



The Universalist Unitarian Church of Halifax

5500 Inglis Street, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada, B3H 1J8

Communiqué

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: 28 May 2018

NS GETS NEW REFUGEE SETTLEMENT ORGANIZATION

181-year old Universalist Unitarian Church becomes province's fourth Sponsorship Agreement Holder

HALIFAX – The Universalist Unitarian Church of Halifax (UUCH) becomes Nova Scotia's 4th federally-mandated refugee sponsorship organization after being granted Sponsorship Agreement Holder (SAH) status by the federal government.

“Unitarians and Universalists have a tradition of helping refugees,” said church Minister Norm Horofker. “Because we hold true certain Principles, such as the *'Inherent worth and dignity of every person,' 'Justice, equity and compassion in human relations'* and *'The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all,'* we aid those fleeing violence and persecution as a matter of putting our faith into action.”

In North America, Unitarians and Universalists have been helping refugees reach safety in Canada since at least the time of the Underground Railroad, when former American slaves fled North to freedom. In modern times UUCH has been involved in sponsoring families during successive refugee waves, such as Vietnamese Boat People in the early 1980s, Kosovars in the late 1990s, and Afghans in the 2000s. A permanent Refugee Sponsorship Committee was formed in 2015, tasked to work with community groups to help settle Syrian and other refugee families in the region.

“We'll now be able to assist more people, more directly,” noted UUCH Refugee Sponsorship Committee member Nawras Althiab, a newcomer from Syria himself finishing a pre-med degree at Dal. “It was not that long ago that I arrived in Halifax and I know what many of our clients are going through. It was through the efforts of Nova Scotians, like those I now work with, that I have an opportunity for a new life. I'm proud to be able to pay it forward as part of the new SAH.”

Founded in 1837, the Universalist Unitarian Church of Halifax is a welcoming community that celebrates diversity of both belief and background. A dogma-free tradition that honours deeds, not creeds, it affirms the principles of an open-minded spiritual community, uses reason and conscience as primary guides, and is committed to justice in the world.

- 30 -

For more information:

Andy Blair, Co-Chair, UUCH Refugee Sponsorship Committee

Rev. Norm Horofker, UUCH Minister