

2024 Waterloo Region Newcomer Landlord Award

The Waterloo Region Newcomer Landlord Award recognizes landlords who go above and beyond to provide affordable housing solutions for recent immigrants and refugees, fostering a caring community that supports newcomers. Explore the inspiring stories of these award winners, and their innovative, flexible, and affordable housing solutions for newcomers & refugees at:

<https://www.immigrationwaterlooregion.ca/thisishome/>

2024 Newcomer Landlord Award recipients

- **Ashley Schuitema & David Martin**

Ginikanwa Ibeabuchi found supportive and caring landlords in Ashley and David. “They are GREAT landlords,” Ginikanwa says. During their time as tenants, Ginikanwa highlights how accommodating and responsive Ashley and David have been to their needs. From addressing maintenance issues to assisting with landscaping, they’ve consistently shown their dedication. They even went above and beyond by providing information about tenants’ rights and gifting a grocery card at Christmas.

Ashley and David have significantly improved Ginikanwa’s experience as a newcomer to Waterloo Region. “Everyone deserves a safe and affordable place to call home. That’s increasingly difficult to find these days, especially for newcomers to our community,” Ashley explains. They emphasize that being a landlord is an incredible privilege—one that they take seriously. “We are fortunate to have them as our tenants. They are amazing people who are deeply committed to making Waterloo Region a better place.”

Ashley encourages landlords to commit fully to their responsibilities and to treat newcomer families with the respect and dignity they deserve. They reflect on how this role can also be personally enriching: “You might find yourself making new friends, learning about different cultures, and trying delicious food.”

- **Manel Miaadi**

Turkcan Saylam found an exceptional landlord in Manel Miaadi. “As a young newcomer, I believe every newcomer needs to feel like they are part of their new home and community. I am so grateful that my landlord and her family have made me feel like we are a family,” Turkcan shares.

Manel’s motivation stems from her own experiences. “As a newcomer in 2018, I faced discrimination and barriers when securing rental housing. Those experiences shaped my resolve to create a more equitable environment,” she explains. Her professional work, including research on refugee housing challenges and her role as a Regulated Canadian Immigration Consultant (RCIC), further strengthened her commitment.

Manel encourages landlords to be fair and open-minded. “Most newcomers are seeking stability and a fresh start, and my experience renting to them has been overwhelmingly positive,” she says. By treating tenants with respect and giving them a chance, landlords can create meaningful connections while helping newcomers build a foundation in their new communities.

- **Peter Maxwell**

This landlord was incredibly considerate and compassionate when working with the YMCA to support a client who was behind on her rent. Peter reduced the rent to give the client some time to improve her financial situation. Additionally, he offered her a cleaning job where she was paid fairly, helping to cover the rent payment. After a few months, the client was in a better financial position and was able to keep the unit.

Peter explains his motivation for being involved in providing affordable housing solutions: “Our company, Maxwell Building Consultants, recognized the increasing need for more affordable housing solutions in our community and decided to apply our real estate development experience to help in a small way. We are pretty good at getting buildings built and have found success in working with community partner organizations that have clients in need of housing. One group in need are recent immigrants and refugees. There can be some process challenges and language barriers to overcome, but it is very satisfying to see our tenants blossom as they add new skills and confidence in our community.”

He also offers encouragement to other landlords: “The process for new immigrants and refugees is challenging and they are deserving of some help to navigate it. Securing a home is critical for so many other aspects of life such as a job, schooling, cooking, and building community. It can be very rewarding to have helped.”

We recognize and celebrate these landlords’ kind gestures of providing affordable housing for newcomer families to live and call Waterloo Region their new home. This is Home.