



The Local Immigration Partnership's Newsletter

Spring 2016



A Message From Our Coordinator

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Well, another six months has gone by and it has been busy. During this time we have concentrated our efforts in two key areas: the Refugee Crisis and data gathering plan through the Racial Harmony Committee as offered through the Canadian Coalition of Municipalities Against Racism and Discrimination.

As most of you are aware, a great Canadian project was initiated by the Federal Government to adopt 25,000 Syrian refugees. Many Canadians became involved in a way that reflects the foundation and values of our vast and diverse nation.

Our local and area community groups such as Willowgrove United, New Beginnings, St Joseph Island and Blind River Sponsorship Groups, St Andrews United, and Refugee 705 have all played major roles in private sponsorship. LIP will continue to play a coordinating role offering direction, referral, and on-going support.

Soon, we will begin data gathering as part of our commitment to CCMARD. The data gathered will mainly consist of policies, procedures, processes, and events that are focused on combatting and eliminating all forms of racism and discrimination in our community.

We look forward to the next six months as we do have a good number of new projects on the horizon. As always, it's a great pleasure to work with a group that has such compassion, heart and drive. We wish Jennifer all the best as she will be away on maternity leave but we will certainly check up on her from time to time.

Sincerely,

Danny Krmpotich



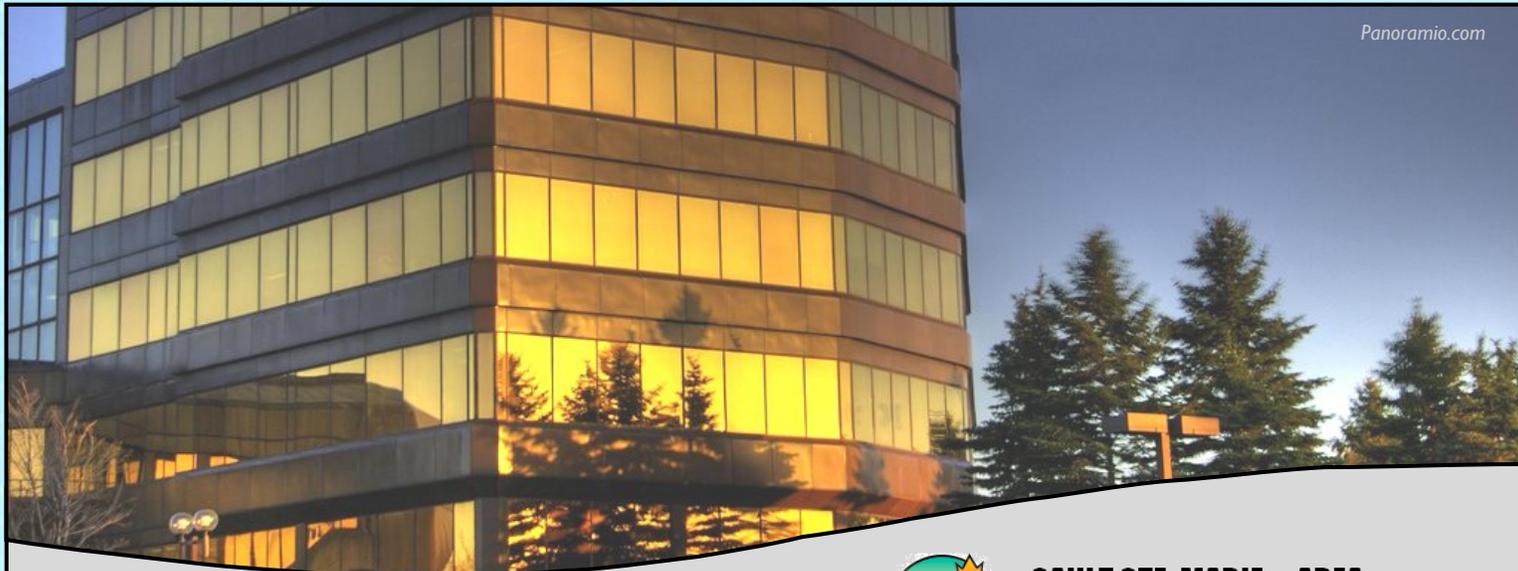
How can I get involved?

Whether as an organization or an individual, we would love to talk to you about how to get involved! You can also request to be part of our LIP members list and receive updates regularly.

Please contact Danny Krmpotich, LIP Coordinator, for more information.

Email: d.krmpotich@cityssm.on.ca

**ALL ARE
WELCOME!**



Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada

Immigration, Réfugiés et Citoyenneté Canada



**SAULT STE. MARIE & AREA
LOCAL IMMIGRATION PARTNERSHIP**

ABOUT “LIP”

Established in 2009, the Sault Ste. Marie & Area Local Immigration Partnership (LIP) is a community-driven partnership administered by the City of Sault Ste. Marie. Today, LIP has 65+ members including local businesses, service providers, cultural clubs, and newcomers. The mandate of the Local Immigration Partnership is simple: creating a welcoming community for all. LIP achieves this through identifying and eliminating gaps in programs and services for immigrants, consolidating and centralizing community resources and services, and addressing current and pending labour shortages through immigration strategy development and implementation. LIP is governed by a council, has 5 sub-committees, and is fully funded by Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC). *For more information about our work, read our most recent Community Progress Report: www.discoverthesault.ca/Home/LIP/Creating-a-Welcoming-Community.aspx*

Who Are We?

Sean Halliday
LIP Researcher



Danny Krmpotich
LIP Coordinator

Jenn Ayton
Outreach Worker



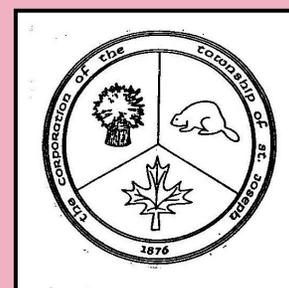
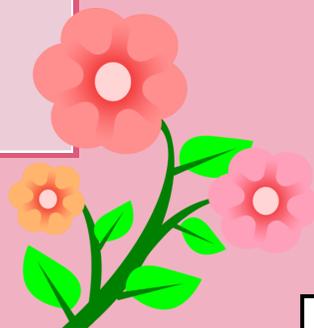


**SAULT STE. MARIE & AREA
LOCAL IMMIGRATION PARTNERSHIP**



Regional Influence

In addition to Sault Ste. Marie, LIP serves Prince Township, Macdonald, Meredith, Aberdeen Additional, Johnson Township, St. Joseph Township, Bruce Mines, and Thessalon. LIP works closely to support these areas in their desire to becoming more welcoming and inclusive communities. Recently, LIP supported the Sylvan Circle Tour involving the Macdonald, Meredith, and Aberdeen Additional communities. LIP has also supported Prince Townships' current efforts to create a Farmer's Market and cultural centre .



Committee Updates

AWARENESS

A light but consistent message has been the agenda of the marketing committee since the last update. In the fall of 2014 we ran a previous commercial to remind us all that we need to be a welcoming community. In Feb of 2015 we promoted the ever successful Forum. The Sault Culture campaign followed on the heels of the Forum on multiple platforms. In the spring of 2015 we ran a Diversity Week campaign. We updated that commercial with the “Our Sault Ste. Marie Includes Everyone” theme and promoted the discoverthesault.ca site to learn more about what we were doing in the community to support refugees. That campaign rolled out in November and December of 2015. Coming full circle we then ran a campaign to promote the Forum March 2016. Looking to the future we will continue to keep a general awareness campaign rolling while reacting to and addressing issues as they arise. We are currently discussing a new and farther reaching campaign as LIP grows and continues to evolve. - *Lisa Rietveld*



RACIAL HARMONY & SOCIAL EQUITY

The Racial Harmony Committee (RHC) began in 2013, with a desire to combat racism and multiple forms of discrimination, while also helping to build an inclusive and respectful community. In 2014, Sault Ste. Marie became a member of “The Canadian Coalition of Municipalities against Racism and Discrimination” (CCMARD). City Council looked to the Racial Harmony Committee to develop a Plan that would ensure the City’s commitment to the vision of CCMARD would be realized over time. The Committee is currently working on a plan that is in coherence with CCMARD’s desire among municipalities to achieve two key goals: 1. Share experiences and lessons learned. 2. Strengthen organizational policies/procedures/culture to counter all forms of discrimination to achieve greater social inclusion. The RHC looks forward to sharing its progress in meeting these goals in the next LIP Newsletter! - *Sean Halliday*



IMMIGRATION FORUM

“The LIP Immigration Forums are a great way to gather the community on the sole purpose of celebrating culture, learning, and inspiring one another to greater equity and inclusion in our City. This year’s Forum, titled, “My Sault Ste. Marie Includes Everyone” is sure to be another success. LIP’s desire in hosting this event is to show the members of our community the value of immigration and the contributions immigrants have and have had in making Sault Ste. Marie what it is today.

Without the help of our dedicated Forum committee, LIP would not be able to put on an event such as this. Thank you to all who volunteered your time and efforts in making this year’s Forum a success. You are truly appreciated!” - *Jenn Ayton*



SPECIAL PROJECTS

“Many special projects and sponsorships have taken place during the last six months:

1. ACCANO—Black History Month
2. Prince Township — Winter skate-a-thon
3. Bon Soo— Passport to Unity Event
4. Newcomer Ski Day — Searchmont
5. Sylvan Circle Tour
6. Refugee Fundraiser Luncheon
7. City proclamation — Elimination of Racism and Discrimination
8. Launch of Referral Application with I.T. division.



LIP will continue to be involved in special projects and do what we can to become more welcoming and invitational”

- *Danny Krmpotich*



Pictures from Sault Community Career Centre



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February 21st marked the third annual Newcomers Ski day. With LIP's support, the Sault Community Career Centre and Searchmont Ski Resort organized and welcomed over 70 Newcomers old and young to Searchmont. Everyone enjoyed a gorgeous winter day learning what "hitting the slopes" was all about.

It also marked Willowgrove's Refugee Fundraiser Luncheon. \$5 from every ticket went to supporting a refugee family, as well as all funds raised through the successful auction of over 50 items! 287 people attended from all over the community and surrounding areas, and over \$3500 was raised!



Pictures from Sootoday.com

RECENT EVENTS



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African Canadian Caribbean Association of Northern Ontario (ACCANO) celebrated Black History Month with a dinner, cultural performances and more! With an attendance of over 200 people, the event has continued growing from recent years. Tickets were sold out, and attendees were able to experience ethnic food from all over the world.

Dave Mornix was the keynote of the event, themed "Our Canadian Story: Black History Sault Ste. Marie and Algoma Region". The purpose of ACCANO is to bring the whole community together—not just those of African descent. Don't miss next year's event scheduled for February 2017!



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Sault Ste. Marie's Information Technology division, with LIP's support, hosted the official launch for the Sault's first ever automatic referral tool, *Sault Connect*. Both David Oraziotti and Terry Sheehan made an address, and the event was attended by over 30 community members.

This application, created for all Android and Apple devices, will allow for newcomers and community members alike to directly access service providers in the city when they need help. For more information, visit the official Sault Connect website: connect.discoverthesault.ca

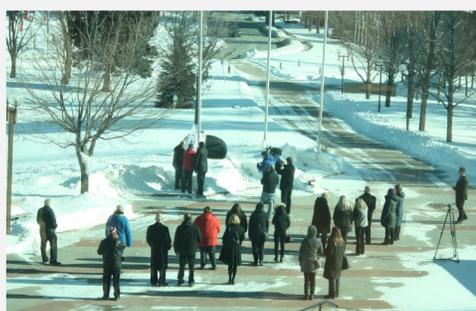


Other recent events include...

Citizenship Ceremony



211 Flag Raising



Bon Soo Winter Carnival



Prince Township Winter Fun Day

Prince Township Winter Fun Day

March 5th, 12:00-4:00
Prince Township Hall



All are welcome to come join your neighbours for Prince Townships Winter Fun Day

- Skating
- Bonfire
- Sleigh Rides(Pending)
- Face Painting
- Affordable Concessions available
- Fire Department Tours
- And Other Activities



S P R I N G E V E N T S

March 23



Canadian Citizenship Ceremony

A Citizenship Ceremony for New Canadians will be hosted by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, with the support of LIP. There is no greater joy than witnessing this swearing in ceremony for newcomers.

April 20



National Canadian Film Day

Want a free night out? Celebrate Canada with great Canadian film on April 20-21 at select locations. This public event is **FREE** for everyone in the community. Go to discoverthesault.ca for more details about showings.

March /April



Salsa Classes

The Algoma Latin Association is hosting salsa lessons at Cocina de Diablo. Individuals who are interested can make reservations directly through the restaurant at (705) 450-6869. Lessons will be available from March through to April!

May 7



Emergency Preparedness Showcase

Emergency Preparedness will be hosting a family fun event at the Walmart Station Mall location. Come join local emergency groups from 11am-3pm and connect with your local first responders! The day will include a BBQ, showcase of services, games for the kids, and more.



They Have Arrived!

From Thailand to Canada, this Burmese family of six has come a long way to settle down in Sault Ste. Marie. I had the chance to sit down with Linda Coulter, one of the leads in the St. Andrew's Refugee Sponsorship Group, to discuss their journey of welcoming refugees.

It all began with a meeting of three or four people who knew something needed to be done; who, after hearing about Canada's first decisions to welcome refugees, began to ask, "What can we do?", "Where do we start?". With the support of their minister and a church family that encouraged their efforts, the meeting of three or four people grew to a committee of about 20. "We had the initial guarantee from the board that we could finance it somehow somehow". The committee would need to pay back the funds eventually, but, in the end, they didn't need any financial help from church funds. The congregation, Labour Movement, local individuals and businesses, as well as other churches and donors all stepped up to contribute. "It turns out the financial part of it is such a small part of it. You need money, but your commitment to the rest of the process is very important".

Having the funds raised, the group began the more lengthy processes: organizing committee groups to lead in arranging schools, health care providers, orientation, and other needs of the refugee family upon arrival. "It takes a lot of people" commented Coulter, as she discussed everything that needs to be done in preparation for a family. Coulter's group signed on under the United Church into the BVOR program. This program enables the group to enter into an agreement with the United Church of Canada, and enables the group to share the financial responsibility fifty percent with the Federal government. In this program, a list of refugee and refugee family profiles registered under the UNHCR are sent to the groups who are ready to receive a family. "There were 19 different countries represented on the list, so we had to decide what really mattered to us and to our group. What really mattered were the children. We felt that our community could best support children. There is everything for kids in this community".

As it turns out, there are many sponsorship groups looking at the same list of profiles. "We called on two or three [families] before we got one". "You get minor information. In the end, we said any family with young children we would go with. So many families needed help".

Finally, on September 23, 2015, two members of the St. Andrew's group received word that their call had been approved. A Family of six originally from Burma, but living in Thailand. "most of us were quite emotional.

Continued on next page...

Barb Cundari and John Tully first heard the word and then we all got together. It was very exciting and very real”.

The family had been living in a refugee camp on the Thailand border. They knew ages, gender, that three of the four children were in school at the camp, their names, birthdates, language, and that the parents had little education themselves.

The family arrived on November 26, 2015 to a warm welcome from committee members, the children’s school principal, a member of the Sault Community Career Centre, and even some Burmese American residents. “We had met a group of people across in Sault Michigan who were also Burmese refugees who had resettled. They brought food that they knew the Burmese family would enjoy. We rented a bus to go with us the airport so we wouldn’t have to separate the family. The school board (ADSB) let us use their facility and we had a reception at Etienne Brûlé”.

Their first week in Canada was described as “a blur”. Application after application was filled out by the family and sponsorship group, with the help of a translator. Part of the sponsorship process is making sure the family is set up for settlement. This includes applying for their interim federal health plan, Social Insurance Number, OHIP, Child Tax Benefit, setting up bank accounts and appointments, and more.

They did have some fun, too, as the children were able to get outside due to the extremely warm November weather. However, settling in did not come without some challenges. “They lived in a refugee camp for years. So [understanding] the appliances, facilities, the idea of locking the apartment, getting the mail, putting out recycling, garbage, and then the heavy clothing, was huge. All so very different than what they were used to. It still continues to be a huge learning curve”.

Since then, the family is settling in and their spirits are high. The children are attending a school which welcomed them with open arms, and the parents are attending English as a Second Language classes. They’ve been skiing, skating, swimming, and even learned to ride bikes (a newfound luxury that was not available in such a mountainous Thai region). The children are willing to try anything, and the family has shown great thankfulness from the beginning.

As our interview came to a close, it was clear that the family were not the only ones positively affected by this process. “The whole experience has been a blessing for us. [We have been given] the opportunity to help a family who may not have had the opportunity that lies in front of them. In the refugee camps it’s a dead end. You have no future. You can’t go forward. You can’t go back. And by sponsoring a refugee family, you give them hope for the future; that there can be a future for their children and their children’s children. We’re very grateful and blessed to have the opportunity to work with them”.

“To be free. Such a thing would be greater than all the magic and all the treasures in all the world.”

If you would like more information on what the Sault and Area is doing for refugees, please visit discoverthesault.ca

A Q&A session with our

Government Representatives



Terry Sheehan
Member of Parliament

What are your thoughts on Canada's response to the Refugee Crisis?

What we're doing is creating opportunity out of crisis. Looking at a particular negative and turning it into a positive and Canada has always done that. We should be proud of what we've done. We've answered the call to a terrible crisis and we've shown them we're a compassionate and caring country and that's reflective of what this community is. We're a passionate and caring community and that's one thing I've always been proud of. Through my work on city council I've always supported *discoverthesault*, passport to unity, and diversification of our community. As we make the community stronger and as we become more mosaic it presents new opportunities. New opportunities lead to entrepreneurship, lead to germinating new research, lead to looking at things in a different perspective. Newcomers bring that new perspective— things we haven't thought of before— to the community to strengthen us through our diversity. Our diversity is our strength.

Is there opportunity for Sault Ste. Marie to help with the Refugee crisis, and how?

I'm having those dialogues with the Minister, John McCallum. He knows Sault Ste. Marie and he likes it here. What I'm noticing is that we're getting immigrants to touch down through the larger communities, but the second wave will be to the smaller communities. Once they get acclimatized, they will look for opportunities. A lot of them are very entrepreneurial. There are opportunities through EDC, Universities, School Boards to get involved. I will be at the forefront making sure [Canada's immigration departments] know about our community, about the app, about the website. [Immigrants] are looking for something other than a big urban centre.

How can the community help in making Sault Ste. Marie more welcoming for all?

Keep putting our best foot forward, come together to celebrate our differences. Any time we have an opportunity, go over and say hi and shake a hand. That is such a Northern Ontario thing that you will never see in Toronto, and that's why newcomers like northern Ontario, just because of our hospitality.



David Oraziotti
Member of Provincial Parliament

We understand you sit on the ad hoc committee with Premier Wynn regarding the refugee settlement program; could you give us an update?

My role is in relation to my ministry (Government and Consumer Services) specifically through Service Ontario in regards to providing health cards, for example, to the refugees that require those services. Service Ontario is a frontline service to these newcomers.

The committee is designed to coordinate and assist refugees in Ontario to ensure there is a smooth transition for Syrian refugees who have been chosen for Ontario.

Current Updates: The committee meets periodically. The settlement is transitioning well.

Where do you plan to go from here?

This was a specific initiative given the number that the federal government committed to. This is unique in a sense that it was designed to deal with a larger group of immediate immigrants that would potentially come to Ontario. Whether or not the committee will be needed long term is yet to be determined.

Should there be other experiences of this nature the committee could be reconvened and may remain, but the important aspect is that, if we're going to have a smooth transition, we need to make sure that ministries are well positioned to address the concerns that will come. It needs to be a coordinated effort.

At a point in time, once we agree that a positive settlement experience has taken place and individuals are comfortable in the setting that they're in, then the core of the services will revert to the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration.

Thank you both for your time and your comments. The Local Immigration Partnership is grateful to have great leaders that support immigration— not only in this community, but in the broader province and nation as well!



Fun & Games

Welcoming Communities

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ACCEPTANCE
 ASSISTANCE
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 CHARACTER
 EMBRACE
 FREEDOM
 LIFE
 PATIENCE
 RESPECT
 RESPONSIBILITY
 VISION
 UNIQUE

WWW.ATOZTEACHERSTUFF.COM



DID YOU KNOW...

- ⇒ Falkland Islands (in the UK) has 350 sheep for every person.
- ⇒ 60% of all lakes in the world are found within Canada's borders.
- ⇒ 49.6% of Niger's population is under 15 years of age.
- ⇒ Mongolia is the least densely populated country on Earth at 4 people per square mile.
- ⇒ There are no rivers in Saudi Arabia, Their water comes from desalination plants or underground reservoirs.
- ⇒ 91% of Suriname's land (South America) is covered in jungle.



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Puzzles.ca

Newcomer Services

discoverthesault.ca—The number one newcomer website in the Sault! From how to get your driver's license to a list of local grocery stores and shopping centres, this site has all the information you will need as a newcomer to Sault Ste. Marie.

New to the Sault— Your one-stop service centre for newcomers to Canada living in Sault Ste. Marie and Area. A great support for newcomers and families to enable successful integration into the community. Go to <http://www.saultcareercentre.ca/newcomers/> or come in to the centre to talk with dynamic and qualified Settlement Counsellors ready to help.

Northland Adult Learning Centre — Offering English as a Second Language classes **free** for all permanent residents, Canadian citizens, and refugees. Classes also available for International students, as well as EAP students through **Sault College!** Visit the school or their website at: northland.adsb.on.ca and www.saultcollege.ca/services/International/EnglishforAcademicPurposes.asp

Algoma University — Offering English as a Second Language classes as well as university degrees for all International students! Visit the school or their website at: <http://algomau.ca/international/#d.en.5133>

Local Refugee Sponsors

November 2015

St. Andrews United Church brings in a Burmese family of 6. They are adjusting well. For details, see page 8.

February 2016

Willowgrove United holds a Refugee Luncheon fundraiser and reaches their minimum sponsorship funding goal.

March 2016

New Beginnings Refugee Sponsorship group waits on the pending arrival of Sault Ste. Marie's **FIRST** Syrian family.

Blind River

Held a community meeting in February to discuss interest. Overwhelming support has allowed them to begin the refugee sponsorship process.

St. Joseph

Community began fundraising for refugee sponsorship at the end of 2015.

WUSC

Algoma University welcomed one Syrian student in late January. Two more are said to arrive in May and September.



Local Refugee Initiatives

Megan Douglas has been on the LIP radar since our first community awareness meeting in regards to the refugee crisis hosted last fall.. Since then, she has been co-chairing the refugee705.com committee—developed to help coordinate refugee efforts around the Sault and greater Algoma region. I was able to ask her a few questions. Here is what she said:

What was it that first “piqued” your interest in becoming more involved in the refugee crisis?

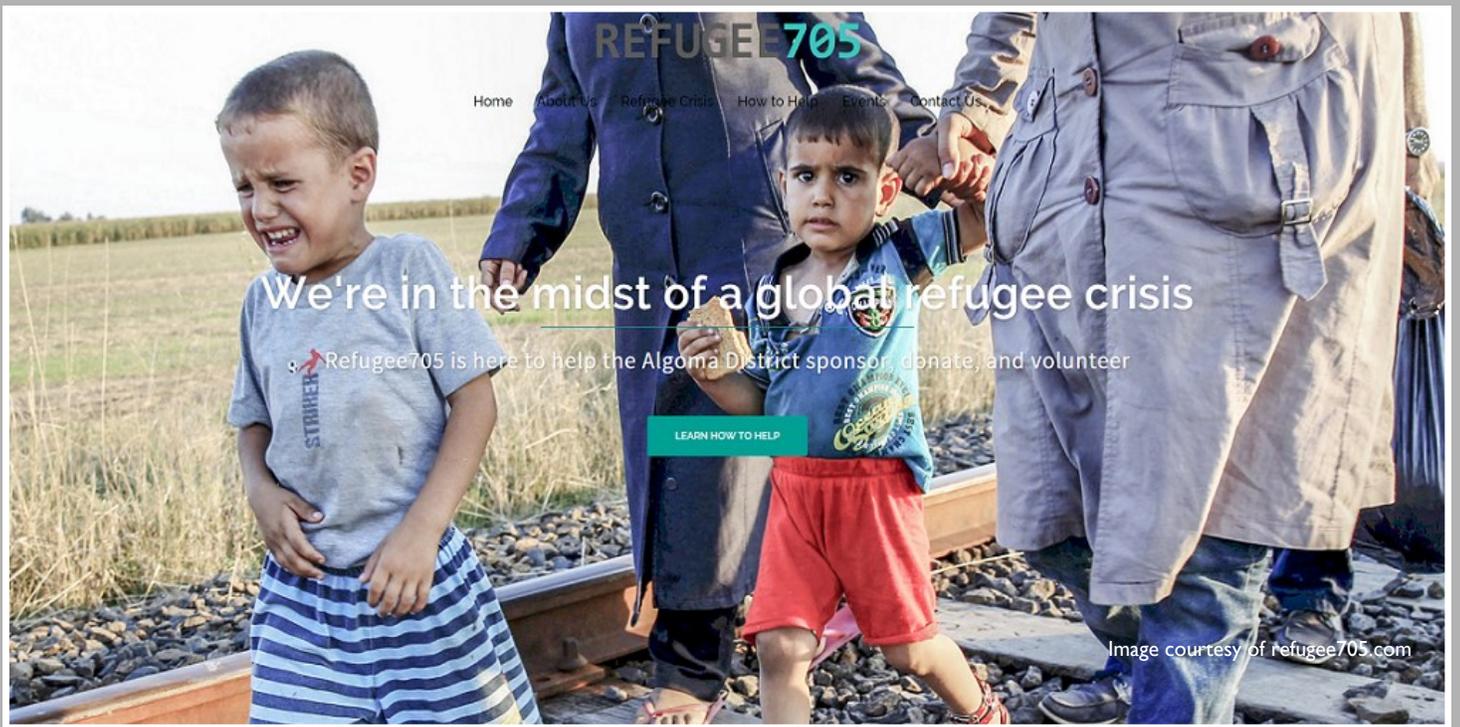
I suppose that for myself, as well as for many others around the world, the image of little Aylan Kurdi’s body washed up on Turkey’s shore was a major wake-up call, because it gave a human face to the crisis. I have a new nephew, and I just thought, if he was ever forced to flee with his family, what *wouldn’t* I do to help him? What if *I* was ever forced to flee my home, and how would I hope people would respond? I just started asking myself these questions, instead of allowing myself to become desensitized to the numbers and statistics of the crisis.

How did you come up with the idea of a refugee website for Sault Ste. Marie and Area?

The idea for the website Refugee705 came about in two ways: first, I was struck by how many people in the Sault wanted to help, but didn’t know where to turn for information. It was all very word-of-mouth. I thought that, in today’s day and age, a website is the best means of information delivery to a large group of people. Second, the site was largely inspired by other website-based projects within Canada, such as Refugee613 in Ottawa and Lifeline Syria in Toronto, and the level of success they’ve had in facilitating community connections to help bring refugees to Canada. I talked over the idea for the site with some colleagues, which led to a group of amazing individuals forming a committee. The site has really grown out of their passion for the project and generosity with their time, as it is 100% volunteer-led.

Give us a brief description of how to use Refugee705/ what Refugee705 offers.

The website is very easy to use. At the top of the home page, you’ll see a menu with items including ‘How to Help’. If you select it, you’ll be taken to a page that provides information on how you can either sponsor a refugee to come to the Algoma District, donate to local sponsorships, or volunteer with local sponsorships. Contact information for local sponsorships is provided, as we hope that people who visit the site will then reach out and make connections. The website also offers links to resources on how to become a sponsor. The site is meant to be a collaborative project, and it’s likely that the site will continue to evolve to insure the needs of local sponsors are met.



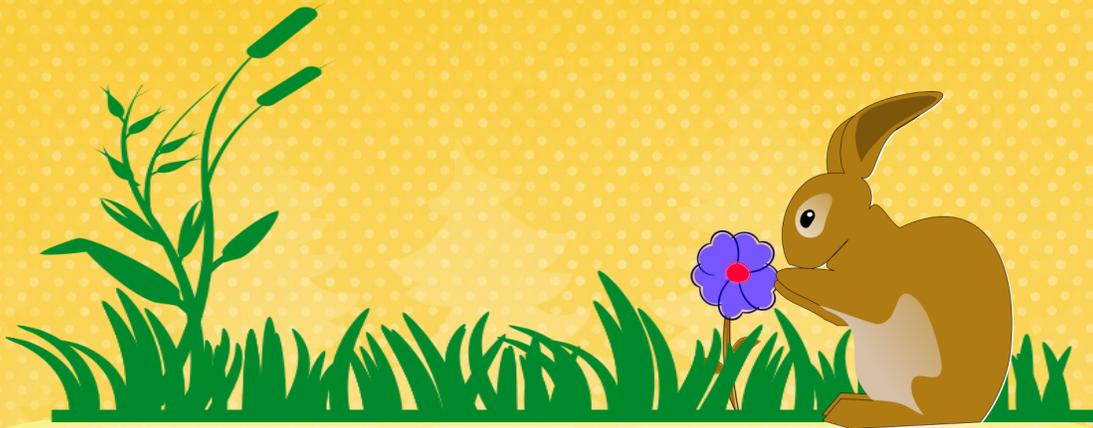
What is your hope in presenting this website to the public?

I hope it helps those who want to help, and that it will contribute to some more positive buzz around the refugee issue. Unfortunately, the crisis has become hugely divisive, both around the world and at home in the Sault. I do a lot of work out of cafes, and that means I get to unwillingly eavesdrop on a lot of opinionated conversations. There are many valid concerns among the general public, but also some uninformed ones. A common objection is that refugees will take jobs away from ‘locals’. Why does it have to be an ‘either-or’ situation? If you look at the resources being given- time, energy, money- they’re largely coming from private individuals in the community who have a generous heart. Instead of being divisive, I believe there is potential for something good to come out of this tragedy- the chance for Sault Ste. Marie to prove itself to be a city of compassionate, globally-minded people. When we look back on history and the largest humanitarian crisis that happened since World War Two, are we going to be proud of ourselves, and of our city?

Any upcoming events we should know about for those of us who want to be involved?

I’ll be leading a round-table discussion on refugees in the local context at the upcoming 6th Annual Local Immigration Partnership Forum on March 16th, which is open to the public. Keep an eye out for other upcoming events listed under ‘Events’ on the Refugee705 website, at www.refugee705.com

REFUGEE705



If you would like to learn more about the Local Immigration Partnership, or you are a newcomer, be sure to visit our web portal. Whether you are a current resident of Sault Ste. Marie, a returning resident, a newcomer, or thinking of relocating to the city, Discoverthesault.ca will provide you with the vital information necessary to navigate your way around the city and link you to all of the services you will need or want to know to truly make Sault Ste. Marie your home.

Discoverthesault.ca offers you the ability to search and link to everything the Sault has to offer from government and social services and resources, arts and culture, education, employment, doing business, and so much more.

Step-by-step, we will do our best to help ease your transition and integration into your community. We intend to help you *Discover the Sault!*

www.discoverthesault.ca

Brought to you by:



**SAULT STE. MARIE & AREA
LOCAL IMMIGRATION PARTNERSHIP**



Ontario



Immigration, Refugees
and Citizenship Canada

Immigration, Réfugiés
et Citoyenneté Canada

