

Journey Home Community Assists in Reclaiming Identity *by Mike Starr*

“In a new country, with no job and no family, you feel that you have no identity. That is why Journey Home Community was so important to us. They gave us friendship. They helped us to do the simple things like start a bank account, find a house, a school for the kids, furniture ...”

When Ahmad and Tabana (not their real names) came to Canada with their children a few years ago, it was not the first time they had left Afghanistan because of concern for their safety. As a young boy, Ahmad’s family had fled to Iran to escape the fighting with Soviet forces. After having been jailed during the Taliban era, Ahmad and his wife and daughter fled to Pakistan as the American bombing began. Each time, the family returned to Afghanistan when it was safer. But now, even though the Taliban is no longer in power, extremist groups punish people who question their ideas. Again, it was becoming unsafe for Ahmad and his family. Now with a family of five, they arrived in Canada to start a new life.

Journey Home Community came alongside the family in the early days after they arrived in Canada. Volunteers and staff helped Ahmad and Tabana through the many small tasks that we take for granted when we move. They also gave friendship, something that is not so easy to find when you don’t

speak the language of your neighbours. That friendship was very important to Tabana when, a short time after arriving in Canada, her father died in Afghanistan. Of course, it was not safe for her to return for the funeral.

Ahmad and Tabana’s children are very bright, and adapting quickly to their new country. The oldest – we’ll call her Hina – says that Canadian schools are more fun, because they are not too strict. She plays volleyball and basketball, and her favourite subject is Math! She wants to be a therapist when she grows up. Hina’s younger brother, Khan, also likes Math. He plays soccer and likes to write fiction books. He writes and illustrates stories of dragons. He taught his younger sister, Perkha, how to read and write, though she is only in Kindergarten. Perkha now writes and illustrates her own stories.

The story of this family has some difficult chapters, but is looking brighter all the time, thanks in part to Journey Home Community.



Proud to Protect Refugees *by JHC Staff*

Walk in the shoes of a family facing persecution. If your family's life is in **DANGER**, you run. There's no time to stand in a queue, even if one existed. In 1969, Canada signed the Geneva Convention Relating to the Status on Refugees to ensure that **PROTECTION** is guaranteed in our laws. This guarantees that **NEVER AGAIN** will those fleeing persecution ever fear being sent away without having their claim evaluated on its merits, as happened to the Jewish refugees aboard the MS St. Louis, who were refused entry to Canada in 1939.

Journey Home Community is participating with the Canadian Council For Refugees (CCR) in a national social campaign - **Proud to Protect Refugees** - to combat negative publicity and build a positive message in the public marketplace. We believe that pro-

tecting refugees is both a Canadian and a Christian value as God teaches His people to love the foreigners living in our midst (Deut 10:18-19). Refugees make great contributions to our country. Their resilience and strength is a gift to our society. and we are proud to say, WELCOME!

Journey Home Community is PROUD TO PROTECT REFUGEES.

Join us in speaking up for the freedom, dignity, and respect that is deserved by all who are globally displaced. On June 20, World Refugee Day, show your support and wear a Proud to Protect button which can be obtained at our office. Also, visit our website to read about the CCR's vision for Canada's refugee claim process.



Join the PROUD TO PROTECT movement.

- * Get involved * Educate yourself**
- * Speak up * Change the conversation**

<http://ccrweb.ca/en/proud-to-protect-refugees-action#individuals>

Important dates:

June 20: World Refugee Day—A good time to start your own "PROUD TO PROTECT" Campaign

June 22: JHC partners with Ten Thousand Villages, Granville Island. Your purchases will support refugee families in our community. (visit journeyhomecommunity.ca for details)

July 24-26: Refugee Highway Partnership-North American Refugee Roundtable @ UBC (visit rhpnar.net to register)

August 24: Join us for the annual JHC summer picnic.

October 5: Join us for the annual Ride for Refuge (visit rideforrefuge.org for more information)

Thank you!

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