



Saanich Peninsula Refugee Initiative Group

UPDATE #13

Nov 13, 2016

Meet Fatima, her parents and young brother

10 am to noon November 19, 2016

“November Noel” at St. John’s United Church.

Celebrate the arrival of this Syrian family and SPRIG’s one year anniversary.

An interpreter and SPRIG Steering Committee will be there.

Fatima and her family arrived here on September 29, 2016. Much has happened since then.

Many people have been involved. Here is an overview of the last very busy six weeks.

ORIENTATION AND GETTING STARTED:

Fatima was able to join her family in most of the Inter-Cultural Association of Greater Victoria (ICA) sessions for newcomers, including orientation to shopping, transit, cultural, financial and neighborhood. We helped her to register for ICA settlement services, get a free bus pass, obtain a Social Insurance Number, register for MSP, obtain a cell phone plan and a new laptop computer, register for Resettlement Assistance Plan payments (for 6 months), open a bank account, obtain a library card, take the English language assessment test, register for ICA English classes that started November 7th and for Camosun College English Development Program classes that start in January. The family has good used rain wear and warm clothes thanks to SPRIG volunteers. And Thanksgiving and Halloween, two Canadian cultural traditions, are now happy memories shared with new friends in Sidney.

MOVING DAY was NOVEMBER 1ST:

The ICA Housing Coordinator took the lead in finding permanent housing for the family with help from several SPRIG volunteers. After a month living in hotel rooms, the family is now settling into their own three bedroom townhouse in Victoria, within walking distance of the ICA and only a few blocks from young brother’s elementary school. Volunteers arrived in trucks, cars and vans delivering donated furniture and household effects that the family had carefully pre-selected. Everyone pitched in with the unloading and setting up, except the mother who provided constant refreshments. With smiles and thank-yous and a little help from Google-Translate, these Canadian newcomers expressed their deep gratitude. What a privilege to get to know this family.

Both Fatima and her father are keen to find work as soon as they feel confident in English. Fatima will be seeking part time work while she studies English, with a goal of attending university and obtaining professional qualifications. The father was a tailor for 15 years but says he can do many things and loves to work. The mother makes unique and beautiful crocheted earrings and necklaces. You can buy them at “November Noel” and soon at Laloca in Sidney.

THANK YOU THANK YOU to each of you who welcomed Fatima and her family with your gifts of time, goods and energy.

NEWS ABOUT SAFAA AND HER CHILDREN WHOM SPRIG IS SPONSORING:

Last month this mother with four children had medical screenings and await the interview with the Canadian Visa Office.

WHAT NEXT?

We will put out the call for support as needed. Some of you may want to volunteer with ICA to work with other Government Assisted Refugee families.

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