

## 2023 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/>

### 2023 Newcomer Landlord Award winners:

#### Armando Camarata

Hussain Mahammad finds in Armando Camarata a supportive landlord. “Armando helped us in renting his house to my family without a credit check as I am new to Canada. He always talks to us in a pleasant way with all smiles. He makes my family comfortable. He repairs some of the house-related stuff without charging me. He always visits us and understands my family's difficulties. He is always supportive.” Armando has gone above and beyond with his tenants, and he appreciates them: “Hussain has been a great tenant. We will continue to help him and his family,” he says.

Armando will continue to make a difference for those calling Waterloo Region their new home: “My wife and I believe that helping those new to Canada is our way of supporting those looking for a new start.”

#### Bill Hall

After reading an newspaper article about how some refugees in Canada might have to return to their country due to challenges in obtaining suitable accommodations - the short supply and the fact they have not yet established a work history or credit rating - Bill reached out to Lisa Weiler, a former Landlord Award winner, to better understand what to expect.

Bill wanted to not only help, but also provide safe permanent housing for Ukrainians fleeing war. He had never done this before. “I am pleased to say I have a wonderful family living with me consisting of a mother, her 15-year-old son and her daughter in law. I am retired and it has been extremely gratifying helping them get established in Canada. They have permanent jobs on the afternoon shift at a local factory, a modest car to get them to and from work and are taking English language courses online. The young man is enrolled in high school, participating in extracurricular sports and has recently started a part time job”, says Bill.

Bill not only provided affordable housing to this family, he supported them with their settlement needs, job search, visa corrections and schooling for the kids to name a few. He helped them settle in Canada so they did not have to return to their country, which is at war. “My experience has shown me that newcomers to Canada are extremely motivated and hardworking. I am enjoying the culture they bring and

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the friendship we have developed. I encourage anyone that has the opportunity to provide short or long-term accommodations to newcomers, please do so. You will find it very satisfying and rewarding.”

### **Zain Valani & Nancy Morales**

Zain Valani and Nancy Morales remembered when they arrived to Canada, “Both Nancy and I are refugees, coming from war zones, decades ago, who were welcome to Canada, by generous Canadians, who helped us get on our feet.”

He and his wife have experienced themselves the challenges of being newcomers, this and the current worldwide situation, motivates them to keep supporting immigrants, “I don’t think one needs more compelling motivation to offer help, than to see, thousands of innocent people, women, children, elderly, and men, being displaced, due to political upheaval in their country. It speaks to your core, heart and conscience.”

Zain and Nancy have not only offered affordable rental units at a discounted rate to newcomers, but has also offered employment opportunities to them. They have helped approximately a dozen individuals over the spring and summer months and they continue to offer employment opportunities to those no longer living in his rental units.

They also partnered with the Waterloo Region Grassroots Response to the Ukrainian Crisis to create a 3-month short-term emergency accommodation. “We have coordinated with the local church and with Steph Goertz, of the Waterloo Region Grassroots Response (WRGR), and our experience has been a very positive one. They have really been amazing! I encourage you to do the same.”

As encouragement to other landlords, Zain and Nancy suggested more support from larger landlords, “We’ve seen many Canadians open their houses to these refugees. To the larger landlords: I ask that you offer 1% - 3% of your housing stock for recent immigrants and refugees, even if it is for 4 months or 6 months. This will give them a place to live, and an opportunity to get their bearings, and look for employment. We have also hired some of these refugees for employment around our properties with success.”

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.