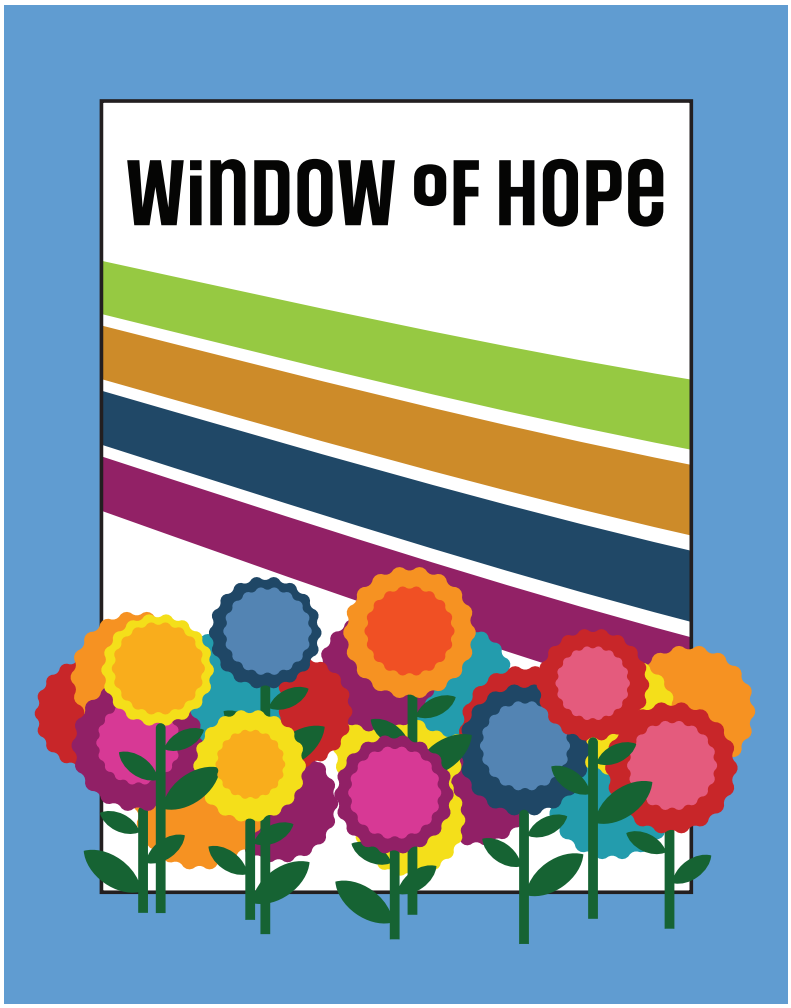
# WINDOW OF HOPE



*Newcomer Reflections 2026*




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Window of Hope
Newcomer Reflections 2026

IMMIGRANT SERVICES Guelph-Wellington

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We would like to express our gratitude to the newcomer and immigrant participants who shared their thoughts about settling in Canada; and to our staff facilitators for creating a space where participants felt comfortable sharing their stories.
THANK YOU!

**Welcoming Week** is celebrated annually in September across Canada (and around the world), to bring people together and show that everyone belongs, no matter where they come from.

It's a time to celebrate diversity, friendship, and community.

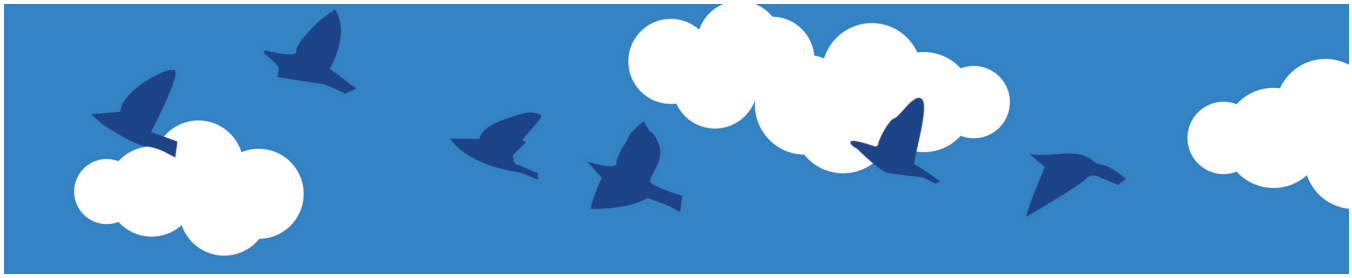
The theme for Welcoming Week 2026 is "Stories We Share: The Courage to Connect". When we stay curious and open to one another, we find the stories that remind us we're not navigating this moment alone.

With this theme in mind, three groups of Immigrant Services clients - newcomer youth, Tigrinya-speaking women and Vietnamese-Canadian seniors - came together to share their stories, wisdom, and advice on topics such as arriving in Canada for the first time, experiences settling in Canada and dreams for the future.

Participants were inspired by the following quote:

*Hope is not merely passive wishing; it is an active, living force.*
*It acts as an anchor in times of darkness,*
*allowing us to find purpose in suffering and look toward the future.*
*It transforms our perspective,*
*reminding us that we can endure and overcome hardship.*
- *Unknown*

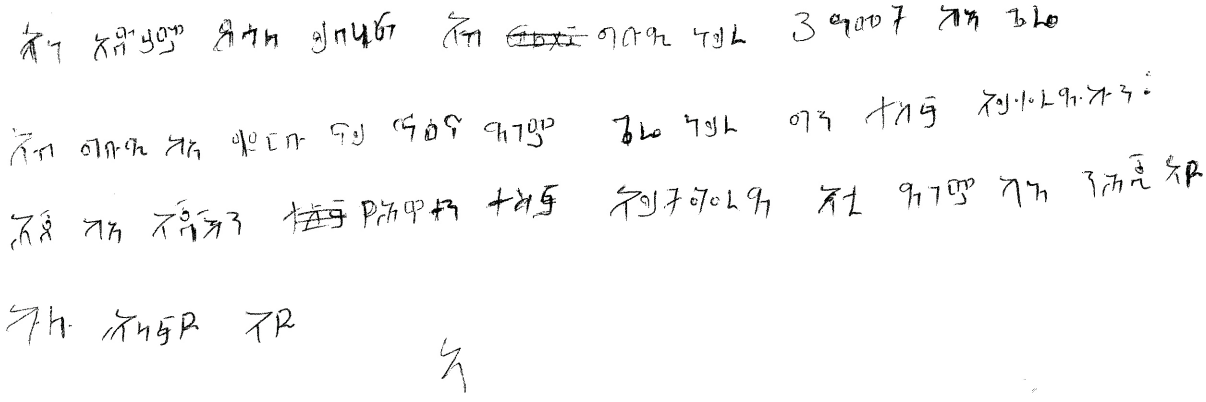
We thank all participants who had the courage to share their personal experiences so beautifully. Their work has been compiled here with the hope of letting newcomers know that they are not alone, they are part of a vibrant, caring community and that while we are all individuals, we are not so different after all.



## Thankful

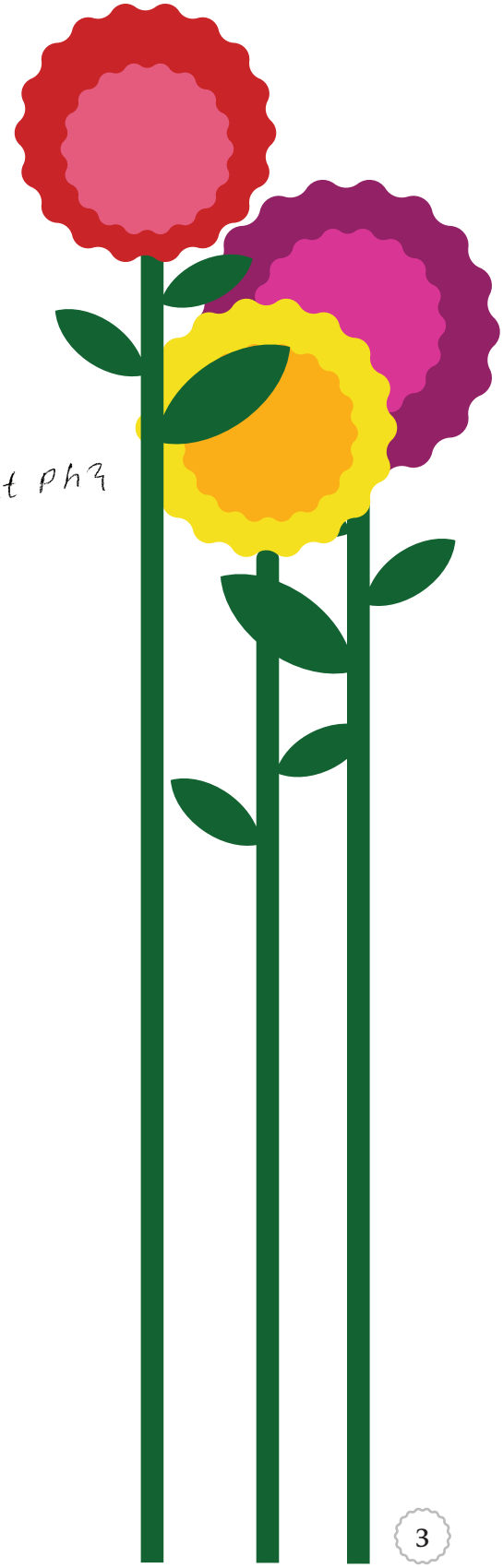
“I lived in Egypt as a refugee for three years. When I first moved there, I experienced a major health problem and became very sick. It was a very difficult time, especially because I had no family support. However, hope was what kept me going and helped me get through those challenging times.

Do not lose hope. You are stronger than you think, and you can through difficult times. No matter how hard things may seem right now, remember that everything will pass. Hold on to hope and believe that better days will come.”



If you are not thankful,
you will never be fulfilled
Provision of Journey
Guiding Light

"Without going through hardship, comfort will not come, and you may not truly appreciate it when it does. Everything is temporary, so do not lose hope. Difficult times will pass, and better days will come."





## Experience, Harmony, Finance

“There is no person who goes through life without facing difficulties, and there is no hardship that lasts forever. Life is not always easy, but if you remain strong and patient, everything will eventually pass. Difficult times are temporary, and brighter, more peaceful days will come.”

ተ ተስፋ ተመነጥራ

ሰ ሰንፈ

ፋ ፈሃያነንሰ,

ወንጽሰብ ዘሃ ሕማዮችነን ዘሃመጬ ሕማር ችነን,
ገብ ቅችም ቀኪ ሚንጣር ችነን ወንን ገነን,
ወመጪታን ሃ-ኮ ሃችኪ
ሕማር ወገዘችዋ ገኪ,
ወገቴ ራሃዝዋ ሃጠገዝ,



Hope

**H**ope gave me a new life.
**O**nce I had no job but now I have work.
**P**raise God for helping me everyday.
**E**very day I am thankful and happy.

One day my life changed.
Peace fills my heart because God is with me.
Every day I thank God for His love.
Every day I keep believing.
Every new day is a blessing.

## Canada and Many Hopes - Thi Mai An

First, I want to thank Canada for welcoming me, my parents, and my nine brothers and sisters to settle in Ontario in September 1978, through the sponsorship of Bethel Mennonite Church in Elora.

I am grateful to the people who sponsored our large family and cared for us with love, kindness, and generosity. They supported us in every way—spiritually, physically, and financially. Through their love and care, we were able to leave behind the worries, challenges, hardships, and uncertainty we had experienced while living in a refugee camp.

We found peace and many new hopes for our lives in Canada. We had left everything behind and started from zero. We learned English through ESL classes, found jobs, and continued our education.

I love Canada—for its land, its people, its way of life, and the way people treat one another. I am grateful that God has blessed Canada with such a vast, rich, and beautiful land, abundant in natural resources, with magnificent mountains, lakes, rivers, and four distinct seasons.

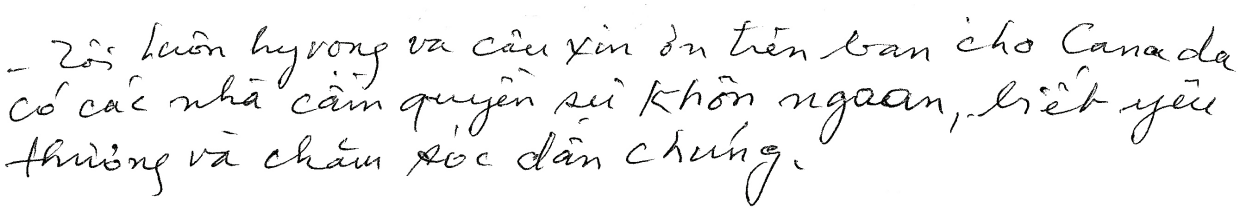
I love the Canadian people for their politeness and kindness. I often hear people say, "Excuse me!" and "Thank you!" and I see them hold doors open for one another.

My hope is to see future generations of young people continue to learn, care for and protect this country and its natural environment, and continue to discover, invent, and develop the resources and opportunities that Canada provides.

I always hope and pray that God will bless Canada with leaders who have wisdom, compassion, and a genuine desire to love and care for the people.

I am thankful to Canada. I am content and at peace living here. Although there are still many challenges and difficulties, I believe that, in time, they will pass.

I love Canada! ♥



## Hope for Love - Guelph, August 7, 2026

Dear Friends of the Future Generation,
I am writing this letter at the age of 50. My family and I have been in Canada for four years. I am writing at a time when life in the world is changing every day, and we face many challenges—from environmental issues to the growing distance between people. But beyond all these challenges, I continue to believe in goodness and in the power of connection and love.

I hope that when you read these words, the world will have become greener, cleaner, and more peaceful. I hope you will no longer have to worry about pollution, wildfires, or war, and that you will live in communities where people share, respect, and love one another.

I hope that we will always preserve and protect the natural environment that God has given to our beautiful country of Canada—a country that people around the world dream of calling home.

There is a saying in the Bible: "Faith, hope, and love." Of these three, love is the greatest. Therefore, no matter what time or generation we live in, I hope that you and I will always cherish and preserve love.

To me, the hope in our lives is that love will continue to spread and be shared. It can help us build a future world filled with hope and goodness. The family is a small part of the world, and within the family, love is deeply needed. When we have love, we have hope, faith, good health, and peace.

Do not lose heart when someone among us faces difficulties, because love, hope, and faith can always begin to grow, even in the darkest places.

We who are living in the present are working every day to nurture love for your future. May you always choose love, courage, hope, and happiness, and may you help make the world—and Canada in particular—brighter and more filled with love.

With warmest wishes,
A Day from the Past
Van Ho

Đừng nản lòng nếu ai đó trong chúng ta gặp khó khăn, bất hạnh, yêu thương, hy vọng niềm tin luôn ngự trị những nơi tối tăm nhất

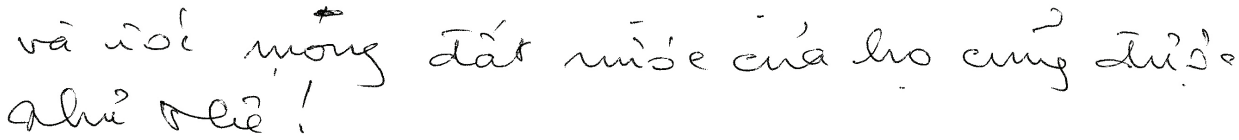
## My Hopes at Seventy - Nhien An

I am 70 years old. My hopes are simple: to have good health, to live each day with joy and peace, to be able to move around independently and help my children and grandchildren whenever I can.

I hope to be a good citizen and set a good example for the generations to come.

I also hope that the country we live in will continue to be a place where people can live happily, peacefully, and with a sense of contentment. I hope that when people hear the name of our country, they will admire it and dream of one day setting foot here.

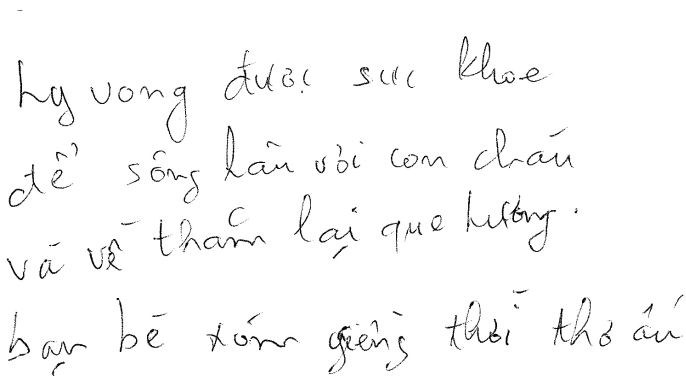
And I hope that their own countries can also become places where people can live with the same happiness, peace, and hope.




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## Chon Nguyen

My hope is to stay healthy and live a long life surrounded by my children and grandchildren, and one day return to my homeland to visit the friends and neighbors from my childhood.



## A Welcome to Canada



Dao Hoang
Guelph, August 7, 2026

Hello to All the Newcomers,
I have been living in Canada for 26 years.

I was fortunate to find work here, and now that I have reached retirement age, I am grateful to have the support of my retirement benefits.

I love Canada because this country has given my family a good life. My children and grandchildren have had the opportunity to go to school and find work in different businesses and workplaces.

People here work hard and follow the laws of the country.

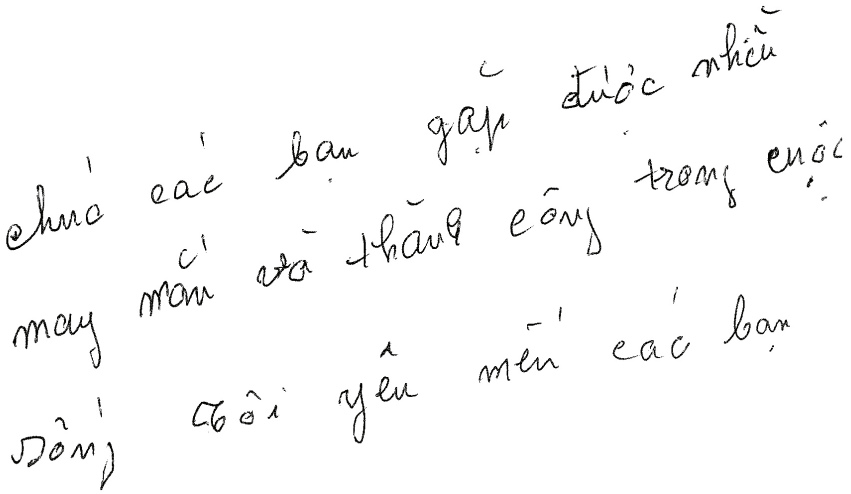
To all of you who are new to Canada, I hope you will find work that suits your abilities and brings you fulfillment.

I hope that you and I will have the opportunity to meet, get to know one another, and become friends.

I wish you good luck and much success in your life in Canada.

I welcome you and wish you all the best.

With love,
Dao



## Hope for Peace - Nga Truong

My hope is for peace.

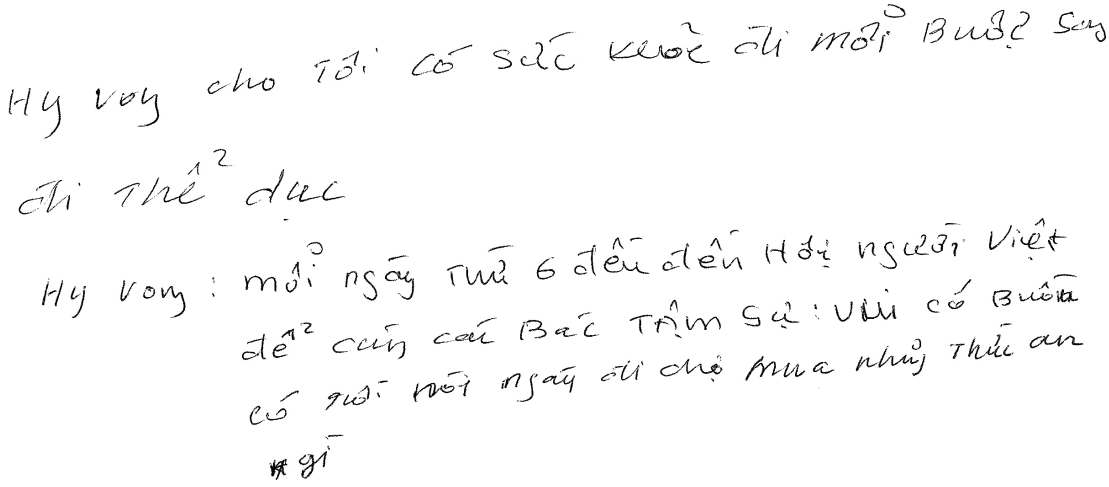
I hope to be kind and helpful to my neighbors and to everyone around me. Throughout my life, my hopes have changed. When I was young, I had different hopes, and now, as I grow older, my greatest hope is for peace.

I hope that my loved ones who are far away will be safe and at peace.

I hope for good health for myself and for the other seniors, so that we can exercise every day and stay healthy.

I hope to come to the Vietnamese community gathering every Friday, where we can spend time together, share our joys and sorrows, and support one another.

And I hope to continue enjoying the simple routines of everyday life, like going to the market to buy food.



## Lai Truong

My hope is that my family and children here in Canada will be successful in their studies and careers, find good jobs, and have happy families with many children and grandchildren. I hope to have a good job and good health, and to live a happy life surrounded by my children and grandchildren as I grow older.

Now that I am older and retired, I hope to stay healthy and live a long life. I hope I can continue to do meaningful things, help my friends, and contribute in ways that are useful to others.
I hope my family will continue to thrive and have a happy and successful life.

Thank you.
LAI TRUONG

Bây giờ tôi già rồi về hưu nhưng hy có sức khỏe để sống lâu. được làm việc gì để giúp đỡ bạn bè có ích lợi cho công việc tốt gia đình thành công rất tốt đẹp
xin cám ơn !!.

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## Sanh Tran - August 7, 2026

Our hope is that our children and grandchildren will succeed in their studies and have good health. We wish the same for everyone.

My hope is that all Vietnamese people living away from Vietnam will have lives filled with happiness and joy.

Sanh

Hy Vọng của chúng tôi là con cháu học thành tài và có sức khỏe tốt và chúc tất cả cũng vậy.

## Lam Xuan Thanh

Hope is something truly precious on your journey through life.

My hope is to see my children and grandchildren grow and flourish, and to see my grandchildren do well in their studies and achieve their dreams.

May my family always be healthy and joyful, and may we always have peace and happiness.

Hy vọng là điều độc nhất vô nhị trong cuộc đời của bạn
gia đình chứng kiến con cháu thành công thành
cháu Học giỏi thành tài

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## Mui Le

My hope is that my children and grandchildren will succeed in their studies and in life. I hope to have good health and to live a long life surrounded by my children and grandchildren.

Hy vọng của tôi, con cháu, học hành tài,
Hy vọng, có sức khỏe, sống với con cháu,

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## Hope for Health and Family - Nhut Le

My hope is for good health, a happy family, and for my children and grandchildren to do well in their studies and grow up to be kind and good people.

I pray that my family will always be happy, peaceful, and safe.

và cầu cho gia đình khỏe mạnh
Bình an

## Tuan Nguyen

My hope is for better health and a good life.

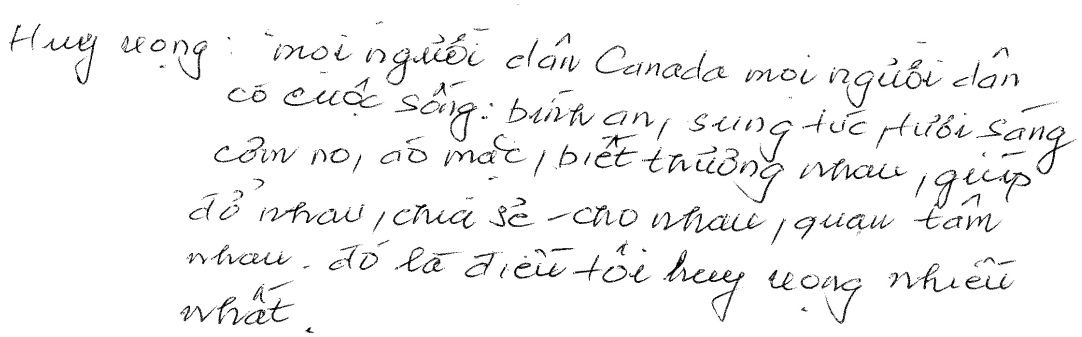
I hope my family will have good health, peace, happiness, and enough to live comfortably without having to worry about basic needs.

I hope we will love and help one another, and that everyone can live in peace and enjoy good health.

I hope my children and grandchildren will be healthy and free from illness, do well in their studies and grow up to contribute to society and their country.

I hope that families and people everywhere will love and help one another and live together in harmony. As we grow older, I hope we can remain clear-minded, healthy, and free from illness, with peaceful minds and a love for life. I wish the same for everyone.

Most of all, I hope that everyone in Canada can live a peaceful, secure, and fulfilling life—with enough food, clothing, and the necessities of life. I hope we will know how to love one another, help one another, share with one another, and care for one another.



## Hope Looks Different - E. Nguyen

Family: I hope all my family have good life, healthy, happy

Good health: Healthy is TOP of our life. Without healthy we can not have good life. If you want healthy you have to do: - Get education (go to school) to learn everything to support your health. By yourself: Exercise everyday, play sports, enjoy outside activities, eat healthy food, no smoke, no alcohol.
You have a good job if you have high level education (college, university) Which country you living you have to respect the laws of that country, involve in community you living. Work, volunteer, help people (donation) get along with your friendly neighbour.

Experience by myself: I have been in Canada 46 years. Now I'm 85 years old but I proved my health. Exercise everyday (at least 30 minutes) play sports and enjoy handyman job around my home and garden.

Our family are very lucky. All three my children had good life. High level of education, healthy and professional job. 3 my sons keep doing the same my hope!

Finally, Thank you Canada;
I hope all new IMMIGRATION have good life in canada

August 07 - 2026



Dear reader

There Was times when you gave me hope When I needed.
And Will remember those days, the first time I saw, you, were
kind and helpful to people around you. am so happy I mete some
one like you thank you for every thing. Wishing you all the best.

Thank you
for every
thing



Dear Reader,

There was a time in my life when I was looking for hope when I need help at school to ask a question and you help me ask. Also you give me a lot of ~~confident~~ compilments and that makes me really happy.

You also

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Dear Reader,
First coming for to Canada I am scared and happy. My cousin help me. First is I don't speak English. My cousins help me and support. My first school is I am scared and nerves. My teacher help me and support. Thank you my teacher.

Daer Reandr

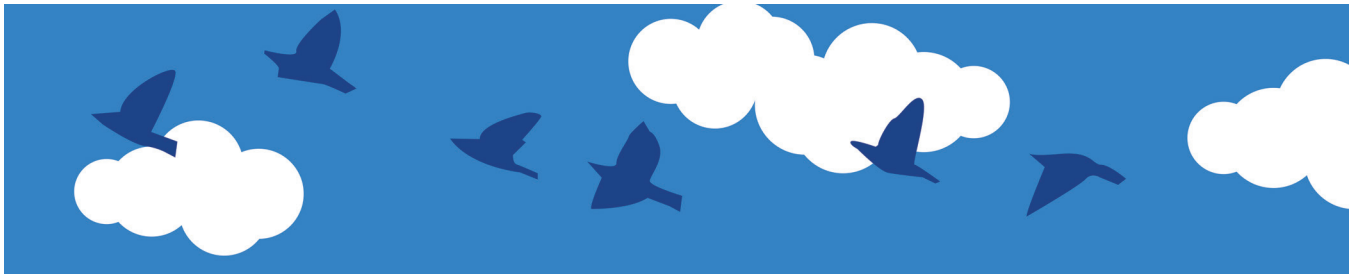
~~frist~~

frist coming for to canad:s~~a~~ I am skeard and heppy. ~~my casin~~ ~~my casin help~~ me first is I don:t speek English. my casisn is help me and support. ~~f:rs~~ ~~goo~~ my ferst school is I am skear and nerues. my teacher help me and support ~~thae~~ theankyou my teacher.

Dear Reader

There was a time in my life when I was looking for hope when I am stuck and is in the need of motivation. And my friend helped me with that when I first came to Canada. She helped me with finding my desk, my locker and showing me around the school. That is how she help me and because of that I became succesfull!

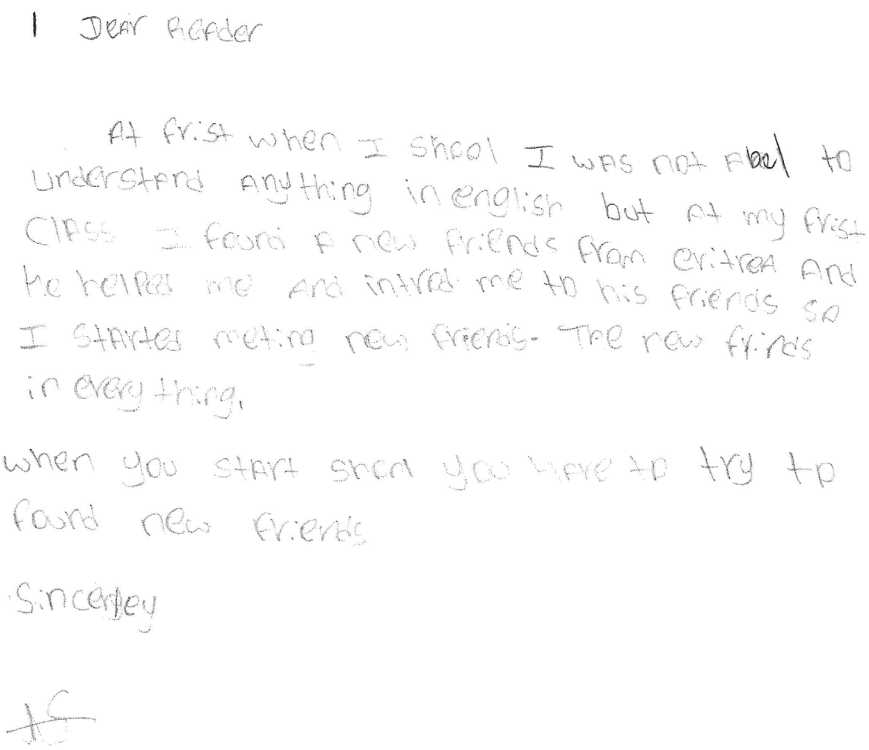




Dear reader,

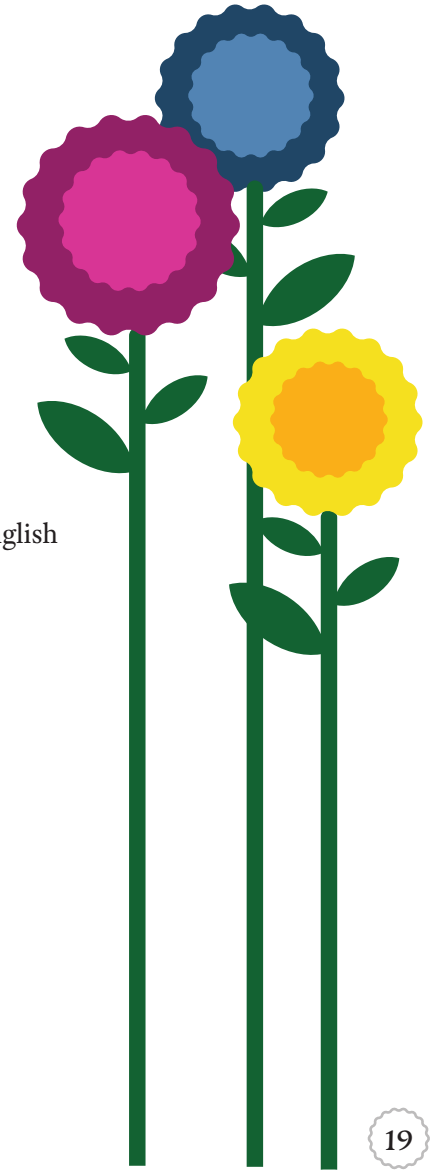
One of the most thing i don't like is leaving everything and evergone behind and move to other country. It is the most hard thing ~~to~~ do in life even if life was not good, ~~in the place~~ because i have people that i love so much who live in that place. Saying goodbye feels like ending my life and hopless. i have been to ~~#~~ sour country before coming to Canada and i have shed my tears multiple times seeing my family and friends waving their hands. It is the worst feeling and wish i have the power to stop everything and go back. I have faced a lot of challenges when i was new and i belive most of us have gone through it. Everything is challenging when we are new and it makes us stressed and lose hope. As a person who has gone through these challenges i would love to tell you everything will be okay. Believe in yourself, don't be afraid, try new things, talk to the people you trust and be hopeful. I believe i will see and meet the people i left behind and i will make it happen. I would love to thank all my family, friend and people who helped me especially God and my mom. Be positive ♡

Sincerely



Dear Reader,
At first when I went to school I was not able to understand anything in English but at my first class I found a new friends from Eritrea and he helped me and introduced me to his friends so I started meeting new friends.
The new friends are everything. When you start school you have to try to found new friends.

Sincerely,
TS





Dear Reader,

The first days in School was very difficult when I was a new comer. ~~A~~ At school everyone was friendly, but nobody was able to talk to me because I can't understand english & they can't speak my language, but a girl named Moriah tries to understand me, she tries to include me in her conversations with her friends and be my partne in all presentations & assignments even though I don't help her much. This experience taught me to make everyone feel included, ~~and~~ which can give them hope like it did to me. My advice to you is doing ~~small things~~ good things to people even if they are small can give them hope and can make a big difference in their life.

Sincerly,

Dear Reader,

There was a time in my life when I was looking for hope, it took me some time then I realised that all it took was some time to feel a sense of peace and tried again and again to overcome it. If found hope with the assistance of my friends and family. This experience taught me that I should sort out whatever problem that I may have, by asking for help. My advice to you is that, It may seem challenging at first, but with a bit of guidance and support, you'll make it through any situation that comes your way.

Sincerely,





Dear Reader,

Canada is a Safe place and a warm home.
You feel Secure, and Canada is not just a city, it's a place of dreams.
Also, I received great Support from my family and Friends.
I Found hope through my family and Friends.

كان هناك وقت في حياتي كنت ابحث فيها عن امل حين ايقنت أن الأمل ليس بانتظار، بل الاستمرار في السعي.
وجدت الأمل من خلال عائلتي واصدقائي هم الذين قدموا الدعم لي.

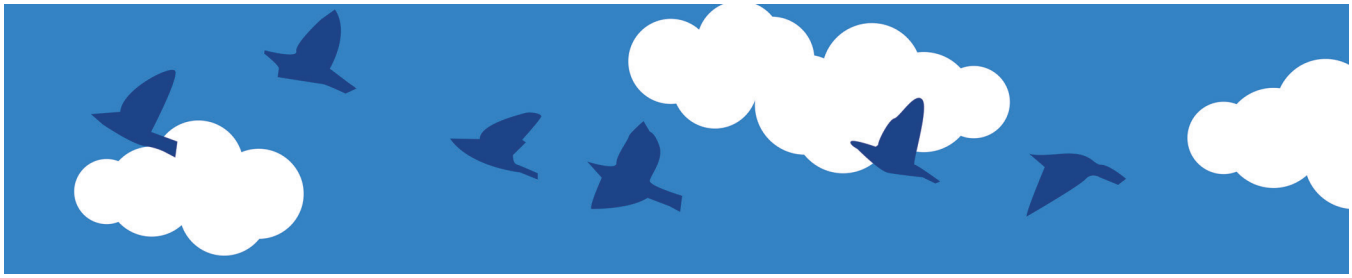


There were times in my life when I was searching for hope, waiting for it to come to me. Then I realized that hope is not something that simply waits for us—it is something we discover along the way. Sometimes, we have to keep moving forward, even when the path is difficult.

I found hope from different sources—small moments, meaningful connections, kindness, and experiences that fed my soul and gave me the strength to keep moving forward and continue to give.

This experience taught me an important lesson about human relationships: sometimes, we find hope through the people we meet, the connections we build, and the kindness we share. We may not always realize the impact we have on one another, but even a small act of compassion can give someone the strength to continue.

كان هناك وقت في حياتي كنت ابحث فيه عن امل جيد
ايقنت أن الأمل ليس بانتظار، بل الاستمرار في السعي.
وجدت الأمل من ~~خلال~~ خلال عدة مصادر تغذي الروح وتدفع
الإنسان للاستمرار. لقد علمتني هذه التجربة درس في
العلاقات الإنسانية.



Dear reader

The first time I have to go to canada, my family were always there to help me if I ever need help. so don't be afried to ask for he

Asking for help taught me that if I ever need help to just ask, you don't have to be afried to ask Teacher or your family for help.

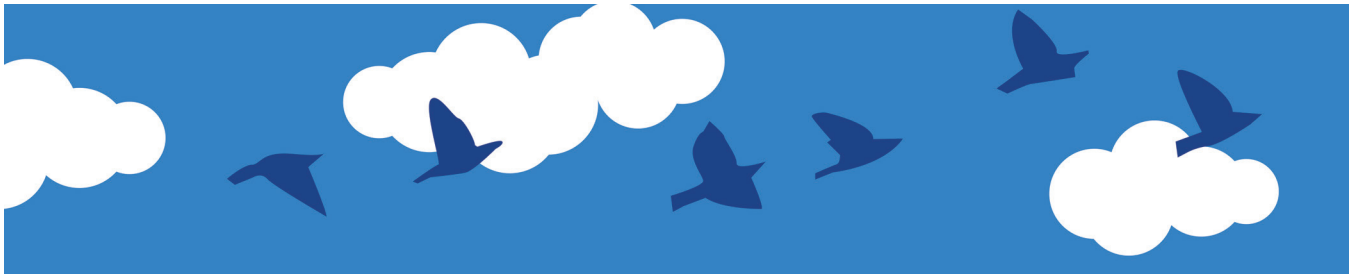
my advice for you is to always ask a teacher to help you understaind a work sheet if you ever need help, or you just don't understaind. And always ask your classmet for help.

Sincerely:



Dear Reader,
The first time I have to go to Canada, my family were always there to help me if ever I need help.
So don't be afraid to ask for help. Asking for help taught me that if I ever need help to just ask.
You don't have to be afraid to ask teacher or your family for help.

My advice for you is to always ask a teacher to help you understand a worksheet if you ever need help or you just don't understand. And always ask your classmate for help.
Sincerely,



Dear Friend,

I hope you're doing Ok, I am writing this letter to let you know that there is always ~~a~~ way to solve things. When I came to Canada I thought there was no one to help me, but over past few weeks I feel like I have never been this lucky. It's all about these Respectful Volunteers. So what I want you to do when you're facing a problem go and share with someone. It will help more rather than sitting in a corner of your room.

Sincerly

S.

Dear Reader,

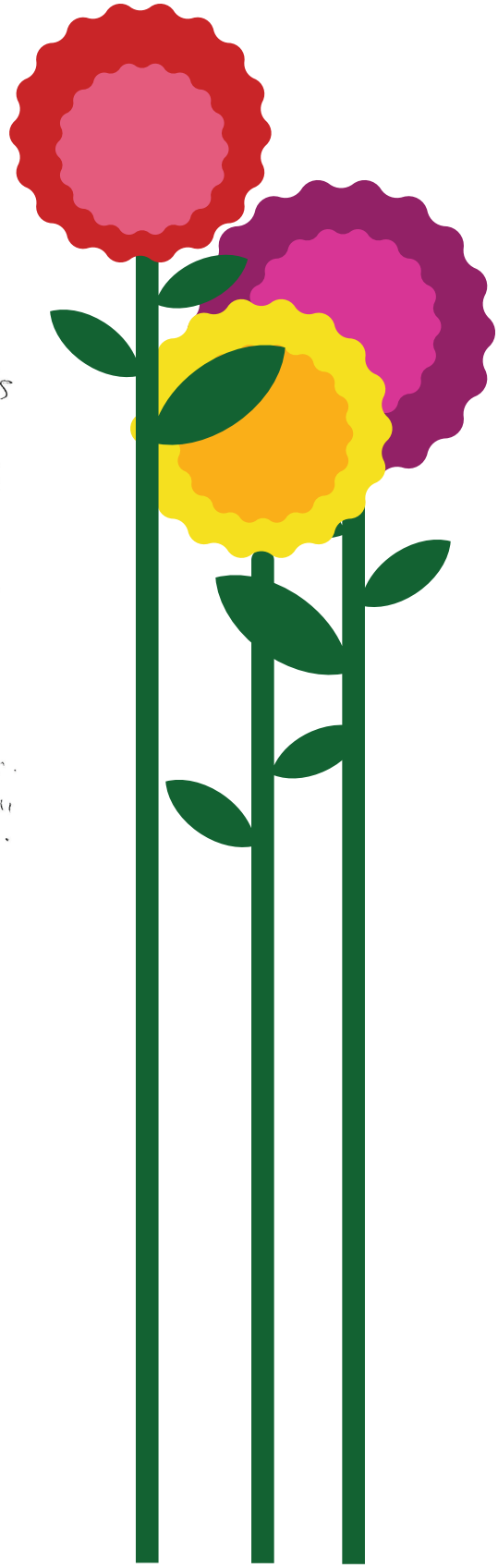
There was a time in my life when I was looking for hope, I had just started school after a 3 month Summer Break. The new teaching style was new to me and my parents hated it and was yelling at me all the time cause I didn't have homework or books 24/7. But I found hope through my teachers being supportive and helpful all the time. I also found hope in a friend I made 1 year later after arriving. They helped me build confidence and helped me get more friends.

This experience taught me... "Something".

And my Advice to you rs don't give up thing "will" and "can" get better

Yours Sincerly

"Someone"

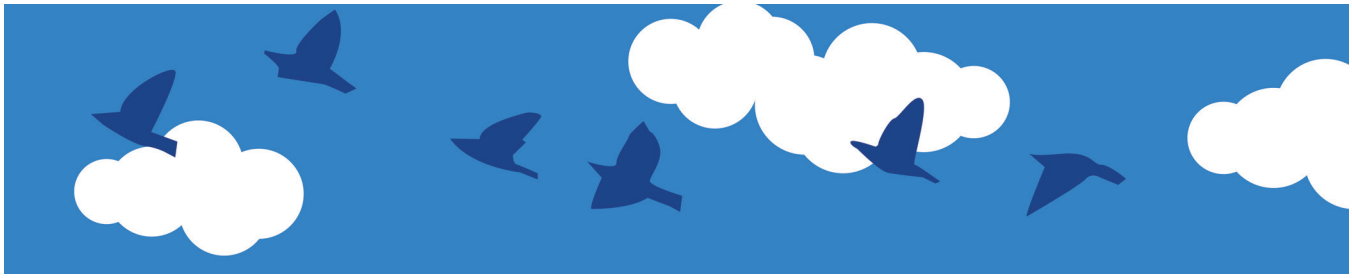




Dear Tyori,

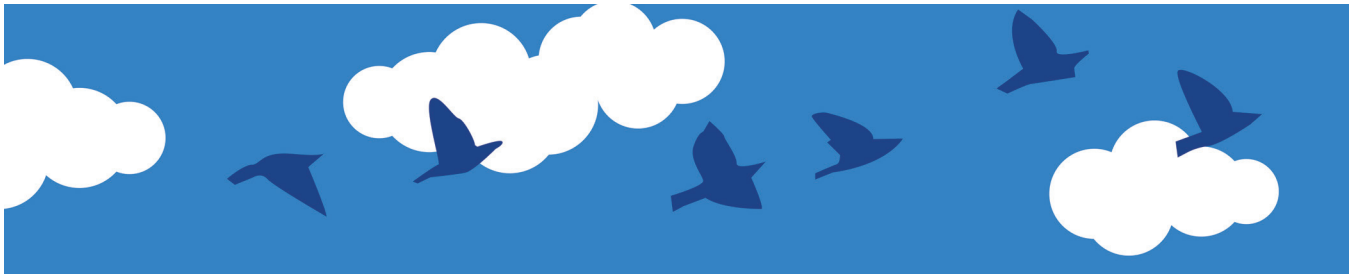
There was a time in my life when I was looking for hope is that to become the best in my furture and that was my family and friends were are supporting me. So when I was a newcomer to Carada and when I go to school I was not feeling good because the background I had was something diffrerent from the school I was. So the only one was helped me was Tyori she was the only one kind to me at that school. I ~~fo~~ found hope through my family and friends My advice to you is feel confidence to ask your classmate and feel confidence to speak / talk make a friend that makes you comfortable.

Your lovely,



Dear

She is helpe me always and she
She is my friend
She is Comeing my home
She is helping translits English
She is studey me
I am comeing first day
She said hi and she is Coming withe me
We are going school

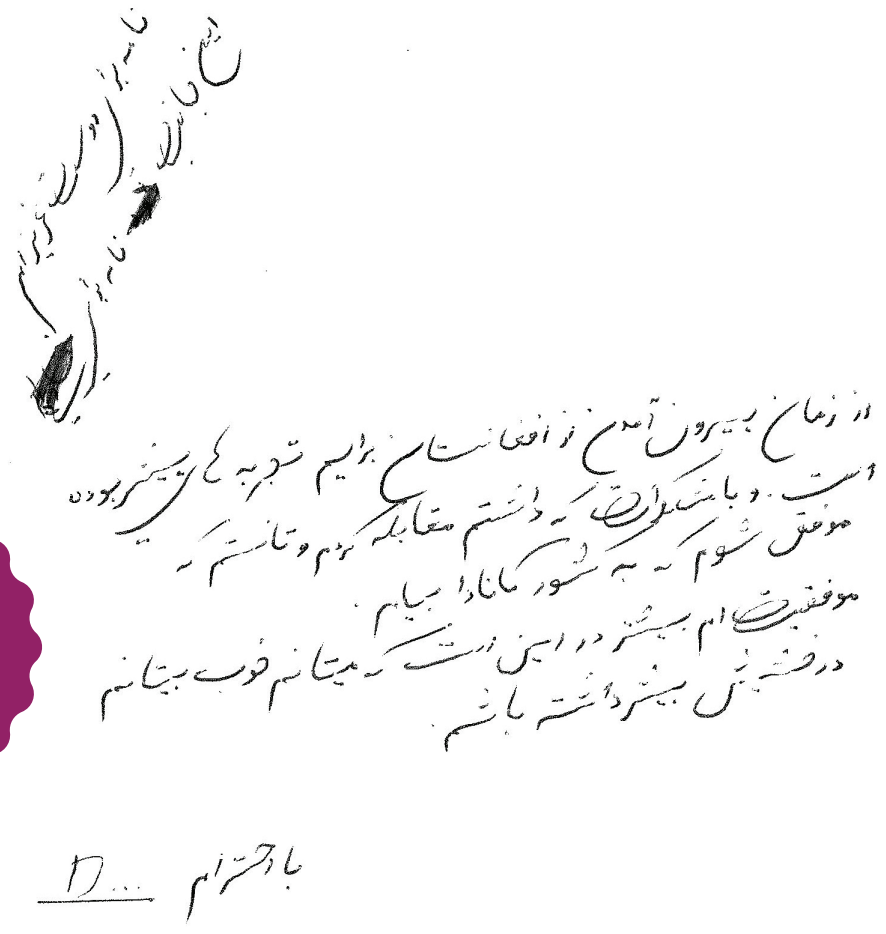


Dear Reader,

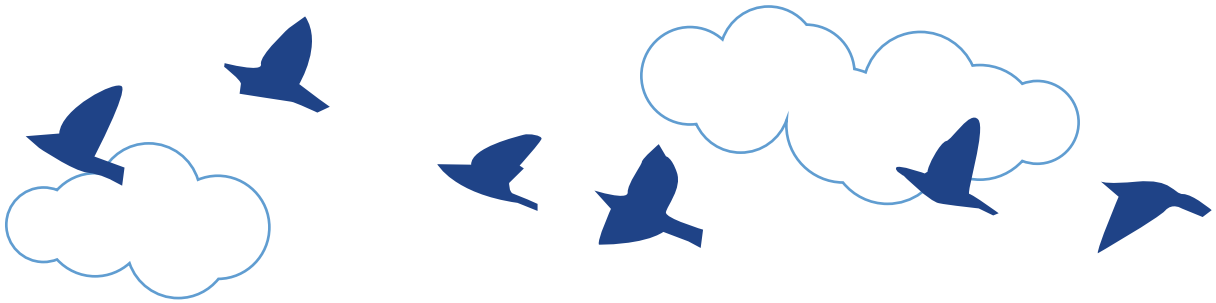
the first time I came to Canada it was really hard to get along with th people in my class, but I had a teacher who used a translater to understand. I also had a few people who helped show me around. At that time n school didn't have a lot of people who spoke my language, there was onl 2 and they both don't know the language very well. So my advice to you is no matter what don't give up, ask for help the teachers there are meant to help you not make you feel like your not importinon. If you don't understand something ask because there are other students in your class who have the same question but they don't know how to ask it.

Sincerely, S





Dear Friend,
Since leaving Afghanistan, I have been through many new experiences.
I faced the challenges and difficulties along the way, and I was able to
overcome them and successfully make my way to Canada.
For me, true success is about having the opportunity to grow,
to become stronger, and to let myself shine even brighter.
Sincerely yours,



IMMIGRANT SERVICES
Guelph-Wellington

104 Dawson Road, Unit 102
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