

JANET

“YOU CAN’T EVEN MEASURE THE IMPACT OF COMMUNITY SPONSORSHIP AS THERE ARE SO MANY POSITIVES; IT KNITS PEOPLE TOGETHER BY PROVIDING AN AVENUE TO EXPRESS KINDNESS, DEMONSTRATE LOVE AND SHOW SUPPORT.”



In 2019 I was approached in my community by the parish priest and asked to come to a meeting about Community Sponsorship. I didn't really know what it was, I knew it was something to do with welcoming refugees and supporting them with what they needed.

In 2015 we were seeing really sad images of migrants crossing seas and I think you would want to be a stone to not be moved and not be touched by what was happening all around. I did not hesitate to get involved and for me it was about shared humanity. No family can arrive into a community if they don't have resources to support them.

We live in a community of about 2500 people with loads of activity, loads of community spirit and people just wanted to get involved. After an initial information meeting our group of 10 was formed and we started to look at the practicalities of the settlement plan and the fundraising.

When the family arrived, it was a joy to see them. There were only a few of us at the house to welcome the family when they arrived so as not to overwhelm them as we were not able to go to the airport due to Covid. But over the coming week all of the group had met with the family.

Community Sponsorship allows you to be of help at a local level and everyone has something to give, you don't even need skills you just need to have a heart. One woman in the group is an older woman and she couldn't access the internet so was unable to be on the Zoom calls but the impact she has had on calling to the family for tea and chats and playing with the kids is fantastic.

There have been hiccups and challenges, but we are working through them and they are well settled in now. We talk things through and work through it and the problems we face we overcome. There is a good team of us and we are all very honest and open with each other, we don't all agree but we chat it through and try to come to a consensus; and at the end of the day these are small things compared to what the family has been through. The family are integrating really well, they have a beautiful house, and the children are well settled in school.

“COMMUNITY SPONSORSHIP HAS ARMS AND LEGS THAT STRETCHES OUT FAR BEYOND THE LOCAL COMMUNITY, IT HAS SUCH A POSITIVE KNOCK ON EFFECT”

Community Sponsorship has arms and legs that stretches out far beyond the local community, it has such a positive knock on effect. I can hardly describe the impact; it has brought such a positive vibe to our own community, but it has also had a wider reach as other parishes have heard and asked how they can replicate what we have done. You can't even measure the impact as there are so many positives; it knits people together by providing an avenue to express kindness, demonstrate love and show support.

