

Working Group to Welcome New Mainers meeting  
Town Hall Council Chambers  
Tues., August 27, 5-6:30 pm

In attendance: Melanie S (chair), Dean P, Johanna H., Nancy K, Keith Kantack, Jennifer Melville, Tom Bull  
Notetaker - Liza M

1. Minutes from last meeting approved.
2. Resource Update -  
Melanie has not gotten a reply from Greater Portland Family Promise (<https://greaterportlandfamilypromise.org/>); looking for info to provide community / professional training in Freeport.

Dean contacted Wolfe's Neck Center (<https://www.freeportcamping.com/>) to find out about temporary housing. Drawbacks - too far from services, seasonal. Possible that WNF could provide summer camp opportunity next year for reduced rate or free (reminder that FCS offers camp scholarships!)

Johanna was in touch with Preservation Management (coordinate for Freeport Housing Trust). They might be able to waive the guarantor requirement. Host families should help their guests contact Liza Murphy to fill out an application.

Carla Hunt has been a very helpful resource to host families.

Translation resources - Catholic Charities, Certified Language Hotline (for a fee).

Freeport Friends - <https://www.freeportfriends.org/> - to request services, ie transportation, conversational practice and translation help. Volunteers may sign up to be on the mail list.

Action Step - Resource Document - Melanie will update the list to put volunteer opportunities at the top of the list.

3. Needs for New Families –
  - Freeport will be/ is home to 3 families- one family of 5, one family of two (both with host families) and a third family of 3 is moving into an apartment this/next weekend.
  - Would be helpful for the families to have a case manager. Biggest challenge is language and being able to have conversations.
  - Both hosts made appts with Johanna for GA and given information by Melanie on how to start housing process asap

- Concern articulated to hosts (by the assigning agency) is to be sensitive about asking about situation that brought individuals to ME; do not want to induce further trauma.
  - Also a reminder about confidentiality and respecting the privacy of the individuals.
  - Translation services - for official documents, sensitive issues, need to have prof. translator, not appropriate role for the albeit willing volunteer.
  - School-age child has been enrolled in Freeport; prof. translator was at in-take meeting (provided by Catholic Charities, arranged by school ESL staff).
  - Adults will be taking ESOL classes twice a week thru RSU5 community ed, at Teen Center (downstairs at FCS). RSU5 is looking to provide volunteer childcare during the lessons (Mon & Wed, 9:30-11). Also looking for volunteers to provide conversational practice for the family. Contact RSU5 community services for more information- Kelli Park: 865-6171 x 22 or email Kelli at [parkk@rsu5.org](mailto:parkk@rsu5.org)
  - At FCS there is a French speaking staff member who can be available to help families when they come to shop. Call ahead to make arrangements.
  - At some point, transportation help (to Portland, Boston) will be needed. For family of 5, a vehicle that can hold everyone (host family's car isn't that big). Specific need - thru Tawni for family moving into the apartment: Queen size bed and linens. Nancy K can provide the bedding and towels. Otherwise families who are in host homes are all set with material needs at this time.
  - GA vouchers from Freeport will be available in mid Sept to be used at designated stores (ie Bow St., African store- Moriah in Portland).
  - At some point the new families may want to volunteer in the community, sharing their skills/ interests until they are able to get a work permit. Already one family member will be a volunteer French teacher at Freeport High School.
4. Fundraising - \$3000 has already been raised by a local woman but we are unsure how to make the funds accessible. Limitations in how it can be distributed to individuals.  
Johanna would recommend to the Town Council to approve a town managed short term fund to help support the needs of asylum seekers. She will put together a proposal for next meeting. Next step will be to get the word out that we will be accepting donations.
5. Event Planning -  
Sub committee hasn't met yet.  
Storytelling event - hope to happen Friday, Oct. 11. Location TBD? (FCS is an option if it hasn't already been reserved for something else.)

Other possible events -Panel event to provide education/ insight; cultural training

(for educators, etal.)

6. Other

How are we making locals aware of all of this?

Get on Town Municipal Bulletin mail list. Johanna will send a sign up link to this group. She will also send to RSU5 (via Ginny McManus) to be put in the school newsletters.

The rest of us can spread the word thru our professional / personal connections (ie - Dean to Wolfe's Neck Club, Liza to FCS, to go out to the Volunteer email list)

7. Next Meeting - Tuesday, Sept 3, 5-6:30 PM  
then Sept. 17, 5 PM.