

FAMILY SO HAPPY TO BE IN CANADA

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GFORCe-2 (Georgetown Friends of Refugees Committee-2) a group of local Presbyterian, United, Catholic and Anglican churches working together to bring Syrian refugees to Canada.

"When I heard there were people in Canada that wanted to sponsor a Syrian family, that was crazy to me," Elias said.

While Elias and Mirna were thrilled to get the news, in Canada, helping out turned out to be tougher than expected.

GFORCe-2 had been presented with profiles for a number of families.

"It was awful to have to

choose," said the committee's Elizabeth Ivany.

For Elias and Mirna, they had to make the difficult decision to come to Canada and leave their parents behind (Mirna's mom is still in Syria).

Elias and Mirna's first-ever flight took them to Cairo in August, where Mirna was happy to board a larger plane to complete the journey to Toronto.

"I'm so happy we came to Canada," Elias says. "Wherever we go, everyone is welcoming us."

The couple got to play the role of welcoming committee last month when Elias' parents joined them in Georgetown.

"When we got a mes-

sage from the Canadian embassy that our papers were ready, (my wife) started to dance," said Samir Hajjah. "We still don't believe it. Is this real or is it a dream?"

Under the terms of their sponsorship, GFORCe-2 must provide financial support for the family for a year.

Elias has found a job with an Acton construction company while Mirna is taking English classes before looking for work.

Two fundraisers are planned: a pancake breakfast at Norval United Church on Saturday, March 28 from 8-10:30 a.m., plus a concert of church choirs and the Georgetown Bach Chorale on June 6 at Holy Cross.

"We're very grateful," Elias said of the local group's efforts to bring them to Canada. "Without them, this would have been impossible."

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Time: 10:00 am - 1:00 pm
Location: Premier Equipment, 8911 Wellington Road 124, Ospringe

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