

## **Gander Refugee Outreach Committee**

Report to the Diocesan Synod of Central Newfoundland 2017

The Gander Refugee Outreach Committee was formed in November 2015, in response to the crisis in Syria. Its goal was to bring seven Syrian families to our area (Gander/Lewisporte), and as many members of the Diocese and members of GRO will recall, we had originally suggested that we would sponsor five refugee families in Gander. Of course, St Martins Church and the Anglican Diocese have been key players from the beginning in this worthwhile initiative.

Four families have been settled into Gander, and two families in Lewisporte. The Gander families are adapting well to the new culture and language. The men of all the families are working fulltime, as well as two of the wives. Eight of the children are attending school, while the other three children are pre-school age. One of the moms is expecting a child in June.

There has been tremendous support from the Community, and from a dedicated committee and volunteers. Financial support came from fundraising events, and generous donations from many sources, including the Parishes of the Diocese. Donations of furnishings, clothing, toys, and household items came in abundance.

A decision has been made to sponsor a fifth family: the daughter, son-in-law and grand-child of the Maymouna family, who are registered Syrian refugees left back in Lebanon. The Maymouna family had a son who was shot and killed during the Syrian conflict and the daughter we are proposing to sponsor was also shot, but recovered. She has since married, and they have a child. Rather than seek an unknown fifth family, we have decided that it is likely more reasonable to reunite our second family with their daughter, her husband and their grand-child. We are still waiting for the Government to process this application. With the generous support of the people of the Diocese of Central Newfoundland we are in a position to financially support this application.

Respectfully submitted,

*John Wall*, Chairperson of GRO