

# Merry Christmas

From the Publisher and the Staff of  
**The New Tanner**

Your *Actonian* connection for **Great Savings!**  
RAM • DODGE  
JEEP  
CHRYSLER  
*Call Phil*  
**GEORGETOWN**  
CHRYSLER • DODGE • JEEP • FIAT LTD.  
**905-877-0149**  
www.georgetownchrysler.ca

**THE NEW Tanner**  
Your Hometown Newspaper  
News stand Price 40¢ + GST  
Volume 19 No. 51  
Thursday, December 22, 2016

**ACTIVE**  
GROUP  
**GROUP ACTIVE. IT'S A GROUP THING!**  
ACTON'S PREMIUM FITNESS STUDIO  
**LOCAL MOTION**

## Church sponsored Syrian refugee family finally arrives in Acton

By: Harry Rudolfs

They're finally here. After almost a year of waiting, the Syrian refugee family sponsored by the St. Alban's Refugee Resettlement Committee arrived at Pearson Airport last Thursday night.

A handful of committee members were on hand to greet the Hassan family after they cleared immigration. They were met with a banner that read "Welcome to Canada—Welcome to Your New Home."

"There were hugs and smiles all around," said Tauni Sheldon, a member of the welcoming team. "You could see they were very tired."

The young couple and their four young children had been in the air for 20 hours journeying from Amman, Jordan, with a stop in Istanbul, Turkey. To complicate things, they arrived in Ontario during an early winter blizzard. The Hassans were given Canadian flags, pendants, and warm Canada logo toques, which they immediately put on.

"It was a big joy for everyone. It was great to see the happiness on their faces, although they seemed bewildered by the

weather," said Rev. Brian Galligan, "The seven year old boy was so excited with the moving sidewalk, he kept jumping on and off, while the little five year old girl was fascinated with the airport vending machines."

Councillor John Hurst brought his seven-seater van so the family could stay together, while the rest of the group followed his taillights through the snowstorm. Upon arrival at their new home in Acton, the family was greeted by other team members who were waiting with coffee, tea and finger foods. According to committee chair Pam Sheldon, "Tired as they all were, they had to be oriented to their new home so they would feel safe that first night. So, it was a very late night for everyone—like 1 a.m."

The young family's arrival is the result of a process started by Rev. Galligan back in January of last year. Galligan is retired now, but at the time he was the parish priest. "We were talking to the congregation about whether they would want to welcome a refugee family to Acton," he said. "They took a vote



Councillor Jon Hurst (left), Ahmed Ali (interpreter), Hassan family: Mom, Dad and the four children, Rev. Brian Galligan - St. Alban's Church (retired), St. Alban's members - Pauline Russell, Tauni Sheldon, Albie Sheldon and Barbara Smith. - Submitted photo

on it and the support was overwhelming. The only criterion was that we wanted to take a family that was most in need."

A committee of about 30 people was formed that worked with the Anglican Niagara diocese to get the process started. The refugee family was identified soon after. "We've been talking to them on the telephone through an interpreter every two or three weeks," said Galli-

gan. "In the interim, they'd managed to leave Syria and get to Jordan."

At the same time St. Alban's refugee committee swung into high gear collecting furniture and renting a house for the expected arrivals. "Halton Hills Furniture and Appliances donated a stove and other people donated a washing machine and dryer, and cribs for the two year old boy and one year old girl," added Galligan.

"The community involvement was fantastic."

Amer Hassan, father of the family, expressed his gratitude to the Canadian government and his sponsors in Arabic through his translator Ahmed Ali. "We are happy beyond expression that we have finally arrived in Canada and left behind all the worries of an uncertain future."

Committee chair Pam Sheldon thinks that the next steps are getting the

family started in ESL classes and getting the two oldest children enrolled in school for January. She also has a team willing to help orient the family to community living and activities. "It will be a long slow, but immensely enjoyable process for everyone involved," she said. "Up until three weeks ago, we didn't know when they were coming. This really has been a Christmas miracle."



**Helen Mclean**  
905-691-8934  
HomesByHelen.ca

**iProRealty**

iPro Realty Ltd. Brokerage

#1 BROKERAGE IN ACTON

IT'S WORTH THE CALL... 905-873-6111



CHRISTMAS GREETINGS  
and Best Wishes To Our Clients &  
Colleagues for 2017

**SHOP LOCAL**  
SHOP SMALL. SHOP BRANTON ILLS.



**Liza Carr**  
416-508-6339  
LizaCarr.ca

Helping you take the first steps home!

\* based on MLS stats for most units sold and dollar volume 2015