

Bringing an Afghan Family to Canada

Almost a year ago to the day an ex-CFUW Belleville member got a panicked phone from a friend of hers. This friend had come as a refugee from Afghanistan during the first Taliban regime and she was very worried about her brother and his family now that the Taliban had taken over again. There was no way she had the resources to sponsor her family.

And so it started. The ex-CFUW member mentioned above had previously been a CBC journalist – and who better than a journalist to understand the importance of connections? She phoned a friend of hers in our Club and told her the story, who in turn told all our members. Six women, all but one of us members of CFUW Belleville, decided to take this on, along with a huge amount of support from our club.

It just felt like the right thing to do. The family - Mom, Dad, three young adult children and the eldest daughter's husband are all educated. Mom has a degree in Mathematics and taught school for her whole life. Dad owned a bookstore. All the young people speak excellent English. And for years the eldest daughter and her Mom were very public advocates of women's rights.

Clearly they were at risk. They were forced from their home, which was bombed, and lived in daily fear for their lives. Indeed, for months they were forced to split up and regularly move to different hiding places. They were stopped and threatened at gun point multiple times. They had to get out of Afghanistan and desperately wanted to build a new life with their aunt in Canada.

Skip forward a year. We are happy to report that they have just been approved to come to Canada! The last step is waiting to get flights, which could take weeks or months – you never know in this game!

Which brings us to our last fund raiser, one that CFUW Ontario Council has kindly offered to share with all of you. It is a **Prince Edward County Air B&B Get Away raffle!** We can all use a 'get away' and where better than in beautiful Prince Edward County? Tickets are \$20 and the total value of the package is over \$1,500 including a 2 night stay at an Air B&B that sleeps 6.

You may want to consider purchasing a ticket for yourself, or for friends & family. It would also make a great stocking stuffer! Check out the raffle details in the attached poster. Also please consider passing our poster on to others who you think may be interested in coming to the County.

This fund raiser will be used to pay for their transportation costs to come to Canada (yes, they get a bill from the Canadian government, likely \$20,000 or more) and many other settlement costs above and beyond basic living costs. Given the cost of living these days, and the small amount of money they will have to live on until they can get established this will make a real difference in their ability to thrive and contribute to Canada.

Mary Miller
Member of the Afghan Family Support Group
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PS. For information about our project check out our website: www.afghanfamilysupport.ca. If you have questions please email them to afghanrefugeeraffle@gmail.com.