

One Family at a Time: The Ayash3 Refugee Sponsorship Group

Refugees, by definition, are people living outside of their home countries and unable to return home because of well-founded fear of persecution. 6.7 million Syrians were refugees at the end of 2021.

Rather than throw up our hands in despair, the Ayash3 Refugee Sponsorship Group is focused on reducing that number one family at a time. And the family we have chosen to sponsor is the Omar Ayash family.



Omar and his wife left Syria to work in the United Arab Emirates after university graduation. He is an accountant and she a high school math teacher. They have three children: two teenage sons and a younger daughter, all of whom are attending school.

When their work permits expired in 2011, they left the UAE. It was not safe to return to Syria, so they went to Jordan. Although able and willing to work, Omar has not been able to get the required government permits, making it difficult to support his family. They have heard from Omar's cousin Anas and brother Ammar, living and working in Nanaimo, about life in Canada and would love to join them, and their families, and the growing Arabic community, on the Island.

Anas describes his cousin as someone who likes to help people, enjoys gardening and hiking, appreciates a good joke and wants the best for his children. His wife likes to cook, garden, teach school, and lists knitting among her hobbies. They already speak some English.

With our help this family can go from being "refugees" to "neighbours."

The approximate cost of our one-year resettlement obligation is \$38,000. New rules require that 80% of that amount be secured before the application can be submitted. The paperwork is done. With your help, we hope to move forward in the next few months.

You can help us raise the necessary funds by:

Writing a cheque and sending it to: St. Philip by-the-Sea Anglican Church, Attn: Tony Davis, 7113 Lantzville Rd, Lantzville, BC V0R 2H0. Write "Ayash3" on the memo line of your cheque.

You can send a single cheque or several post-dated cheques. We can also provide you with an approved pledge form, indicating whatever terms work for you. Tax receipts will be issued for amounts of \$50 or more.

Donating online through CanadaHelps. For an instant tax receipt, go to <https://www.canadahelps.org/>, search for St. Philip by-the-Sea, Lantzville. From the drop-down menu, select "Ayash3 SG."

E-transferring from your bank to ours is an option if you do not require a charitable donation receipt. Simply auto-deposit to ayash3account@shaw.ca. E-mail the same address for more information or assistance.

Donating your refundable beverage containers. Take them to Junction Bottle Depot in Ladysmith, and before they start counting, ask that the credit be applied to Account #499. Refundable items can also be returned to any Return-it Express kiosk in BC. The account number is 250 944 1146.

Email Ayash3project@shaw.ca if you would like more information or if you have beverage containers you would like us to pick up.

To learn more about the project, visit our website: <http://ladysmithrefugeesponsorship.org/>, or find us on Facebook as "Ayash3Ladysmith."

Thanks so much.