

February 7/2022

Crest Annual Report

2021 marked the 22nd anniversary of the CREST program, made up of 3 Charleswood churches sponsoring refugee families to Winnipeg - Gloria Dei Lutheran, Charleswood United and Charleswood Mennonite. The acronym CREST stands for Charleswood Refugee Ecumenical Sponsorship Team.

Each participating church puts between \$3,000-\$5,000 into the CREST treasury each year, along with individual donations and fund raisers like our annual Pancake breakfast. These funds build up the necessary reserves to sponsor a family for one year--estimated to be about \$15,000-\$20,000, depending on the family size.

Helping the refugees with housing, providing furnishings and clothing, applying for government programs (SIN #s, Manitoba Health, Child Tax Credit, etc.), getting them into ESL classes and dealing with rent, utilities, home maintenance, etc. is shared among CREST members. Often people from our congregations are recruited to befriend the refugees, take them to appointments, etc. Ongoing support may be needed for up to 5 years.

We were relatively inactive once again in 2021. We have agreed to sponsor a family of 4 using the quota system of the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC). Paperwork is in process but we know from previous experience that it could be up to 18 months before their arrival.

We continue to develop a relationship with the small Yazidi community. Land was provided for growing produce, with some of the finished product being sold at market gardens at CUC and other locations. Thanks to Michael Wilson and Bo Wholers for their continuing leadership.

Two of our CUC Christmas hampers went to our last 2 sponsored families together with a financial donation. Thanks to Gail Reid and Mark/Linda Little for their ongoing support.

We have been blessed by the many contributions from members of our congregations – many thanks for your ongoing support. Furnishings, clothing, and financial donations are always welcome, although space constraints are always a consideration. CREST has a bank account but cannot issue charitable receipts so please make cheques payable to Gloria Dei Lutheran Church marked “CREST donation”, and a tax receipt can be provided.

The benefits that CREST offers to refugees coming to Canada are obvious. The benefits in getting to work with church members from CUC and other denominations are a valuable side benefit as well. Please join with us as we joyfully follow Christ's mandate to be our brother's keeper.

Members of the Crest Committee

Rocky Richardson

Katharine Bergbusch