 at the St. Clair College Residence and Conference Centre, a graduation celebration and public reception was held. Each partnering organization was formally recognized for its contributions to the success of the camp.

The evening was comprised of activities that showcased the work of the participating youth:

- Video Presentation: Recognizing community contributions
- Living Library Session: Providing space for dialogue
- Quilt Story: Expressing themselves through pictures



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TRAIN THE TRAINER: WHAT COMES NEXT INFORMATION SESSION

October 5, 2016

Our community partners have been working together to support the transition of the Syrian refugees who have yet to secure employment from IRCC Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP) financial supports to Ontario Works. As a result of the joint Orientation and Communication (OAC) Committee and the WE LIP Settlement Partners Information Communication Exchange (SPICE) Committee Month 13 Planning meeting, a Train the Trainer session was planned. The purpose of the training was to help ensure Orientation staff from IRCC funded settlement service provider organizations are providing all clients with the information they need.

The 1.5 hour session was hosted and facilitated by the Multicultural Council of Windsor and Essex County on October 5, 2016. A presentation entitled "What Comes Next", outlining the next steps for those applying for Ontario Works, was shared with the group. Representation from City of Windsor Ontario Works was also present to provide input.

Agenda

- What comes next?
- **Ontario Works** program requirements and application process
 - Guest Speaker: **Ontario Works Staff**, City of Windsor Social Services
- Q & A
- Assistance with scheduling appointments for **Ontario Works** applications

What comes next?

- Assistance comes to an end
- Continue learning and improving English
- Looking for work
- Continue accessing support services in the community
- Applying for Ontario Works Assistance

The following organizations participated in the Train the Trainer Session:

- Collège Boréal
- Multicultural Council of Windsor and Essex County
- New Canadians' Centre of Excellence Inc.
- The Windsor Women Working With Immigrant Women
- Unemployed Help Centre
- Women's Enterprise Skills Training of Windsor Inc.
- YMCA of Windsor-Essex
- Centre Communautaire Francophone Windsor Essex Kent Inc. Centre d'orientation des adolescents (Centre Ado)

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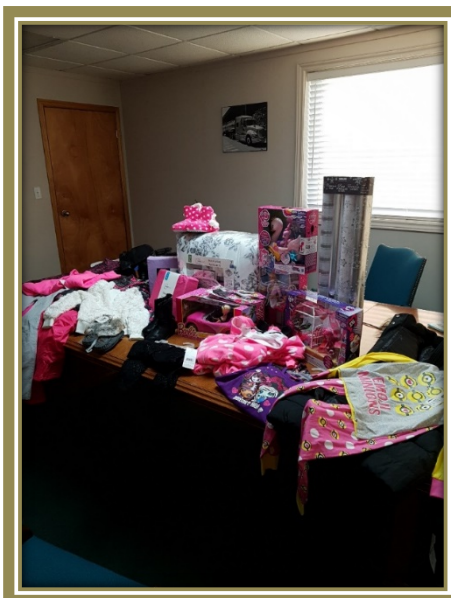
HOLIDAY SPONSORSHIP OF SYRIAN FAMILY

December 2016

In December, one local Syrian refugee family experienced the true meaning of Christmas and the giving spirit of the Windsor Essex community.

For the past 12 years, Gorski Bulk Transport Inc. has sponsored between 2 to 4 families per year through the Windsor-Essex Children's Aid Society Holiday Program and this past year, decided to also sponsor a refugee family. They contacted the Windsor Essex Local Immigration Partnership staff for some guidance and were connected with WE LIP member, Unemployed Help Centre of Windsor Inc. (UHC), who organizes an annual Holiday Sponsorship Program. The UHC paired Gorski with a family consisting of a mother and her four-year-old and 6-year-old daughters. They also provided Gorski with a wish list of items for the family.

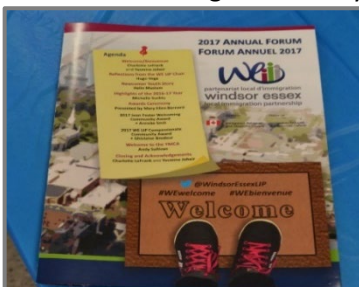
Staff at Gorski Bulk Transport Inc. contributed monetary donations which the company then matched. Volunteer shoppers purchased winter jackets, boots, pyjamas, pants, sweaters, toys, bed sets and a grocery store gift card, ensuring to get everything on the list, as well as some extras. The UHC delivered the gifts to the family just before Christmas, and much to her surprise, Gorski also provided the mother with a gift card for a pair prescription eye glasses. The family, who arrived from Syria in December 2015, expressed their gratitude and appreciation for the generous gifts by sending a thank you card to the staff of Gorski Bulk Transport. Gorski also donated additional grocery store gift cards that the UHC was able to distribute to additional families in the Holiday Sponsorship Program.



2017 WE LIP ANNUAL COMMUNITY FORUM

March 2, 2017

The 2017 WE LIP Annual Community Forum was held on March 2, 2017 at the newly built YMCA at Central Park Athletics. With over 120 council members and community stakeholders in attendance, the forum was a celebration of the ongoing efforts of WE LIP Council members and the community at large to make Windsor-Essex a welcoming community.



Helin Muslim, a 16-year-old Syrian refugee youth, shared the story of her journey to Canada with her beloved shoes that were gifted to her by her mother.



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The Jean Foster Welcoming Community Award was awarded to Anneke Smit for her advocacy work with refugees. Ghislaine Brodeur was the recipient of the WE LIP Compassionate Community Award for her countless contributions to the WE LIP Council.

A Tour of Welcoming Practices offered attendees an opportunity to network and learn about unique initiatives by community organizations:

- A21 Academy
- AIDS Committee of Windsor
- Comité local en immigration francophone de Windsor Essex
- Measuring the Integration and Local Capacity (MILC) Survey – WE LIP SPICE Committee
- Leamington and Area Syrian Refugee Private Sponsorship Committee
- MyNewCity App – City of Windsor Geomatics Department
- Working Together to Welcome Syrian Refugees to Chatham-Kent
- Data and Employment: Workforce WindsorEssex
- WE LIP Newcomer Youth Committee
- YMCA Newcomer Women's Hockey League
- VON Immigrant Health Clinic



Photo Credit: Michelle Karr, Workforce WindsorEssex

WE LIP Featured on CBC's Power & Politics

March 15, 2017

Power & Politics

CBC's Power and Politics filmed a live segment at the University of Windsor of March 15, 2017. Hugo Vega, Chair of the Windsor Essex Local Immigration Partnership, participated as a member of a panel discussing Windsor's efforts to resettle Syrian Refugees. He was joined by Yousra Debduk and Obada Baghdadi, Syrian refugees, who spoke about their experiences in Canada thus far.

Rosemary Barton, host of the show, asked Hugo why Windsor is successful in integrating and welcoming so many refugees. Hugo cited the strength of WE LIP's 90 plus member organizations and its relationship with the City of Windsor municipal departments such as housing, child services and social services. Windsor Essex has been working on refugee issues for many years, resulting in a foundation and infrastructure that was already in place. When the Syrian crisis occurred, Windsor Essex responded by accelerating the work that was already being done.



When asked how refugees are handling the month 13 transition, Hugo stated that WE LIP has been working alongside the municipality to ensure a smooth transition. "We need to contextualize the settlement process for a lot of newcomers. This is a two to three to five-year process for most of them to really land on their feet. I think we need to understand that that's where they're at; they're just one year in. Most families really thrive."



Hugo identified housing and mental health as issues that need attention. "The complexity of the resources that are needed go well beyond settlement. We have a great partnership locally with the Local Health Integration Network and we've been able to open up a Newcomer Health Clinic that serves newcomers specifically. It's a very unique model in the country and those are the sort of things we need to do; not just to ask for dollars but to also figure out how to streamline, how to

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work with other sectors to really support this in the best way we can.

“I would love to say that it (Syrian refugee story) is a success already. I want to look to the future. We have to look at this as a long-term plan...this is our Vietnamese Boat People for this generation and I think in 10, 20 years we’re going to look back and say we’ve done this well. Was it frustrating? Were there challenges? Absolutely, but I think in general we’ve done things relatively well.”

Please click on the following links to either view or listen to the segment in its entirety:

Video: <http://www.cbc.ca/player/play/898959939610/>

Podcast (1:21:40 mark): http://podcast.cbc.ca/mp3/podcasts/cbcpowerandpolitics_20170315_41431.mp3

WE CAME TOGETHER – PROGRESS REPORT ON SYRIAN REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT

December 5, 2017

In December 2015, the Windsor-Essex community came together to discuss how best to serve the influx of Syrian refugees destined to make Windsor and Essex County their new home. Two years later, on December 5, 2017, the community was brought back to reflect on the resettlement process and discuss the challenges which lay ahead for both the refugees and the system of services working to meet their needs. The *WE Came Together – Progress Report on Syrian Refugee Resettlement* event was hosted by The City of Windsor, WE LIP, The Multicultural Council of Windsor and Essex County and New Canadians’ Centre of Excellence Inc.

Over 80 attendees from community stakeholder organizations heard about best practices and emerging issues which surfaced in sectors such as employment, language and settlement healthcare, welcoming community, education, and housing. Additionally, Syrian newcomers shared their stories of resettlement, detailing both their challenges and successes.

Guest speaker Virginia Hatchette, Assistant Deputy Minister, provided an overview and major initiatives of the Ontario Refugee Resettlement Secretariat of the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration. During the Sector Breakout Session, participants were provided an opportunity to further discuss the Secretariat’s mandate components as they relate to Windsor-Essex. The topics included removing barriers, engagement and strategic communication. A report will be developed to capture key points of the discussions and community success stories.



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