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News / Winnipeg

## How can you help refugee claimants arriving in Winnipeg? Manitoba Islamic Association outlines 3 ways

The Manitoba Islamic Association presented a seminar illustrating homegrown ways to mobilize compassion at the Grand Mosque Monday night.

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JOHN WOODS/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Dr. Jodene Baker, chair of the United Way Community Investment, announces the launch of a new website to assist refugee claimants in Winnipeg on March 2.

By: [Jessica Botelho-Urbanski](#) For Metro Published on Tue Mar 14 2017

Razak Iyal, an asylum seeker from Ghana, lost nine of his fingers to severe frostbite last Christmas Eve. He trekked to Emerson, Man. to escape deportation from the United States and his story has brandished international headlines.

Despite losing dexterity, he hasn't stopped moving and is volunteering daily at the Canadian Muslim Women's Institute (CMWI).

Iyal said he helps sort clothing and household items that arrive by donation — anything to keep busy while he awaits his refugee board hearing later this month.

"I don't have fingers, but I do my best," he said to a crowd of about 40 gathered at the Grand Mosque Monday night for a seminar called "Mobilizing Compassion."

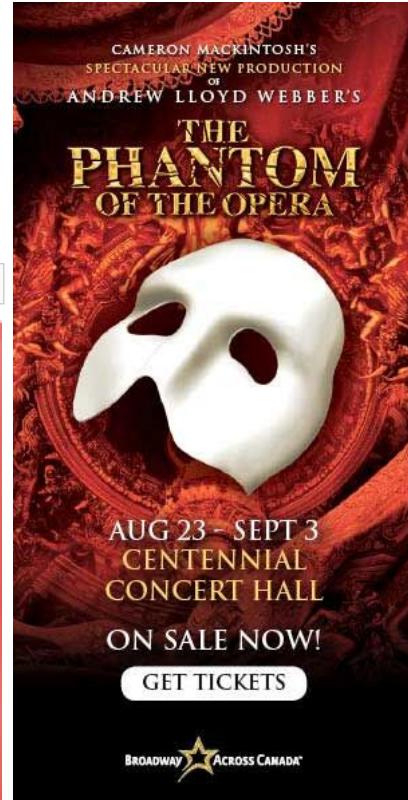
The Manitoba Islamic Association asked Iyal and representatives from Immigration Partnership Winnipeg and CMWI to explain ways the public can help the influx of asylum seekers get settled. More than 200 have arrived in Manitoba since Jan. 1.

Iyal thanked those at the mosque for their outpouring of generosity in recent weeks.

"I want to take this opportunity to thank the people of Canada. We both have seen very, very good people," Iyal said, speaking on behalf of his friend Seidu Mohammed, who couldn't make it because of a doctor's appointment.

The pair walked together in the bitter cold and Mohammed lost both hands and a toe to frostbite.

The representatives at "Mobilizing Compassion" suggested three main ways to help asylum seekers.



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**Donate money**

Dozens of local non-profits are pitching in to help refugee claimants file their paperwork, find temporary housing, warm clothing, toiletries, culturally-appropriate food and transportation to and from appointments.

United Way Winnipeg has created a central website where the public can donate funds, which will be divvied among the agencies: [helprefugees.ca](http://helprefugees.ca).

**Donate goods**

The Canadian Muslim Women's Institute is temporarily stopping acceptance of clothing donations because they've received more than they can store. Hygiene items, like pads, toothpastes, toothbrushes, shampoos, conditioners, lotions and towels, are current needs.

For an update on which items are crucial, call the CMWI office at 204-943-8539 or visit them at 61 Juno St.

The Manitoba Islamic Association is also looking to put together 150 care packages.

**Donate time**

CMWI needs help sorting through their goods and is organizing volunteers to stop by this weekend. Call ahead for more details.

If you have a legal background or a basic understanding of immigration paperwork, Immigration Partnership Winnipeg recommended getting in touch with local organizations like Welcome Place to see if you can help asylum seekers fill out forms in English.

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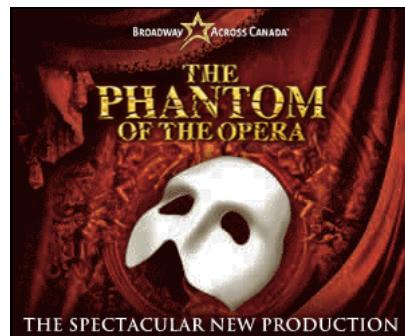
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