

New Beginnings

Philippine Family Settles In Stouffville

By Kinjal Dagli Shah

Myla Cabrera (left) moved to Canada with her family in 1999. She is seen here with twin daughters Kyra and Kyla and their older sister Camil.



A skeleton springs out of the Gabreras' front lawn and a vampire hangs over their porch, signalling that they are Halloween enthusiasts.

But their residence is anything but scary. Myla and Arnel Cabrera have made themselves at home in Stouffville along with their four daughters: Chesca, Camil and twins Kyra and Kyla.

The Cabreras were first drawn to Stouffville because of Arnel's brother, who had already discovered the beauty of the town. "We visited my brother-in-law often, and ultimately decided to move here too. It's a really peaceful town," said Myla, who works as a dental hygienist.

The children, however, were less enthusiastic about the peace and quiet. Camil, who's 18 and has to travel a fair distance for college, is only now appreciating all that the town has to offer.

"I didn't want to move here from North York initially because I didn't think it would be a great place for teenagers. It didn't seem well connected. But once we moved, I got used to the surroundings and the commute. I like our new home but I wish they would improve the public transit," she said, admitting that she still misses the spontaneous trips to the mall and the freedom to hop on the subway at any time.

The Cabreras moved to Canada from

the Philippines in 1999, leaving behind some family and many friends. "It was for the kids – just like everyone else who comes to Canada for better opportunities," said Myla, admitting that it's hard to bring them up the same way she would have back home.

"We try and follow the same customs but at the end of the day you have to give the children the freedom to choose because they have been brought up here. Looking at the larger picture though, the couple are happy with their decision.

"We're okay here, and are enjoying Canada despite the cold weather. My husband misses the Philippines much more and would love to visit every year but it's too expensive," said Myla, adding that it is perhaps Arnel's large family that keeps him more attached to his home country.

"Arnel is one of 10 siblings, and even though eight of them, including himself, are in Canada, he misses his friends and siblings back home," she said, laughing. It is perhaps the large family here that keeps the Cabreras going.

"When we were in North York, we had family get together nearly every weekend. It gets a little difficult now because we have moved farther away but we still make it for most occasions. And we're still happy to have moved to Stouffville," said Myla.

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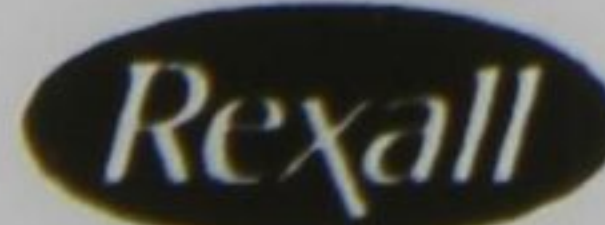
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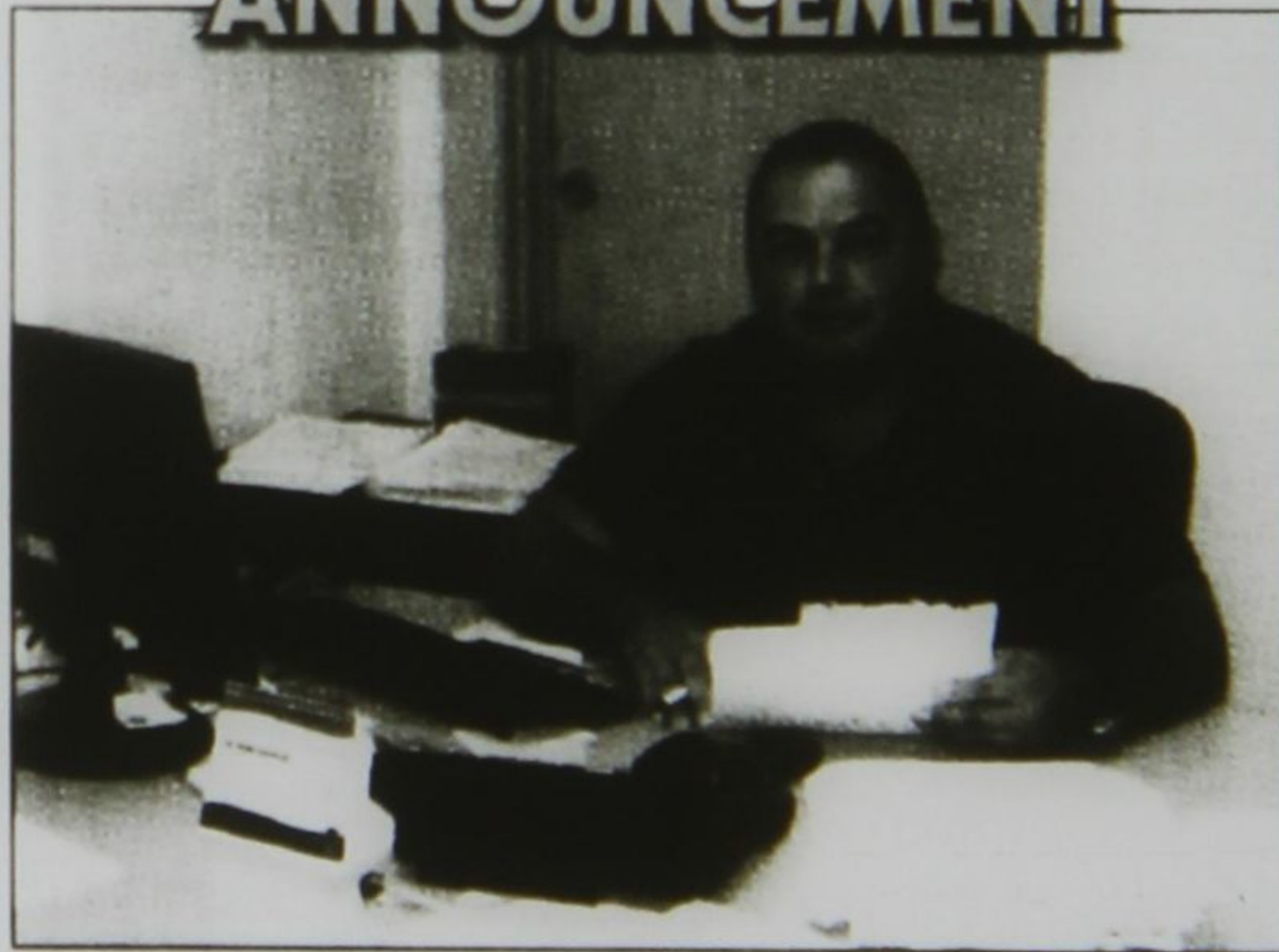
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