

Women Gathering supports Syrian refugee family

by **Julia Le**
Oakville Beaver Staff

What began as a retreat for Christian Oakville women to come together in support of a friend's journey through cancer, has blossomed into a community-wide event that celebrates women of all faiths.

Women Gathering... A Pathway to Peace officially began in 2010 and has grown to foster an open dialogue between women as they listen, learn and share in fellowship.

Oakville resident Ann Mulvale, who has been part of the organizing team over the last several years, said what has made the event so successful over the years is that it provides a meaningful experience for those in attendance.

"We have a high return rate because they believe it's a good investment of their time,"



Naomi Alboim

said Mulvale, a former Oakville mayor.

The purpose of the event is to grow understanding between women of all faiths. Mulvale added.

"We believe knowledge is powerful," she said. "We try to deal with some of the myths between the world religions."

This year's event will take place at Maple Grove United Church, 346 Maple Grove Dr., on Wed. Nov. 4. Registration and fellowship begin at 6 p.m.

The keynote speaker is Naomi Alboim, the founder of Lifeline Syria.

Alboim is the former federal bureaucrat in

charge of Vietnamese boat people resettlement and the former provincial deputy minister of citizenship and immigration. She'll be sharing her past and current experience helping settle refugees in Canadian communities.

Mulvale said through guest speakers and discussion, the event will also explore the commonalities of all the religions.

"We all believe in the Golden Rule in different ways — do unto others as you would have them do unto you," she said, adding there will be an academic speaker touching on Islamic, Jewish and Christian perspectives.

see Annual on p.22



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