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**New Beginnings**



**Home Is Where The Heart Is**

By Kinjal Dagli Shah

Asif Khan landed in Canada with not just his family tucked away inside his pocket was a return ticket for all of them.

"It was 1990, and I wasn't sure if we would like it here," said Asif. Twenty years later, he and his wife, Mumtaz, are enjoying their new home in Stouffville, while their five children have all found spouses and had children of their own.

"That's how life is; you never know whether you'll like it until you experience it. I still miss my country, but my children are here so this is home," explained 76-year-old Asif, who hails from Hyderabad, India.

Asif worked as a farmer in a village near Hyderabad for most of his life, before migrating to Canada. "I still miss tending to my land," he said.

But farming has been replaced by a host of other activities, and you see evidence of that all around the home. Brocade slipcovers adorn the couches and chairs in the living room, and beautiful henna patterns on the backsplash tiles give the Khan residence a regal look.

"She stitched all the covers herself," said Asif, indicating his shy wife. "The henna was done by my eldest daughter," said Mumtaz, eager to shift the attention away from herself.

Mumtaz is also famous among relatives and friends for the mango pickle she now bottles and sells.

"I make it at home. It gets sold by word of mouth," she said. The many boxes of pickle jars in her kitchen show just how popular her concoction must be, even as it serves to preserve a slice of their culture. At the same time, the Khans are only too happy to mix in with the larger community.

"We don't worry too much about our grandchildren not picking up our language and culture," said Asif. "When our entire extended family gets together, with first and second

cousins, we number nearly 300 people," added Mumtaz, "so our grandchildren end up being familiar with our customs." She and Asif are currently awaiting the arrival of their thirteenth grandchild.

When the Khans' four daughters and a son aren't visiting with an army of toddlers, the couple watch TV and walk around the neighbourhood. "It's a peaceful town, but we're yet to fully acquaint ourselves with it," said Asif.

When they do, this warm-hearted couple are sure to make many more friends.

Write to Kinjal at [kinjal.dagli@gmail.com](mailto:kinjal.dagli@gmail.com).



Asif and Mumtaz Khan relax in their new home in Stouffville.

Tip No. 2

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