

Challenges and Opportunities:
identified during the first phase of Syrian GAR
settlement in Lethbridge

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Syrian GAR challenges

- **Housing**

- In comparison to their homes in Syria
- Delays cause RAP SPO to lose potential housing
- insufficient allowance
- Locating sufficiently large enough housing
- Grieving for Syria and homes there

Syrian GAR challenges

- **Health**

- Diverse needs – dental (90%); mental health challenges (PTSD; vicarious trauma; youth mental health); immunizations; pregnancies

- **Finances**

- Living under the poverty line – huge adjustment

- **Language programming**

- Expected more language facility than the reality
- Needs more variety in the offerings

Syrian GAR challenges

- **Expectations** - both Syrians and ours
 - Misinformation provided overseas
 - Cultural mores clash
- **Bureaucracy**
 - Canadian processes require many checks and balances; take longer
- **Transportation**
 - Large families make public transit v. expensive

Syrian GAR challenges

- **Family members left behind** – in surrounding countries, or worse, in Syria
- **Employment expectations** – not well informed about Canadian standards /systems
 - Little formal employment experience
- **Smoking cessation** – many grown males smoke; too expensive in Canada

Syrian GAR opportunities

- **Relieved** of transportation loan
- **High** levels of settlement success
- **Exploring** the area on their own
- **Rapid** rate of language acquisition
- **Resourceful** – budgeting; planning for future; second hand
- **Desire** to give back

RAP SPO opportunities

- **Form** steering committee – meets for five months
- **Many** community collaborations emerge
 - AHS; church groups; YWCA; primary care GP's
- **Funding** for extra staffing resources approved and personnel hired
- **Summer** programming developed for all school ages – B.A.S.E. camp
- **Proactive** planning for next round of arrivals

RAP SPO successes

- **157** Syrian GAR's settled: Jan 1 – Feb 29
- **All** families in permanent accommodation within 2 weeks
- **All** families are paired with a local GP
- **All** adults have language assessments
- **All** children enrolled in school within short time

And, we made it...!





Thank you!

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