

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

March 28, 2019

Lifeline Syria partners with WoodGreen Community Services to support Syrian Refugee Family Counselling and Settlement Services

WoodGreen Community Services receives \$100,000 from Lifeline Syria Fund (hosted at Toronto Foundation), leverages gift into \$200,000 to support this vital program

TORONTO — As part of its ongoing commitment to supporting Syrian refugees, Lifeline Syria is donating \$100,000 to The WoodGreen Foundation to support its ongoing work helping to provide family support services for Syrian refugees in the Toronto area.

Mohammad Al Zaibak, President and CEO of Lifeline Syria said, “We are proud to be working with and supporting WoodGreen. We were inspired to make this gift by the innovative and proven programming WoodGreen has implemented to help Syrian refugees settle into their new lives in Canada. Our donation will allow WoodGreen to advance their vital Syrian Family Integration Program, which addresses the pressing need for settlement support for Syrian refugee families in Toronto.”

Lifeline Syria has challenged the philanthropic community to match its gift, and this support has already triggered a matched donation from an anonymous donor, doubling the impact of Lifeline Syria Foundation’s gift – with \$200,000 now directed to this vital programming.

In addition to its long history of providing critical settlement services to all newcomers to Canada, WoodGreen has also been at the forefront of supporting Syrian refugees. The goal of WoodGreen’s Syrian Family Integration Program is to ensure healthy integration of Syrian refugee families – to help them adapt successfully into a new country, a new school system and a new culture. Through a broad mix of information and activities in a variety of environments, the program systematically builds the skills, knowledge and experiences of both parents and their children, through a Canadian lens.

Anne Babcock, President and CEO of WoodGreen Community Services said, “Lifeline Syria’s gift is enabling us to continue our invaluable Syrian Family Settlement Support program and address many of the key stressors our Syrian refugees are experiencing. Their vision and generosity will help us ensure that Syrian refugee families are well supported and can thrive in their new country.”

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About Lifeline Syria:

Lifeline Syria was launched in June of 2015 and incorporated as a not-for-profit in September of 2015 in response to the ongoing humanitarian refugee crisis. Lifeline Syria helps private sponsor groups and organizations to welcome and resettle Syrian refugees as permanent residents in the GTA and are committed to helping Syrian refugees settle in Canada. Since its inception, Lifeline Syria has helped private sponsorship of more than 1,100 Syrian refugees to settle as permanent residents in the Greater Toronto Area, and has played a major role in mobilizing Canadians to sponsor Syrian refugees.

In Fall 2018, Lifeline Syria partnered with UNHCR and RSTP and donated nearly \$500,000 from the Lifeline Syria Fund (hosted at the Toronto Foundation) that enabled private sponsorship of an additional 100 Syrian refugees to resettle across Canada by the end of 2018 under the Canada Blended Visa Office-Referred (BVOR) program.

Lifeline Syria is partnering with Canadian charities with the aim of assisting Syrian refugees to integrate into and contribute to Canada.

About WoodGreen Community Services:

A United Way Anchor Agency, and one of the largest social service agencies in Toronto, WoodGreen provides new pathways to opportunity for some of the city's most vulnerable residents. WoodGreen combines significant scale and a proven track record with an entrepreneurial mindset, continuously seeking and developing innovative solutions to critical social needs. With an annual operating budget of \$50 million, we serve 37,000 people each year from 36 locations. We help people find safe, affordable housing, seniors live independently, internationally-trained professionals enter the job market, parents access childcare, homeless and marginalized people get off the streets, youth find meaningful employment and training, individuals with developmental and mental health issues find support, and newcomers settle in to Canadian life.

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