



## *Women's Group*



The Women's Mission Group (Rights of Women and Solidarity) U.S. Sector attended workshops and conferences sponsored by the organization **REAL LIFE GIVING**. This organization is dedicated to helping and empowering women and children in New Hampshire. They look for ways to prevent exploitation and raise awareness in regard to sex trafficking through education, training and preventive initiatives.

One of the projects that the **Real Life Giving** organization has undertaken is "Bags of Hope", also known as the Backpack Project. This is a way of reaching out to women affected by trafficking, addiction, and homelessness in New Hampshire. Last year, the members of the Women's Mission Group donated money and were able to present two backpacks to **Real Life Giving** with the suggested items to benefit the women.

In February, the group decided to prepare more backpacks. Enough money was collected to donate three backpacks from the Women's Mission Group. The Associates donated \$100 – enough for two backpacks, and the Arts and Creativity Mission Group also prepared a backpack to help in this endeavor. Consequently, we were able to present a total of six backpacks. When the Executive Director of the organization came to pick up our donations she was pleasantly surprised and grateful for our support.

Louise Auclair, CSC

## *Holy Cross Early Childhood Center*

Representing the members of their Bonded Group, Anne Hoffer, CSC, and Lorraine Richard, HCA, surprised the staff and children of Holy Cross Early Childhood Center with a variety of supplies that can be used in their classrooms. Each child was given



the opportunity to pull out an item from the basket and to show it to the group. Once all of the items had been seen, the children placed them on a table so that the teachers could put them away for future projects. Following the presentation of gifts, the children entertained their visitors by singing a few songs. The staff and children were most grateful to these generous benefactors for their gifts of various school supplies and wonderful children's books.

Louise Auclair, CSC

## *Visits - St. George Manor*



Several times during the year, the staff and children of Holy Cross Early Childhood Center go to St. George Manor to visit our elderly sisters. They usually have some kind of activity that they do with the sisters and some of the residents at Holy Cross Health Center. It is amazing to see the smile on the faces and the interaction that is going on between individual children, the sisters, and some of our lay residents! This is a rare program that has intergenerational activities so important for both ends of life.

On April 10th, one such activity took place in order to celebrate the opening of the baseball season. The participants gathered in Holy Cross Center to play ball and then were treated to a hot dog lunch. Everyone involved had a wonderful time! Thanks to all who made this possible.

Louise Auclair, CSC

## *Meeting a Syrian Family*



On Saturday, April 8 a group of Associates from the Ontario Sector under the direction of Sister Cecile Paquette travelled to the town of Renfrew for their monthly meeting. They were pleased to have the opportunity to meet with a young Syrian family who had arrived in Renfrew approximately six months earlier.

Twenty-six-year-old Ammar Hriz, his twenty-three year old wife Wiaam and their almost two year old son Elian were proud to show off the English skills they had acquired since arriving in Canada on November 1. They, along with 25 year old cousin Baraa, who arrived

in Canada with some English skills already in hand, openly discussed their feelings of gratitude as they arrived in a country which offered them a safety and comfort which they could not have back home.

This young family has been sponsored by the Catholic parishes of the Renfrew area, and have a team of committed individuals working with them to assure a smooth transition to Canadian life. Though they miss their beloved Syria, it is clear that they are working hard to establish themselves as contributing members to Canadian society. Both young men have found work, and are trying to pay off the family's air flight debt to the Canadian government before their year of sponsorship concludes. Wiaam is particularly happy, since she and her husband are expecting a second child sometime in September. "Imagine," she says, "our new baby will be the first Canadian citizen in our family!"

The associates and accompanying sisters were appreciative of the opportunity to meet with this family. They acknowledged the courage it must have taken for this family to start over in a strange land with a new language and vastly different customs, so far from home. When asked if there was anything the same about both Syria and Canada, they replied, "There are good people here just like there are good people in Syria. Thank you, Canada, for helping us."

Carol Sulpher, Associate of Holy Cross

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