

# 2018 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 housing solutions for recent immigrants and refugees.

The winners of the 2018 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).

## 2018 Award Winners

### Abhi Sankar

Abhi Sankar works as a property manager for Northview Apartment REIT in Kitchener. In the past five years he has helped over 200 government assisted and privately sponsored refugees to find new homes in this community.

“Abhi is an amazing asset to our community,” says Zakim Tokhy, housing specialist at Reception House Waterloo Region. “Not only has he rented 50 units to our refugee clients in the last several years but Abhi approves refugee families very quickly and accommodates move-ins on any day of the month, realizing that our clients may not just need housing on the first of the month.” Abhi goes above and beyond to help newcomers – receiving refugee families in the evenings or even on the weekends. He is flexible and doesn’t mind helping in the moving process.

His influence goes beyond the individual refugees that Abhi is able to help. He often encourages others to rent to newcomers – highlighting how he has found refugees to be very responsible tenants. “Think outside the box and provide a helping hand when someone really needs it,” he urges others.

“Canada is a country that welcomes thousands of new immigrants and refugees every year,” Abhi says. “In one way or the other, everyone in Canada plays a role in helping new immigrants and I am really glad to be a part of a team that helps newcomers find their first home in Canada.”

## Whitehall Apartments

Whitehall Apartments consistently takes in refugee families to their Kitchener location. If refugees are looking for housing and Whitehall Apartments has space, they will reserve a place for them.

Ambika Opal, a volunteer who helped a refugee family find a home at Whitehall Apartments, noted that they “understand the position the refugee families are in.” She reflected that, “While other landlords required reference and credit checks and a current job, which are difficult for a refugee family in their first year in Canada, Whitehall Apartments requires none of this and is happy to welcome refugee families.” Sometimes it is the attitude and sense of welcome that is just as important as the housing itself.

Robert Kelava, President of Whitehall Apartments, is motivated “to give immigrant families an opportunity to start a new beginning.” He has found that new immigrants are respectful and hard working individuals and Whitehall Apartments has had no collection issues with them. “They treat our units like it is their home.”

Whitehall Apartments is a worthy winner of this award. Ambika points out that Whitehall Apartments “serves as a model of how to welcome people to our community.”

“In one way or the other, everyone in Canada plays a role in helping new immigrants.”

– Abhi Sankar

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

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www.immigrationwaterlooregion.ca

