



85 Church Street, St. Catharines, Ontario L2R 3C7
Phone: 905-685-6589 Fax: 905-685-8376
www.folk-arts.ca

On behalf of the Niagara Folk Arts Multicultural Centre Board of Directors, Staff, Volunteers and newcomer families our thoughts and prayers are with the families of those killed at prayer in Quebec City and with the Muslim communities of Canada. We must continue to name and fight against Islamophobia, Anti-Black Racism and Xenophobia. Our future and the future of our children and grandchildren depend on it. We encourage the citizens of Niagara to speak out, show up in protest and act in solidarity with communities under attack.

As the Executive Director of the Niagara Folk Arts Multicultural Centre and Chair of the Niagara Refugee Assistance Committee (NRAC) I have been answering questions and speaking to Citizens over the last several days regarding the current situation at US Borders and the discriminatory, anti-Refugee executive orders passed by Donald Trump affecting certain majority Muslim countries.

Over the last eighteen months Niagara has welcomed over 120 Syrian refugee families in addition to dozens of refugee families from other parts of the world, most through the private sponsorship system. These families are working hard to become productive members of our community and Niagara has welcomed them with open arms.

Local Settlement agencies such as the Folk Arts, Welland Heritage Council, Fort Erie Multicultural Centre and YMCA have worked with community partners, local governments and Niagara Region through NRAC to build up capacity and support local sponsoring groups in Niagara. We are proud of the work we have done to make Niagara a welcoming community for newcomers and a safe haven for refugees.

I know Niagara Citizens will continue to welcome refugees with understanding and compassion in the face of the cruel and unfair actions of the US government and those who hate. To get more involved in the effort to welcome refugees to our community and/or take part in local demonstrations and events please go to www.folk-arts.ca.

In Solidarity,

Jeff Burch

Executive Director, Niagara Folk Arts Multicultural Centre
Chair, Niagara Refugee Assistance Committee (NRAC)
Director, Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI)