



The Midwest and Canada: A Home for Syrian Refugees

Wednesday, May 3

6:30 PM

Nerinx Hall High School Auditorium

In December 2015, the world saw images of Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau greeting the first planeload of refugees from Syria, telling them, “Welcome home.”

But Trudeau’s government is not responsible for supporting many of the refugees who have made their way to Canada. Thousands are being privately sponsored by regular Canadians, using a process unique in the world for placing the power of selecting, financing, and resettling refugees in the hands of private citizens. As a result, Canada is riding a wave of enthusiasm, as people feel empowered to help Syrians in what has become a popular movement.

In the United States, the government sponsors all refugees, and nine resettlement agencies receive federal funding to help them begin new lives. But a coalition of Syrian American and libertarian groups is lobbying the White House for a version of private sponsorship. This could be a moment for change.

Journalist **Robin Shulman** traveled to Canada and to Des Moines, Iowa, to look at how the political dialogue is shaped when so many regular citizens are personally impacting immigration policy.