



## Diocesan Sponsorship 2015

The Diocese of Qu'Appelle in March 2015 approved the sponsorship of five members of an Iraqi family who are currently in Turkey. The members of the family are relatives of Marleen Abbo, who together with her husband Safaa Mousa and their daughter Majdleena were sponsored in December 2011 in honour of PWDRF50. Marleen and her family are parishioners of St. James the Apostle Church in the Rosemount area. They regard the congregation as their Canadian family.

Majdleena attended play school at the Regina Open Door Society while Marleen was studying English. Marleen has completed her language classes. Majdleena, who turned five on October 11, began kindergarten this September. She now has a lovely baby sister, Sara, who was born on July 24, 2014. Marleen works part time. Safaa has returned to language classes at Regina Open Door, and works part-time as a cleaner with Regina Open Door after classes. In the evenings he also works from 5:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. as a cleaner with Wascana Building Services (corner of Victoria Avenue and Broad Street, Regina). Two parishioners at St. Paul's were instrumental in finding them earlier employment before Safaa returned to language classes.

Marleen's family members who fled to Turkey are her father (Saeed Abbo Paulos, age 69), her brother (Amjad Abbo, age 24), her sister-in-law (Rawan Saeed, age 22) and their two children (Sareta, age 3 1/2, and Saemon (Simon) age 2). The father formerly worked with the Baghdad Municipality Bus Company and retired as the supervisor of ticket collectors. Her brother, Amjad, worked as the "Church Police" in the Mosul area. This job appears to be that of a Security Commissioner for the Orthodox Christian Churches in and round Mosul. Rawan worked as a primary school teaching assistant.

The family lived in the Mosul area. This part of the country was a safe place for Christians both under Sadaam Hussein, and the post-Sadaam Shi'a majority government, until the early 2014 offensive of ISIS, the radical Sunni rebels. The family were at risk, especially after the new Sunni authority stopped and warned Amjad not to report for work or volunteer with the Church. This was before the overt prosecution of Christians and Yazidis started. The family took the hint and fled with minimal belongings to Turkey in August 2014, where they had friends. They subsequently registered with the UNHCR, and the Turkish authorities.

Canada Immigration interviewed the family in July 14, 2015, after which they were told to get their medicals done. This they did, and the checks indicated no medical problems. The family were asked to bring their passports to the Canadian Embassy in Ankara last Thursday (October 8, 2015). They did as requested. It is likely the Canada Embassy in Ankara is assisting them to get an exit visa from the Turkish authorities. With some luck the family could arrive before winter does.

The Diocese needs to raise approximately \$40,000 (including ideally \$9,000-\$10,000 for medical contingencies) to support the family for one year. Donations can be made directly to the Diocese of Qu'Appelle (memo Refugee Fund) or indirectly through one's home parish for forwarding to the Synod Office. Parishes are also encouraged to do one or more fund-raisers to support this initiative. Unused monies in the fund could be used to help with future diocesan or parish specific sponsorships.

The Diocese of Qu'Appelle once again thanks all those who supported the successful PWDRF50 initiative, and all who are supporting or will be supporting the current family sponsorship. Working together, we can make this a success!

(For further information, please contact Ralph Paragg, Diocesan Refugee Coordinator, (at 306-586-4155 or [rparagg@sasktel.net](mailto:rparagg@sasktel.net)) or Reverend Malcolm French (at 306-550-2277 or [iona@access.comm.ca](mailto:iona@access.comm.ca))