



Smith Mountain Lake Democrats

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NEWS RELEASE

SML Democrats Introduced to Roanoke Asylum-Seekers Support Network

The Smith Mountain Lake Democrats Club hosted Herb Beskar, Director and Treasurer of Roanoke Asylum-Seekers Support Network (RASN), at their general meeting on January 24, 2022. RASN is an all-volunteer 501(c)(3) non-profit agency providing an array of daily living services to families legally in the Roanoke area as they navigate the complicated immigration asylum process.

Beskar, a retired social worker, started RASN in 2019 upon becoming aware that several asylum seekers in our area needed assistance in numerous ways. He explained that “these, primarily, families have established to immigration officials they have credible fears of injury, violence or death if returned to their home countries and have been granted one year to seek asylum in an immigration court. The nearest Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) office is in Richmond and the immigration court in Arlington, Virginia.”

RASN’s approximately 100 volunteers currently provide 26 families assistance with basic living requirements including food, housing, education and transportation. They also provide medical, dental and legal services to their clients. At this time, all these services are provided entirely through individual contributions.

Tax deductible monetary donations can be made through the Roanoke Asylum-Seekers Support Network page on Facebook. Volunteers with conversational Spanish are needed to provide hands-on support to families but many opportunities for non-Spanish speakers, particularly in transportation, exist. More information is available at RASN.org.

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