

A Message from our Syrian Canadian Family

First we would like to tell you a little about the family. They are a family of eight. Khaled, the father is 46 and was a soccer player turned coach in Syria and Jordan. He has a number of FIFA qualifications and once he learns enough English he would like to coach soccer again.

Maysaa is 36 and the mother of six children. She is warm and caring and nurturing and loves to cook for her family and us! She has been busy crocheting scarves for the children before winter arrives.

Sulaiman is 18 years old and he is very eager to learn English and start working to help support the family. He did not attend school for the past four years and he worked in a cell phone shop.

Sedraa who is 15 attended some school in Jordan in the last four years. She is quiet and thoughtful and is a great help to her mother.

Masa is 10. She is smart and strong and quiet. She also helps her mom out a lot. She likes to dress up and have her picture taken.

Habiba is 8. She always has a smile on her face. She listens and takes in everything that is going on around her. She is very active and has a great sense of humour.

Ali, who is 7 is a boy who likes to play soccer and keep very active. He is smart and is learning very quickly at school.

The oldest daughter in the Alchami family is Suliama. She is 19 and still in Jordan with her husband and their daughter Miriam, who was born in September.

We asked the family to tell us what it is they wanted to relay to the parish if they could speak to them and then we asked them to tell us what they liked most about being in Canada.

Khaled and Maysaa began by saying that they are very thankful for the support that they have received through the sponsorship from our parish. They realize that they see only the faces of the committee but know that there were many, many people who were responsible for the funds raised to bring them to Canada. They feel like they have been reborn! They had no hope of a future and now they have a new chance and a new life. They have been rescued from the war in Syria and from what they have seen happen to their country and their people.

The family feels that they have not just made friends in Canada they have added to their family. It is important to them to continue to develop these relationships. They think that the people who are guiding them are honest, loyal, supportive and humble and have done so much to give them a new life. The family wishes to thank all of you for doing God's work. Having spoken to other families, they are very aware that not all refugees are so lucky. Some families do not get the same experiences that they have had. Their prayer is to be able to find work, work hard and give back to their new country.

Khaled's best memory so far of being in Canada is the first day at the airport when the family was welcomed and he felt the joy and love of the people of Canada for his family. He remembers being given the key to his new apartment and being overwhelmed by what had been provided for them by complete strangers.

Maysa most loves the people she has met. She says everyone is humble, honest and heartwarming. She appreciates how women and children are treated with great respect in Canada.

Sulaiman is enjoying learning English. He was not looking forward to attending school but he likes the chance to learn and speak English with the other new Canadians in his class.

Sedraa is really missing her older sister, but through school she is able to meet other girls her age who are facing the same adjustments she is. She is appreciative of the people she has met from the church and that includes her guidance counselor.

Masa's favourite part about Canada is school and her teachers. She has met new friends and she loves math. She had not been able to attend school in four years. She loves her new home.

Habiba loves going to school. It is the first time she has had the opportunity to attend school and she really likes her teacher. She likes playing with Masa at recess and riding her bike.

Ali is able to go to school for the first time as well. He too likes his teacher. He likes playing with the boys at recess. He liked going to Niagara Falls.

In closing the committee would like to thank all members of the parish for the overwhelming support you have given to us and to our family. It has been almost 2 years since we began this endeavor and there is still much work to do. The physical needs have been met for the family, now come the other challenges; learning English, developing skills for employment, finding a job, adjusting to the way of life in Canada, facing the winter climate for the first time. The work for this family is really only beginning. Thanks to each of you and your generosity they are on sound footing to face their new life in Canada and to become contributing members of our country.

God Bless all of you,

Fr. Peter, Fr. Kevin, Sr. Kathleen, Jeff Wild, Shelley Cutrara, Mary Barnes, Margaret Doma, Anne Deoni, Julian Patino, Ravi Jayasuria, Cynthia Harris, Kathleen Ware