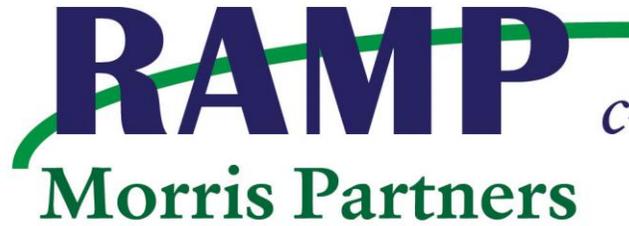


Refugee Assistance



*A Bridge to Assist People to
Cross From One Life to Another*

GENERAL MEETING MINUTES April 30, 2019

In Attendance: Tom and Carol Graham, Jo Angelina, Sarah Dundas, Kathy Larkin, Joan Belz, Tina Genest, Rebecca Mears, Debra Duke, Peter Plomchok, Laufrey Bustany, Mary Bradford, Rev. Paul Olsson, M.E. Baffoly, Charles Courtney, Noel Robinson, Jackie Bay, Leo and Carole Rogers, Mary and Gerry Gannon, Mary Ellen Gaffney, Mary and Tom Lewis,

Opening prayer: Rev. Paul Olsson

Finance Report: Leo Rogers explained that RAMP's bank balance is between \$72,000 and \$73,000; minus \$7,000 spent on the purchase of a used car for the Mashal family

Future Plans for RAMP: Gerry Gannon outlined the activities regarding the plans for the future of RAMP. He reviewed the two agencies that had sent representatives to the last two general meetings. One speaker was from First Friends. The second representative was from International Rescue Committee (IRC). After considerable discussion, the Steering Committee decided to partner with IRC, since they work with partnering agencies as in a similar manner as Church World Service. It was emphasized that we must have a Family Team ready for the fourth family by June 30th.

Family #4: Tom Lewis outlined the description of a possible fourth family from Afghanistan who are connected with a student from Drew University.

Question: Is it final that RAMP is accepting this family with the Drew connection or are we open to a 5th family? SC voted "yes" for Family #4, however, they could be assigned to another organization. Accepting future families is contingent upon finding a Family Coordinator, etc.

Policies & Procedures Update: Tom Lewis provided an update on the Intern Report's 48 recommendations, the sub-committee that has formed as a result of it, and top recommendations they have adopted from the report by the sub-committee. The sub-committee has put together individual policies to address key recommendations and the plan is to publish them in a book that will be available to all, but will be particularly helpful to Family Coordinators. Tom shared an outline of the book and was thanked for all the effort he has invested in this process.

Vetting Process Volunteer Policy: Noel spoke about why it is necessary to vet volunteers, particularly those who work with children. St Elizabeth's counseled us to sign up with Verify Volunteers and RAMP is paying to vet the volunteers and members who work directly with families. The vetting process has two parts: criminal background check and motor vehicle driving check. 31 volunteers will have to undergo the process. It has been messy as the motor

vehicle check was originally left out. Noel to follow up with all volunteers to ensure completion. Fewer than 10 people have completed the process.

Family Communication Timeline Policy: Tom explained that there would be an official meeting with RAMP and the family to talk about funding expectations. The timeline for funding will be one year with extensions for extenuating circumstances.

RAMP VOLUNTEER/DONOR RECORD KEEPING AND EMAIL COMMUNICATIONS: Tina explained that she keeps volunteer and donor records in three ways. First, she maintains an excel spreadsheet. It details each member's contact information and a history of each member's volunteerism and donations. It is used when RAMP does mailings, or other specific projects requiring the sorting of information.

She also oversees a Volunteer Directory, which is a Google Doc that is shared with Family Coordinators and also team members who request it.

MailChimp is used for broadcasting RAMP announcements and all volunteers and donors, for whom she has email addresses, are subscribed to it. She encouraged everyone to add Refugee Assistance Morris Partners, info@rampnj.org, to their email list of contacts, as broadcasted emails come from that address. She also encouraged everyone to check their spam filter and junk/trash email boxes **periodically** to ensure RAMP emails are not in them. If a RAMP email is found there, move it to your inbox. If it is found in spam, indicate it is NOT spam. If you have taken these steps and are not receiving communications from RAMP, email her at christina.genest@gmail.com or info@rampnj.org, or call her at 973 206 1358. She will check your MailChimp record to confirm that your email address is correct and that announcements are being sent to you. She underscored that some email providers, such as Optimum, are particularly problematic. If all else fails, after contacting Tina, contact your email provider to attempt to correct the situation.

Family Updates:

Tarakji family: Mary Gannon reported that the eldest son quit his job today and, hopefully, has another plan. He takes his driving test in May. The father got his driver's license in MI. Lona is doing well in school and is a beautiful artist. The little boy is trying very hard and is getting a lot of help from tutors. Carol reported that she has been contacted by school and family members complimenting RAMP and displaying an understanding of what we do. Working with this family is an ongoing challenge but progress is being made.

Muniri family: Tom Lewis reported that the family is doing well. Akbar has passed his driving test and the wife will take hers this upcoming Tuesday. The little boy attended the Mosque pre-school and it did not work out. He has been given a scholarship for a new one next year, Joyful Noise in Morris Plains.

Mashal family: RAMP has purchased a car for Fahim and he is going to have a full-time job in training for a management role in a local business. He had an interview on Friday. He will start in two weeks and gave his notice at UPS. His future looks bright. Noor has been volunteering at a daycare center which is a requirement for public assistance. The amount of money they are getting is very small and she is not happy so she will probably stop going soon. Fahim is a speaker available for presentations in which he talks about Afghanistan then (pre-Russian invasion) through now. He will be at the Church of Messiah in Chester on a Sunday morning over the summer and has some upcoming engagements in the fall.

Next Meeting To be announced.

Minutes taken by Jackie Bay, Secretary