



The Cao family's garden at the back of their Main Street, Acton home is almost ready for harvest, but seven-year old Hoa and her brother, Thung, 11, have already been at the broccoli. The six-member family has been busily learning English since arriving in Canada in November.

Community grew in size, insight with arrival of Asian refugees

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overcome the obstacle, often with the help of other Oriental-Canadians who provide occasional translations. Complicating matters for teachers and sponsors alike is the ethnic diversity among the refugees themselves. The Vietnamese, Laotian, Chinese and Cambodian (Khmer) people use a number of distinct dialects. "It's largely a matter of speaking more slowly and avoiding slang words and abbreviations," Mr. Long explained. "The conversations I've had with our own group of

refugees have so far been limited to our own basic interests - just elementary discussions. Some, I know, have family albums and photos that predate the communist invasion of South Vietnam." **BLACKLISTING** Although even official reports from Viet Nam since the fall of Saigon (now Ho Chi Minh City) in 1975 have been conflicting, it is generally believed that any South Vietnamese civilians who had been associated with the American troops and their allies were "blacklisted" by the communists from the

north. The form of communism introduced by the Viet Cong since that time has allegedly burdened other civilians, as well, particularly the professionals - doctors, lawyers, etc. - whose numbers were greatly reduced in the interest of reawakening the country's agricultural heritage. Thus, the new brand of socialism has forced doctors into farmwork and demanded a certain level of militarism from all civilians. Hundreds of thousands of South Vietnamese opted to leave their homeland, trading their valuables for passage aboard all manner of boats in the hope of reaching friendlier shores. As has been well-documented elsewhere, a large percentage met their deaths at sea. Those who survived the sea crossings to Australasia, Malaysia and Hong Kong invariably suffered at the hands of pirates who stole their remaining valuables and added further degradation to their beleaguered existence.

By all accounts, the drama was real; although the language barrier prevents detailed reports from those living in Halton Hills, those questioned about these alleged occurrences at sea often nod their heads in silent agreement. Many of Halton Hills' refugees still have relatives in southeast Asia, some remaining in their own homes, some now in the refugee camps. Vu Mah, head of the small family

brought to Canada by Mr. Long's group, maintained strong concern for his brother and two sisters still in the camps. He has worked hard to arrange their own immigration here. **ENDURED ALL** Despite their hardships over the past year and a half and before, those refugees living in Halton Hills have endured admirably, adjusting well to life in Canada and, as mentioned, attaining varying degrees of self-sufficiency. Members of the various sponsor groups offered diverse reactions to The Herald's invitation to share their stories and those of the refugees with readers. Some offered full cooperation while others declined on the basis of a continuing fear that neighbors who do not understand their involvement in the refugee crisis might attack them verbally or otherwise. Still others believe it's simply too early for the

refugees to open up publicly. From the sponsor group based in Glen Williams, however, came the most delightful news item of all: Devane and Khammeng Muensaveng are expecting the arrival of their first child later this year. All involved agreed there can be no more fitting symbol of the refugee community's adaptability, successful resettlement and growth than the birth of its first offspring.

Majority of 'Boat People' families have reached goal of self-sufficiency

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that their second family, the Dangs from Viet Nam, "seem to be making out pretty good" since arriving in Georgetown in late January, following a nine-month stay at a refugee camp in Taiwan.

CLOSE CONTACT The sibling family is now self-sufficient, although sponsors are in close contact to help resolve occasional difficulties the family may have in adjusting to life in Canada.

Twenty-six year old Ha spoke conversant English even when he arrived in Canada and has been working at Varian as a technician since April. His 16-year old brother Hua and sister Thung, 15, have been in Burlington for much of the summer, taking extra courses to catch up to regular high school level.

Initially, the family had stayed with a family from the Church but will shortly move into an apartment closer to Georgetown District High School.

Another sibling couple is living in Ballinacree under the sponsorship of the Mountainview Baptist Church in Georgetown.

Quang Dong, 22, and his sister Nguyet used to live a fairly standard, middle class life in Hong Kong before coming to Canada. Quang worked in a small appliance factory and their father ran a flour mill.

GOOD SUPPORT With his job in Toronto's Chinatown area on Dundas Street, Quang is steadily getting himself and his sister more and more independent. Nguyet is looking for a job and spons-

ors are maintaining close contact with the family, providing good support.

One of the first signs that life is improving is the growth of a family. Devane Muensaveng is expecting her first child later in the year, creating a good deal of excitement among her family-husband Khammeng and his brother Vinay, 16, and their sponsors, known as the Glen Williams group.

Since arriving last Autumn, the Muensavengs have moved into an apartment on Mill Street in Georgetown. Khammeng is working at Sheridan Nurseries, while Devane is employed at Maple Lodge Poultry Farms.

The family has been taking English courses regularly since they arrived in Georgetown and Khammeng is looking forward to the day when he can begin training as an industrial mechanic. Vinay, meanwhile, will begin grade nine at GDHS in a few weeks.

DIESEL MECHANIC Nhuang Tang worked as a diesel mechanic in Ben Nol, a village located outside of Saigon, before coming to Canada with his family in October. Now, according to St. George's Anglican Church group co-ordinator Dr. Gerry Corbett, he is learning "everything" there is to learn at the plant in his job with Mold Masters Ltd.

Nhuang's wife, Nipsol, is trained as a children's teacher and is working at Maple Lodge. Two nephews who accompanied the Tang's overseas, 14-year old Guong Tang and his brother Loi, 12, will be attending school this fall.

The Tangs have adapted well to the language. Dr. Corbett reports. After three months, Nhuang has acquired "quite a knowledgeable vocabulary" and the family had been working on their English while at a refugee camp on Bi Dong Island, Malaysia.

The Tangs are now "very steady" financially and are communicating with other members of the family in Viet Nam who wish to immigrate to Canada.

Known simply as "Mr. Tsan", the 67-year old patriarch of the Tsan family sponsored by the Christian Reformed Church in Georgetown has fled various homes three times due to war.

LEFT CHINA In the last 30 years, Mr. Tsan has had to leave China, North Viet Nam and most recently South Viet Nam. He arrived in Canada in October with his wife, an older daughter, a son and a daughter-in-law, setting up an apartment on Main Street in Georgetown.

The Tsans are now fairly self-sufficient. Twenty-year old Ken Tsan is working for Outdoor Products in Brampton. His wife Sue and his sister Ann are employed at Maple Lodge. And like many other refugee families, the Tsans, says Christian Reformed Church Group refugee committee member Gay Dykstra "are coping quite well" with their new life in Canada.

The ten-member Phung family endured refugee camps in Indonesia and Hong Kong for almost a year before arriving in Canada late last Autumn.

The family was forced to sell all their gold before they could buy passage on a boat out of Viet Nam. But even before they arrived safely ashore to endure almost 12 months of refugee camps in Indonesia and Hong Kong, the Phungs literally had to strip the shirts off their backs to fuel the aging craft.

According to Das Sydney of the Acton Churches for Boat People, the Phung's sponsor, the family is "quite happy" in their new home in Acton. Now

an elderly couple, Hong and his wife Au-Nhuang, have passed on the breadwinning chores to two daughters: The Muoi, 24, and Sa Nu, 21, who work at Superior Glove Works plant in Acton.

SUMMER COURSE The Phung's oldest son, Siec Lung, 22, is attending an English language program at Conestoga College. Two girls - That Muoi, 19, and Bat Muoi, 18 and another son, An Luong, 13, are also studying English during the summer.

Summer lay-offs at the glove factory have meant a temporarily reduced income for the family, but the Acton churches group, composed of a number of churches in town and the Salvation Army, have maintained a fund for the Phungs.

The family sponsored by the Park Lifeline group in Georgetown (a private neighborhood organization in the Park Avenue area) has "come out of this awful thing very well", says group co-ordinator Mary Lou Brock. The group requested that the family members not be named.

A 37-year old uncle in the group speaks some English, and Vietnamese as well. A bookkeeper by trade, he is now working at Smith and Stone, supporting two teenage siblings.

The boy, Mrs. Brock reports, is "very ambitious, and would like to become a doctor". Apparently, he used to assist medics in the refugee camps the family stayed in before arriving in Canada. This summer he has been working at Halton Hills Refurbishing and plans to enroll in grade nine at GDHS in September.

His sister is working as an "au pair" girl. A number of sponsor spokesmen said that despite the long hours of work involved, the experience shared between sponsors and the refugee families was immensely rewarding and they would seriously consider sponsoring other families. At least one group has already been approached by the Depart-

Cable studio faces obstacles

Herald Special Halton Cable Systems Ltd. could have a long, difficult time pursuing its intention of building a new headquarters on property near Speyside.

Mayor Pete Pomeroy predicted the difficulties Wednesday after listening to planning staff and councillors tussle with the list of hurdles facing the company's application for an amendment to the official plan and for a Niagara escarpment development permit.

The company wants to locate a television programming studio, business offices and an affiliated servicing operation on Lot 15, Concession 2.

The land is zoned special policy area (11) hazard land-rural and the request is to change to commercial. It is in the NEC development control area and therefore Halton Hills zoning won't have any force. It is up to the NEC to grant approval to the project.

The site is also under the jurisdiction of the Halton Regional Conservation Authority who would have to issue permission in order to have fill placed in the site, Coun. Roy Booth, who sits on the NEC, told council the commission had already decided against the application pending comment from council. He said the commission is unlikely to change its mind on the application.

When council voted down a staff recommendation against the application, Mayor Pomeroy recommended that council tell the NEC it is too soon to make a final decision.

He also called for a public meeting to hear neighbor concerns. Mr. Vesdittl said he had concern expressed verbally by several residents.

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