

Hello!

We are a group of seven friends who wanted to make a life-changing difference to a family at serious risk. We call ourselves the SWAT team ("Socializing With A Target") because we want to do some tangible good while enjoying the companionship of like-minded others.

Working with [Journalists for Human Rights](#), we were matched with a family that was forced to flee Afghanistan when the Taliban seized power. The father is a young man who has been a longtime activist and journalist focusing on women's rights and anti-extremism. He also founded a studio with his brother, a sculptor, to produce street art aimed at deradicalizing people, especially youth.

When the young man would not turn in his brother to the authorities, he was detained and beaten. He and his family were threatened with death if he failed to comply with the Taliban's demands. The family managed to escape to Islamabad, but they remain at risk. His library and art studio have since been destroyed by the authorities.



We have submitted an extensive application package to the IRCC (Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada) to have the family brought to Canada under a [special program](#) for Afghans in danger due to their work in journalism or human rights. The father, who speaks English, will be accompanied by his wife and their 11-year-old son. They are expecting a baby in October, so time is of the essence.

As private refugee sponsors, we are responsible for the entirety of the family's needs for one year after their arrival in Canada. This includes covering their financial costs, settling them in housing, school, and (when appropriate) work, arranging for transport, transit, language training, medical and dental needs, and providing emotional and social support. We have budgeted over \$50,000 to provide for the family's first year in North Vancouver. **As you can imagine, housing is their biggest challenge and we are very keen to connect with anyone who may be able to offer either transitional housing in North Vancouver when they arrive, or something in the community that is longer term and affordable.**

For the purposes of the application, we are required to have an approved co-sponsor accept and administer the funds raised on behalf of the family. Our co-sponsor is [St. Agnes Anglican Church](#) in North Vancouver, and we are thankful to them for contributing to this important part of the sponsorship. All refugee applications must be submitted to the IRCC via a "Sponsorship Agreement Holder" (SAH). Our SAH is the [Anglican Diocese of New Westminster](#), and we are grateful for the guidance, time and energy they continue to offer us.

The Anglican diocese and many of its churches have been active in refugee work since the arrival of the Vietnamese boat people in the 1970s. Unfortunately, the need for refugee sponsors has only increased since then; there are currently [100 million people displaced](#) from their homes, the

highest number in recorded history. We can't help everyone, but we can bring hope to this one desperate family by helping them survive and thrive in a safe and supportive community.

How to Donate

We are obliged to have all our funding in place by the time the family arrives - and we have no way of knowing how soon that may be! We thus humbly ask that you give any contribution your consideration as soon as possible. **You can donate money online by using the drop-down menu under "Fund" on St. Agnes' donation page (look for #3 on the list; "Refugee Support: SWAT Group"); a tax receipt will be immediately issued.** Alternately, you can write a cheque to St Agnes Church, with "SWAT team refugee sponsorship" in the memo line. Please ensure that your name and mailing address are included, so that your tax receipt can be provided in the new year.

We expect our sponsorship will move forward as planned. However, please be aware that under Canadian tax law, once you have donated money to a charity it cannot be refunded. Should this particular family be unable to travel to Canada, we will use your funds to sponsor another family at risk.

Please be in touch with any of us should you have comments or questions.

Gratefully yours,

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