

# 2021 Waterloo Region Newcomer Landlord Award



Waterloo Region has always welcomed immigrants and refugees. The Waterloo Region Newcomer Landlord Award recognizes landlords that go above and beyond to provide affordable housing solutions for recent immigrants and refugees.

The winners of the 2021 Newcomer Landlord Award show how landlords are helping to create a caring community that supports newcomers. The stories of how they and past award winners provide innovative, flexible, affordable and caring housing solutions for recent immigrants and refugees are shared at: [www.immigrationwaterlooregion.ca](http://www.immigrationwaterlooregion.ca).

## 2021 Newcomer Landlord Award winners

### Narine Dat Sookram

Narine is passionate about helping people settle and succeed in Waterloo Region and beyond. He migrated to the region 20 years ago. He knows how difficult it can be to establish in a new place as a newcomer. He has dedicated part of his life to helping many newcomers overcome barriers like finding a safe place to live even in these pandemic challenging times. For instance, he recently accommodated a newcomer family in his own home until they were able to find a suitable and permanent place in the region. He also spent time with this family virtually to help them find employment and teach them the basics of integrating into a new community. Narine has always worked to make our community more equitable and inclusive for everyone through his work as a social worker and a licensed diversity and inclusion trainer. "I hope more individuals are encouraged to open their doors to help because this can make all the difference," says Narine. Although his work has been recognized with the most prestigious awards such as the Canada's Top 25 Immigrant Award, the Newcomer Champion Award from the Ontario Provincial Government, the Waterloo Civic Honour from the City of Waterloo and many others, his greatest reward is the grateful smiles of the families he has cared for, which gives him great satisfaction.

For information about how you can provide housing for newcomers contact:

Waterloo Region Immigration Partnership  
519-575-4757x3171  
[ImmigrationPartnership@regionofwaterloo.ca](mailto:ImmigrationPartnership@regionofwaterloo.ca)  
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## HIP Developments

HIP Developments generously offered Reception House the use of one of their apartment buildings for the temporary accommodation of refugee families. COVID has had a particularly strong impact on settlement service organizations like Reception House. In times of pandemic, their temporary accommodation with shared bathrooms, kitchens and living space for refugee families does not follow the public health restrictions to prevent the spread of the virus. Thanks to HIP Developments' generous offer, Reception House will be able to expand their capacity to house clients in temporary accommodation. Families will each have their own apartment unit where they can also quarantine safely. Families will also each have their own full kitchens, bathrooms, and plenty of space to relax and unwind after a hard day's work of long resettlement appointments and meetings. "HIP Developments is proud to play a small role in helping newcomers to Waterloo Region find a safe and stable home as all of life successes stem from this most basic necessity," says Scott Higgins, President of HIP Developments. HIP Developments went above and beyond to offer their properties at a below-market cost to a local non-profit. "They have been incredibly supportive of our mission to give refugees a warm welcome," noted Emma Jennings, Manager, Resettlement and Housing, Reception House.

## Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church

Through its HOMES Program, Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church creates and advocates for affordable homes for low-income individuals and families in Waterloo Region. Knowing that affordable housing has a positive impact on the prosperity and wellbeing of communities, they offer medium-term housing (ideally 2-3 years) for individuals and families needing some support as they get their feet on the ground, and work toward longer-term housing. For example, Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church owns five properties immediately surrounding the church property, of which two of those properties currently house refugee families from Syria and one is being rented by a local family that recently lost their home in a fire. At the remaining two properties, the HOMES program has been working with the House of Friendship to provide affordable, supportive, dry housing for people going into and coming out of addiction treatment programs. Laura Enns from Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church reaffirms this organization's commitment to building a welcoming and supportive community for all: "we are currently reviewing the HOMES program and evaluating if there are ways that we could be better stewards of the land and better address the increasing need for affordable housing in our community."

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