

## MEDIA RELEASE

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February 10, 2016  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

# SYRIAN REFUGEES RESETTLING IN THE COWICHAN VALLEY GET A LITTLE HELP FROM VIREB



NANAIMO, BC – The Vancouver Island Real Estate Board (VIREB) has donated \$1,177.02 to the Cowichan Intercultural Society's (CIS) Syrian Refugee Fund. VIREB's donation will be used to help support refugees resettling in the Cowichan Valley. VIREB Past President Jason Finlayson presented the cheque to CIS Executive Director Lynn Weaver on January 5.

"Our board and members believe that everyone deserves to live in a safe and healthy community," said Finlayson. "Being in a position to offer sanctuary to families who are fleeing Syria is an incredible feeling. We hope that our donation will help make life a little easier for the refugees."

CIS offers a variety of services for refugees, including translation, interpretation, trauma support, employment support, settlement assistance, free English classes, and professional mentoring.

CIS began holding public information sessions on the Syrian refugee crisis in the fall of 2015, introducing the concept of refugee sponsorship to the Cowichan Valley community. Recently granted Sponsorship Agreement Holder (SAH) status by the Government of Canada, CIS can now sponsor refugees directly, offering full financial and emotional support for one year per family. Additionally, CIS can authorize other community groups to provide sponsorship through CIS. So far, two families have arrived on Vancouver Island as Privately Sponsored Refugees (PSRs). There are another seven private sponsorships in the works, and CIS is awaiting news on up to 12 families hoping to resettle here as Government-Assisted Refugees (GARs).

"We are so appreciative of the support we received in our community," said Lynn Weaver, "and VIREB stepped up in a significant way. Their contribution will have a lasting impact on the area as a whole because we all benefit when newcomers integrate effectively into our communities."

VIREB's donation falls under the REALTORS Care® umbrella. This guiding principle and brand celebrate the great philanthropic work performed by Canadian REALTORS®; real estate boards and associations; and broker offices. Between 2012 and 2014, Canadian REALTORS® donated over \$71.6 million to charities.

For more information on the CIS Syrian Refugee Fund, click [here](#). To donate, click [here](#).

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## **ABOUT VIREB**

VIREB represents approximately 950 REALTORS® in nearly 90 member offices on Vancouver Island, from the Malahat in the south to the northern tip.

For more information, please contact:

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