



Welcome Home Page

Refugee Housing Community Newsletter

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Never Too Old!

Susan Fish

When Aaron Schmidt was four years old, his family came to Canada as refugees. They struggled with learning a new language and adjusting to a new culture. This October, at the age of 81, Aaron rode 26 kilometres in the Ride for Refuge in Niagara, and helped raise more than \$25,000 for Welcome Home.



After a serious biking accident 20 years ago, Aaron knew his wife would only agree to him cycling if he raised funds for Welcome Home. He trained under the watchful eye of his daughter/team captain Joy and experienced pre-ride nerves after a bout of stress-induced shingles.

However, as he said to his daughter Sharon who works as Welcome Home's Program Director, "I had signed up because I felt God wanted me to do this so I was very confident that God who started the good work would see it to completion!!"

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Persecuted

Aitifa with Sharon Schmidt

My name is Aitifa*. I am thirty years old. I am from Eritrea. I would like to briefly explain my background.

I started to attend a Pentecostal Church in 1996. The name of my church is *Church of the Living God*. I sang in a choir group there from 1997- 2007.

All Eritrean Pentecostal churches were shut down because the government said this religion is from outside our country. Only Orthodox and Catholic and Protestant churches could continue.

From that day, the only churches they closed were Pentecostal churches. The government started to take Pentecostal leaders to the jail one by one. So, we continued worshiping by meeting in different homes. Even there, if somebody knew we were Pentecostal, and heard us singing and praying, they would report us to security. This is the situation in our country at this time.

In January 2007 the leader of my church was taken to the jail. They found all the lists of our church people. Because of that I had to change my address for a while. We began to meet underground, in a hole. A foreigner owned this land, and allowed us to meet there.

After that I paid someone to help me escape to Cairo. It took one year for my refugee claim to be recognized by the UNHCR. It took another three years of waiting for the Canadian government to

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Tidbits

An active summer full of new experiences helped our refugee friends

- Learn more about Canada
- Heal a bit more
- Make new friends
- Learn English conversationally

Camping at Guelph Lake



A young refugee exclaimed: "Just like in the movies!"

Canoe Trip Up North



BBQ in the Park



Hike in the Woods



Thank you The Meeting House-Waterloo, Elevation, and Glencairn for helping make our summer memorable!

News

Good-bye and Hello

Welcome Home bid a grateful farewell to Marcee Groen, after 22 months of 24/7 support to refugees.

At the same time, we eagerly and gratefully



embraced Sara Leo as her replacement - our new Female Supervisor.

Bursting at the Seams

This summer we barely had time to clean a room before it filled up again. It's been unique to have two families with small children join us, changing the look and feel of our blended family in many great ways.

'Old?' Continued...



Aaron's wife was his biggest cheerleader in his fundraising and during the ride. His extended family, friends and neighbours responded generously to his personal requests, donating over \$1000. He says, "It was exciting to start out with

70 riders who all had a purpose for riding that morning." The cyclists rode into a 40-mile-per-hour wind and experienced a delay when one cyclist fainted. (She completed the course the following weekend.)

After the race, Aaron had no ill effects. He said, "I was beside myself with exhilaration. There were cheers as we entered the auditorium. We felt so good to have done something so meaningful." Aaron isn't sure whether he will ride again next year- he doesn't want to impair his ability to help his wife - but he enthusiastically says, "Right now, I would go [do it again] tomorrow!"

'Persecuted' Continued...

bring me here. I have been living at Welcome Home since April 2011 and hope my husband will soon be able to join me. He is still in Cairo.

When I was in Cairo, I worshipped God very well freely, but my youngest sister was left behind in an Eritrean jail because of her faith. I am always crying and praying for her. I feel bad when I remember her. She has been in jail for five years at this time.

God gives me strength. Really, I am okay

by His grace. When I see her letters from prison, it makes me strong.

Please pray for all Eritrean Pentecostal believers that are in jail. God Bless You and Your Nation.

*Name changed to protect her family.



260 King St. E. Kitchener, ON N2G 2L1
Email: welcome.home@iteams.ca
Web: welcomehome.iteams.ca
Telephone: 519-568-8696

Donate online at welcomehome.iteams.ca. Cheques can be made payable to "International Teams" designated to "Welcome Home" Send to: International Teams Canada, 1 Union St. Elmira, ON N3B 3J9. Tax receipts will be issued by International Teams Canada. (www.iteams.ca)