

Meeting Notes Lake Superior Bridge Builders - 2/2

Present:

Mary Meierotto

Cathy Smith

Doug Lowthian

Howard Patterson

Marty Burkel

Declan Lowthian

Sandy Brue

Larry and Lana Jorstad

Alex Breslav

Greg Barnes

Diane Fizell

Jeff Nilles

Mary opened our meeting with a prayer

Finances - Doug and Sandy completed a grant request for \$5,000 through Duluth/Superior Community Fund that required a budget for the entire year that the grant would cover - suggested incorporating this budget into our already budgeted system for use on other grants - Doug will circulate the grant budget for group review.

Housing - Mary let us know that Tom Boggard will allow the family to stay in their current place for longer while we work to create an apartment in the lower level of Bethesda church. Doug will work with Bob Feyen to come up with a design and cost estimate for the apartment that will be presented to the church council at their 2/11 meeting.

Health Care - Pavel has ongoing dental needs but his next appointment scheduled may conflict with a court or ICE check in appointment - all are waiting to see what the dates will be for a possible trip to either Chicago or Milwaukee. The family continues with therapy appointments - there is a need for an official assessment that the lawyer needs - Alex is helping with translations - next court appointment may be on May 12th - waiting for clarity on this from the attorney.

Education - Cathy reported that Oliver continues to improve and participate in school and has a school appointed go-between with Pavel and Alla.

Alex - gave a family update that Pavel has volunteered to help someone from Corny with their car repairs - he has experience in car repairs and having this to do makes him happy - gives him something to do. He has also helped Alex with his car

Greg - gave us a synopsis of this month's Texas Border Forum that took place right before this meeting. Topic was the first 13 days of the Biden administration's efforts to change the US immigration and asylum seeker policies. Although several executive orders were issued not all border control officers are complying. 100 days moratorium on deportations was issued but people are still being deported. The system is in chaos as there are not enough officials in place to make these rapid changes. The analogy was trying to turn a huge ship around with only a few experienced deck hands onboard. Meanwhile some people who have families to receive them are traveling to those families but those without sponsorship or families are sometimes on the street with orientation to their new surroundings.

Fundraising Letter - still in progress and the group will review next week. Discussion on sending it out and the cost involved.

Diane - brought up the issue that Alla and Pavel need help with pronunciation of English words and speaking in general. Doug L. will research a possible online program they could use to improve their English speaking skills.