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Charitable Number: 8664 34640 RR0001

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## THE PRIMATES WORLD RELIEF AND DEVELOPMENT FUND (PWRDF) ANGLICAN DIOCESAN REFUGEE NETWORK

The PWRDF Anglican Refugee Network is an informal association of volunteers and staff from the Anglican diocesan refugee committees, which support refugees and take on refugee sponsorships, and PWRDF refugee desk staff that assists the refugee committees by providing information on refugee issues, and facilitates its public education and advocacy efforts. PWRDF staff is involved in other aspects of refugee work and a separate summary of this work is available.

### What Diocesan Refugee committees do on work concerning Refugees?

- Network ecumenically with other sponsoring groups, and liaising with appropriate agencies
- Address the media and educate parishes and the public at large on immigration options and refugee issues
- Provide, pastoral, emotional, and financial support to potential refugees during the waiting period outside of Canada
- Assist and supports government sponsored refugees, refugee claimants, refugee serving agencies, and newcomers
- Advocate at the international, national and local level.
- Sponsor refugees♦

### Challenges of this Ministry

- Increasing numbers of Refugees arriving with high needs
- Canada Immigration and Citizenship processing times and refusal rates
- Increasing suspicion and animosity towards refugees
- Volunteer driven committees with limited capacities and resources to sponsor a family (time, expertise, funds, staff, volunteers, shrinking congregations and small multi-point rural parishes)
- Lack of understanding within the church about the refugee situation in the world
- Mobilizing Anglican Church of Canada membership and leadership support, due to lack of awareness about the refugee work at a local level
- More difficult to get parishes/people to look beyond themselves to the needs of others.

### Rewards of this Ministry

- Saving lives
- Providing aid, comfort and a different future to the most vulnerable and marginalized families and children
- Learning about the world and its diversity and being reminded constantly how well off we are
- Building community and providing parish and community with a true sense of purpose
- Making life-long friends.

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♦ **The Refugee Sponsorship Program** is a Ministry open to Canadian Anglican dioceses, many of which are engaged in the government's Private Sponsorship of Refugees (PSR) Program, which supports refugees to settle in Canada. Currently, 18 dioceses hold refugee sponsorship agreements with the Government of Canada. They are known as SAH's - Sponsorship Agreement Holders; incorporated entities that have signed an agreement with the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration.

The sponsorship is undertaken at the local parish level, under the direction of the diocese. The parish sponsors -also known as constituent groups, engage in the government program and accept financial liability for refugees. Sponsors must secure financial, emotional and settlement support -accommodation, clothing, food for the duration of the sponsorship period -one year or until refugees can support themselves financially (in special cases the period can be extended for up to 36 months). When there are relatives in Canada of the sponsored person, who agree to work with the sponsor to provide the necessary support but are unable to do so, sponsors are ultimately responsible for it. Sponsorship conditions and requirements depend on the type of sponsorship:

- **Full Sponsorship.** The sponsor -a parish/group of parishes, Diocese, ecumenical group, refugee's family members living in Canada, or a combination of these, selects the refugee and accepts full financial responsibility. Within this, **Family Linked Sponsorship (FLS)**, where the Refugee's relatives living in Canada underwrite it and may provide financial aid together with the local group, constitutes a significant percentage of the Anglican Dioceses' sponsorship.
- **Joint Assistance Sponsorship (JAS).** Sponsors work in partnership with Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) to resettle government-selected refugees with special needs. CIC provides the financial support, and the sponsor arranges housing and other settlement services and moral support.
- **"Visa office-referred" Sponsorship (VOR).** Sponsors accept profiles and usually provide financial aid for refugee cases from CIC Matching Centres' inventory of VOR cases, which have already been selected but require a private sponsorship.
- **The Group of 5 (G5s).** Allows for 5 people to join together to sponsor a Refugee. Sponsors do not have a SAH status, but sometimes Anglican SAHs provide training, orientation and assistance to them.