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April 25, 2016

Dear Friends of the Neighbourhood Group,

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you again for your very generous support of Friends of The Neighbourhood Group. Your support has made it possible to sponsor 3 families – 21 people in all – to come to safety in Toronto. I also want to provide an update about what has been happening over the past few of months.

We have received confirmation from Lifeline Syria, the organization we've been working with, that our group has been matched with three Syrian refugee families. The first is a family of nine, including seven children under the age of 10 years; they are currently living in a refugee camp outside of Jordan. The second is a family of five and the third is a family of seven.

As we eagerly anticipate the arrival of our families, we can appreciate the concern our supporters must be feeling as they hear news of delays in the arrival of Syrian refugees to Canada. The government has just recently announced the imposition of a cap on the number of private refugee sponsorship cases it will approve for the remainder of 2016 and are now in the process of gradually funnelling the existing agreements.

Please be assured that all three of our families are existing agreements and we've been informed by our contact at Lifeline Syria that our first family, who we were matched with in January, is coming this year. It's just a matter of time. While we were quite hopeful that they would have been here by now, this unfortunately is not the case. There has been some sort of hold up in the processing of one of the family members information which is likely resolvable but will take time.

The process for the next two families, who we were matched with as community sponsors, is also underway. But unfortunately, that doesn't mean they will arrive quickly. It could be weeks, months or even next year.

While frustrating, it is not surprising that the system has been overwhelmed. Please know that we're committed to staying in close contact with Lifeline Syria and others who

can help, including our federal representatives. We also remain committed to keeping our donors informed about what is happening.

In the meantime, we have been working hard to prepare for the arrival of our families,

already in Toronto. If you're interested in volunteering to help with this work, please contact Chantal Guthrie (CGuthrie@cnh.on.ca or 416.925.4363) or Lina Trifonova (TTrifonova@neighbourhoodlink.org or 416.691.7407).

Please know that your generous support of this important lifesaving work is greatly appreciated. None of this would have been possible without your kindness and willingness to help.

We welcome your questions and thoughts as we move through this process together so please do not hesitate to contact me at any time at eforestell@cnh.on.ca or 416.925.4363. We also have a Facebook page where we regularly post updates: www.facebook.com/TheNeighbourhoodGroup/.

Thank you again for your commitment and support.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth Forestell
Executive Director
The Neighbourhood Group

