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Refugee family arrived in Shelburne this week

A new Canadian family of three is scheduled to arrive and put down roots in their new home in Shelburne this week under the sponsorship of First Line for Syria.

The group has been raising funds since last summer to help bring the family out of Turkey where they fled from war-torn Syria.

The family, including a 17-year-old daughter, were, at press time, set to arrive in the early hours of Wednesday morning, February 24, after what will likely be an exhausting trip from Ankara, Turkey via Jordan and Shannon, Ireland.

For privacy reasons, the group can not divulge much information about the family.

?As for specifics, we don't know why they were forced to flee or when,? says Wally Barr of First Line Syria, ?That is, of course, their story and we may never be privy to it. We do know from our own research that their home city was wracked by a month-and-a-half of intense fighting last year involving the Syrian government forces, opposition forces and ISIS. ISIS was defeated in that particular battle.?

This family is the first of two families being sponsored by First Line for Syria with the help and support of the community and, in particular, Primrose United Church and treasurer Sharon Holmes.

It is still not known at this time when the second family will arrive in Canada.

?We have arranged for housing for the first family in Shelburne and for the second in Orangeville,? says Barr. ?Both families will be welcomed into the home of one of our members for a few days, as a sort of ?landing pad' before they move into their rental homes.?

There will be many things to do to help the Syrian Canadians adjust to their new country, including arranging English classes, health coverage, school enrollment, banking and much more.

First Line for Syria reports, ?Dufferin County in conjunction with Wellington County has been extremely organized and helpful for all sponsorship groups, so that a lot of the paperwork should be streamlined.?

The group will also introduce the newcomers to the local stores and help them to find their way around the area.

The youth group, which started in January, is looking forward to welcoming the new family and is busy putting together a welcome package. The Dufferin County youth will continue to develop support plans for the resettlement of children in the refugee families in the days and weeks ahead.

First Line for Syria is still in need of more people for occasional translation in Arabic and English as well as occasional drivers to help with transportation needs.

If you are interesting assisting, please contact First Line for Syria on Facebook.

By Marni Walsh