

Refugee Committee Update: Nov 2023



SIX MONTHS IN CANADA: AN UPDATE ON THE AL MOUSA FAMILY

It has now been a little more than six months since St. Basil's welcomed the Al Mousa family, refugees from Syria, into our community, which marks the halfway point of our formal Refugee Sponsorship of the family.

It has been a very busy six months and the family, including parents Youssf and Houda and their three adult children, Madeleine, Khalil and Joelle, have been working hard to settle in Ottawa and to make the most of the opportunities open to them.

A major challenge for most of the family has been to learn English in order to be able to obtain employment or pursue further education. Volunteers from St. Basil's have been providing tutoring to Youssf, Houda, Madeleine and Khalil. Fortunately, Joelle, the youngest member of the family, was already fluent in both English and French when the family arrived in April.



A FEW HIGHLIGHTS

- Parents Youssf and Houda are learning English
- Madeleine is also learning English and working part-time at Greek on Wheels
- Khalil was married on August 5, is learning English and works as an Uber Eats driver
- Joelle is preparing to study Biotechnology at Algonquin College and working at Urban Planet



Recently, we asked the family to tell us about their experiences during their first six months in Ottawa. Joelle provided a written summary on behalf of all of the family. Here, in Joelle's own words, is that summary.

About our first six months in Canada, my father started learning English by going to the Confederation Education Center as a level 0-1 student. He started on the 11th of September. My mother is doing the same but she started on the 18th of September as a level 0 student. On that same day, Madeleine started as a level 4-5 student. She is also working as a part time cook/cashier at Greek On Wheels.

Khalil started English school on the 11th of October as a level 3-4 student. He is working as an Uber Eats delivery driver. Khalil got married on the 5th of August.

Joelle is preparing to study Biotechnology at Algonquin College. She completed an English Assessment Test that gave a great result of her being eligible to start studying as an Academic Upgrading Student to get her grade 12 equivalency. She started by completing Technical Math courses. What's left is Biology and Computer Skills courses. Joelle will begin her Biotechnology journey in September, 2024. [In addition to her studies] she is working as a full time sales associate at Urban Planet.

Our first six months were full of new beginnings and journeys. Despite it being kind of difficult to start new adventures, results are showing. We are feeling more used to our new lives and adapting to our new surroundings and environment. We were very happy with those first six months and with the support of the church and we hope to continue this journey with happiness and peace.



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