



# Welcome Home Page

Refugee Housing Community Newsletter

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## An Intense Learning Experience

Scott Cressman

Living at Welcome Home for the past 20 months has been a life-changing experience. Sharing one home with up to 15 other people comes with its challenges, when dirty dishes pile up or babies are crying through the night. But it's also a beautiful picture of God's family coming together.

In theory, I'm in the home to help our residents learn how to live alone in a new country. In reality, though, these



refugees have taught *me* a lot about faith and strength.

I have heard so many refugees praise God, despite their lonely circumstances. "God is good!" one Congolese mother would say with a big smile each time a volunteer helped provide infant formula for her young family. As refugees, residents are nearly powerless in their new country. Maybe that's why some of them look so faithfully to God for their daily help. Could I adopt the same attitude?

My compassion for newcomers has

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## Free to Flit

Sara Jane

If you glanced through the windows of our house, you might miss Mawahib altogether. She often flits in the front door and flies out the back like a butterfly with a very full social life. If you focus on the dynamics between the people in our house, however, then you will see that Mawahib makes an unmistakable impression.

A wonderful cook, it is easiest to net her in the kitchen, where she loves to be in constant connection with everyone who

comes and goes through Welcome Home- washing dishes, sharing food or asking questions. Always quick with an answer or a laugh, she replies, "Peace!" and "Weather!" when questioned about the *best* and *worst* parts of her life in Canada.

Mawahib has become good friends with Carolyn, a volunteer from Elevation. Her favourite memory is when they conspired over tea to trick a supervisor and pulled it off beautifully.

Looking closer reveals a very different picture. Originally from West Sudan, Mawahib fled to Khartoum, working as an assistant cook in a hotel, and saving enough money to escape to Syria. She spent more than a year in Syria, waiting to be accepted by Canada as a refugee.

Mawahib says the people here are not

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# Tidbits

## Year End Update

**2011 Budget:** \$143,000  
**Income:** \$144,165  
**Expenses:** \$146,251

# Thank You!

Donors, hosts, movers, cooks, cleaners, bike riders, and prayer partners!

### Lessons Learned:

As our Advisory Group leaders network together, they are enriched and inspired with practical new ways to love refugees through their communities, at Welcome Home and in their neighbourhoods.

### Looking Ahead:

- Hire a Program Assistant
- Golf 2012– June 7, 1-7 pm  
32 golfers, more advocacy, 15 sponsors, raise \$5000+
- Africa Learning Trip, March 21-April 5– equipping our Director



15 Teams,  
135 riders,  
7 locations,  
\$26,393 for 2012!

### Our Mission

To provide short-term housing along with emotional and spiritual support for refugee new arrivals.

### Our Goal

To develop partnerships with local churches who will welcome refugees in the Name of Jesus.

## IMPACT!

- Bethany EMC
- Calvary United
- Elevation
- Glencairn MB
- The Journey
- The Meeting House-Waterloo
- Stanley Park Community Church

## DONATED

- Winter clothing
- Umbrellas
- Oil, sugar, rice
- Laundry soap and TP
- Baby clothes, diapers
- Children's books, toys
- Gift cards
- Bus tickets



## July-Dec 2011

- ♦ 206 people interacting
- ♦ 25 refugees from 7 countries
- ♦ 38 volunteers (9 newly trained)
- ♦ Hikes, BBQ, fire-works, swims, camp, canoe, scrapbook, baby shower, bowling, baking and making new friends!

### 'Learning' Continued...



changed. I now understand so much more about how the difficulties of picking up your life and moving it to a strange new place. I'll never again pass an Ethiopian, Congolese, or Colombian stranger on the street without wondering about the story behind the face- What

troubles and hardships made this person come to the unfamiliar land of Canada?

I've been invited to enjoy countless tasty (or sometimes strange) meals made by a refugee, eager to share. Isn't that the table where would Christ be? He IS present with the volunteers, staff, and residents at Welcome Home. He's offering an English lesson, graciously cleaning up a mess, or lending a sympathetic ear to someone who misses her family. Most importantly, Jesus might just be a loving presence, showing care while sitting quietly with someone.

That's not always easy, but it's what I want to emulate, at Welcome Home and beyond.

### 'Flitting' Continued...

like those she's known before. They help her, showing her how life is going to be and how to be strong. And because of this, being on her own as a young woman is much easier here than in Syria.

*"Canada is a peaceful place with beautiful and lovely people, Welcome Home is my family, and Canada is my first home."*

Simply thinking of her family in Sudan, however, is enough to make Mawahib feel very alone in a house crowded with people she loves. *"Sitting still and think-*

*ing would make me go crazy!"* Staying busy, having a conversation, making someone laugh, or having a cry makes her feel better. And it comforts her that God is close, that he knows before we are born how our lives will be, when they will be hard and when they will become easier.



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Donate online at [welcomehome.iteams.ca](http://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](http://www.iteams.ca))