



HUME CITY COUNCIL

STORIES FROM THE HUBS 2021

hume.vic.gov.au

A message from Hume's Mayor

I am delighted to present the Stories from the Hubs 2021.

The stories, the photos and the artwork showcased in this book represent the many different journeys that Hume Hub Participants have come from, their dreams and aspirations, their memories and celebrations. The stories have been collected exclusively for Refugee Week, with the consent of the authors to highlight the strength and courage that takes to restart a life in a new country. As the son of Christian Assyrian refugees from Iraq, this is a journey that members of my own family have taken, making Refugee Week very meaningful to me personally. The photos were taken for International Women's Day 2021 in the view of challenging the stereotypical cultural idea of women and their roles. The art works were produced and displayed to celebrate Harmony Day 2021 with the focus on the theme of Unity.

Hume City Council is honoured to support the Community Hubs project, helping women, schools and communities to connect, learn and feel valued. I acknowledge the work of the Hume Community Hub leaders, facilitators and participants who have worked tirelessly on the project to bring this book to fruition. I hope you enjoy it. Please share it with your families.



Cr Joseph Haweil
Mayor Hume City Council

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF TRADITIONAL OWNERS

Hume City Council recognises the rich Aboriginal heritage within the municipality and acknowledges the Gunung-Willam-Balluk of the Wurundjeri as the Traditional Custodians of this land.

Council embraces Aboriginal living culture as a vital part of Australia's identity and recognises, celebrates and pays respect to the existing family members of the Gunung-Willam-Balluk and to Elders past, present and emerging.



WHAT ARE COMMUNITY HUBS?

Community hubs are welcoming places where migrant and refugee families, particularly mothers with young children, come to connect, share and learn.

Hubs bridge the gap between migrants and the wider community, they connect women with schools, with each other and with organisations that can provide health, education, and settlement support.

HUME CITY COUNCIL'S HUBS:

There are 15 community hubs in Hume City. All the Hubs are located within primary schools and they provide programs such as playgroups, English classes, settlement information, social activities and health information.

To find out more about specific programs offered within the hubs, contact the hub closest to you.

Different languages are spoken at the hubs, please contact each hub to find out which languages are available.

Bethal Primary Hub

Eldorado Crescent, Meadow Heights
9309 7626

Broadmeadows Valley Primary Hub

Dimboola Road, Broadmeadows
9309 4066

Campbellfield Heights Primary Hub

Laurel Crescent, Campbellfield
9359 5502

Coolaroo South Primary Hub

52-72 Bushfield Crescent, Coolaroo
9309 1664

Craigieburn South Primary Hub

Hothlyn Drive, Craigieburn
9308 3133

Dallas Brooks Primary Hub

26-36 King Street, Dallas
9309 1181

Dulap Wilim Primary Hub

Charter Road East, Sunbury
9744 3377

Good Samaritan Primary Hub

1 Southern Cross Drive, Roxburgh Park
9308 6177

Holy Child Primary Hub

227 Blair Street, Dallas Brooks Primary
9309 1620

Meadow Heights Primary Hub

46-60 Paringa Blvd, Meadow Heights
9305 2033

Meadows Primary Hub

41 Gerbert Street, Broadmeadows
9309 2573

Mt Ridley College Primary Hub

2-30 Hampton Street, Craigieburn
8338 3600

Roxburgh Park Primary Hub

7/21 Almands Avenue, Roxburgh Park
9303 9335

Roxburgh Rise Primary Hub

Cnr Lockwood Drive & Blue Bird Way
9305 4334

St Dominic's Primary Hub

408 Camp Road, Broadmeadows
9309 4146



Introduction

The stories captured in this booklet are from participants attending one of the 15 community hubs located in Hume City.

In the spirit of 2021 Refugee Week theme Unity the following pages capture the personal accounts and those belonging to family members and share how the authors lives have been shaped by the refugee and migrant journey, the challenges and the rewards achieved while building their new lives in the new country.

Hub participants have also shared their stories and journey through their traditional and modern skills, producing incredible pieces of artworks (craft and photos) that express the concept of unity and explore the idea of Woman in 2021.

We hope you enjoy reading and discovering these precious stories, photos and artwork that the local community hub participants have generously shared in this book.

Hume City Council would like to acknowledge all the hub participants who shared their memories, their lives, their views and a bit about themselves.

READER WARNING

Some of the stories in this booklet may contain details and events that readers may find disturbing and/or may not be suitable for younger audiences, including violence and trauma.

Reader discretion is advised.

If you are feeling upset in any way please make contact with one of the following services:

Beyond Blue

1300 22 4636

beyondblue.org.au/

Embrace Multicultural Mental Health

embracementalhealth.org.au/

HeartChat Multicultural Mental Health

heartchat.com.au/

LifeLine

11 13 14

lifeline.org.au/

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The year 2009 my daughter and I, traveled from Eritrea to Sudan walking through mountains and deserts in hot weather. My daughter was wrapped around my back with a scarf.

After a while I saw a man with camels so I stopped by to get one camel I had to pay for the camels and I didn't have much, We got one a camel and took off to Shagarb camp which is for refugee people. We stayed for three months, after three months we got our yellow card.

My daughter got really sick and I couldn't find any medication, I illegally went to Kasala which is a city in Sudan. As soon as we arrived to Kasala I called my aunt and her son came to pick us up to their house.

I stayed in my aunt's house for six months, after six months my husband came to Sudan and we rented a house. We stayed for five years, and we had two boys. Then my sister in law sponsored us to come to Australia. After six months we got called for an interview and we passed the interview. Two months later we went to a city in Sudan called Khartoum and we waited for our procedures for two weeks. Then we flew to Australia and we arrived at my sister in law's house and we stayed there for one year and six months. I had a baby girl while living in my sister in law house. A month later the government gave us a house in the high rise buildings Carlton. The house had a problem with the water so we had to move houses and we got a house in Coolaroo and we are happy we feel safe here but I miss my family.

– AFRAH

Refugee Week Artworks



Biscuits
Jihar



Australia in wood
Hyrunnisa Abdul Ladeef



Rabbit
Athor



Blanket blue/white
Aysan Bashir



White blanket with flowers
Tugba Guler



Crochet blanket
Senay Guler



Baby Knitted Pink Dress
Huda



'Yolekhta' Dancing Scarf
Tressa



'Lauf' Bath Loofa sponge
Maysoon



Crochet table mat
Maysoon



Group Effort
Coolaroo South Primary Hub

“

Success at last. My happy opportunity, this is my story..

On April 10, 1999 my journey begins when I arrived in Australia. I was a mum of 5 children aged between 2 and 10. I struggled in my life a lot. It was a very difficult journey. I tried to open my businesses and study at the same time.

I educated myself. I had confidence in my abilities to be able to connect with families within the community. I was passionate about finding and starting work. I found a successful career in early childhood, having previously been a primary school teacher in my home country of Samoa. I'm very passionate about working with children and families. I have confidence in myself and I'm assured in what needs to be done. I can easily delegate with families and love connecting with people.

I volunteered in my community for 6 years. It was a unique and great opportunity to be able to expand my knowledge of the Australian people and their beautiful culture.

In 2007 I spent 6.5 years studying at night while working and raising my 5 children as a single mum. An opportunity which would not be available to me in Samoa. I love working with diverse people, and have found that with the people I meet, there is connection and mutual respect. Learning about different cultures, and extending my own, engaging in the community.

I had the amazing opportunity to be able to study in Australia. Having studied at Monash university, Melbourne university and Vic university, I studied brain development, special needs child services, leadership training, community services and a diploma and bachelor 1 in children services and care.

Currently I work in community broadcast radio and as a bi-cultural liaison facilitator. Its a great opportunity for me to be able to work with a wide range of diverse people, giving me the opportunity to explore my self and my language and culture through connecting in the community.

I explored Australia through dance and music, to showcase my traditional Samoan culture. My coordinator Maureen said she saw great passion and knowledge in me. She helped me to commit to myself and have faith in my abilities which gave me the success I have today.

I am extremely grateful to be surrounded by such encouraging,empowering and passionate people that helped me to become who I am today. Thank you to all the parents, children, volunteers and organisations that connected well with us and put me in the position to be able to give back to the community. Maureen helped me achieve my goals and be my best. Sayanti has been very encouraging and flexible and very confident in my nature to work with people. Thank you to Maureen and Sayanti for acknowledging my experiences and for your professionalism and encouragement and being a big part of what I call my success story.

– MARIA TUUA

Gerçek Dostluk Masalı

Günlerden bir gün, Alper ile ilyas adlı iki arkadaş çölde yolculuğa çıkmışlar. Yolculuğun bir noktasında aralarında bir tartışma başlamış, Alper, ilyas'ı incitecek şekilde konuşup ilyas'ın kalbini kırmış. ilyas bu duruma çok üzülmüş ama Alper'e hiçbir şey söylemeden kuma söyle yazmış;

"Bugün en iyi arkadaşım beni çok incitti!"

Sonra çölde yürümeye devam etmişler.. Çölde hava çok sıcakmış, ikisi de çok susamışlar. Çok geçmeden biraz ileride bir vaha görmüşler ve kosa kosa vahaya varıp su içmek istemişler. ilyas, su içmey yeltenirken ayağı kaymış ve bataklığa saplanmış. Tam boğulmak üzereyken Alper, ilyas'ın imdadına yetişip onu bataklıktan kurtarmış. ilyas bu defa sert bir kayaya söyle yazmış;

"Bugün en iyi arkadaşım hayatımı kurtardı!"

Alper, bu duruma çok sasırmış, ilyas'a sormuş;

"Seni incittikten sonra kuma yazdın, şimdi de bir taşın üzerine yazıyorsun, neden?"

ilyas cevap vermiş;

"Biri bizi incittiğinde, hafif bir rüzgarın silebileceği kuma yazmalıyız.

Ancak, birisi bizim için önemli bir iyili yaptığında, onu hiçbir rüzgarın silemeyeceği bir taşta kazımalıyız, asla unutmamalıyız."

ÖGÜT: Hayatınızda sahip olduğunuz şeylere değer vermeyin. Ama hayatınızda sahip olduğunuz kişiye değer verin.

– SHARED BY SERPIL, ROXBURGH RISE COMMUNITY HUB

True Friendship Tale (Translation)

One day, two friends named Alper and Elijah went on a trip through the desert. At some point in the journey, an argument broke, and Alper spoke in a way that hurt Elijah and broke Elijah's heart.

Elijah was very upset about this situation, but without telling Alper anything, he wrote in the sand:

"My best friend hurt me so much today!"

Then they kept walking in the desert. It's so hot in the desert, they're both so thirsty. Soon they saw an oasis a little further away, and they rushed to the oasis and asked for a drink of water. Elijah slipped and got stuck in the swamp while trying to drink water. Just as he was about to drown, Alper came to Elijah's rescue and rescued him from the swamp. This time, Elijah wrote on a hard rock:

"My best friend saved my life today!"

Alper was surprised by this situation and asked Elijah;

"After I hurt you, you wrote it in the sand, and now you're writing on a rock, why?"

Elijah replied;

"When someone hurts us, we have to write them in the sand, which a light wind can erase. However, when someone does an important good deed for us, we must carve it into a stone that no wind can erase, we must never forget it."

ADVICE: Don't value what you have in your life. But value the person you have in your life.

– SHARED BY SERPIL, ROXBURGH RISE COMMUNITY HUB

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The Journey of an Assyrian Wanderer

Born in Mesopotamia, modern day Iraq, the Assyrian wanderer grew up in a small village 'Komaneh', overcoming the various tribulations, which had inhibited his longing for education. 'Komaneh' is situated in Northern Iraq, and its history dates back to the Old Assyrian Empire, where the Assyrian King would hunt wild animals in its fields. In his youth, my father, the Assyrian Wanderer, was subject to long, exhausting walks on his way to school, each and every day, irrespective of the harsh weather conditions. Often, the cold climates of Northern Iraq would reach below freezing temperatures, however, my father's unparalleled determination supplied him with the strength to power through, bearing the pain of the elements in his quest for knowledge.

At the age of 24, he had achieved his first teaching degree. Whilst at University, my father had met the woman of his dreams, and after seven years, at the conclusion of their tertiary studies, they had married and both moved to Baghdad. My parents both worked as teachers, raising five children of their own. Having his own family did not prevent my father from studying further. Despite working, and raising his family, my father had taken it upon himself to further bolster his knowledge, pursuing a double-degree in Law and Politics, at Al-Mustansiriya University in Baghdad. He had eventually completed his degree five years later, graduating in 1978.

In the year 1979, my father moved back to Northern Iraq with his family, working as a lawyer at the Ministry of Education. The following year, the war between Iraq and Iran broke out. In the first year of war, my parents had an additional two children, twin boys raising the sum of his children to seven. During these ten years of war, my father experienced much pain, including the loss of loved ones, and fear of death, however despite these tribulations, he would not relinquish the desire to raise his children in a manner revolving around education.

In the year 1988, the war had subsided, and the residents of Iraq had returned to a normal lifestyle, free of the numerous fears associated with war. The war sirens, sounds of explosions, and unexpected calls, signalling the deaths of those closest to you, were put on hold for two years. In 1990, the Gulf War started. The Assyrian Wanderer gathered his family, and utilising his political knowledge, he stated "My children, from this day onward, Iraq will not be the same, we must flee". With his eldest son enlisted in the army, his decision to abandon his homeland became all the more clear.

My family left the Iraqi border on Easter Monday in 1990, arrived at the Turkish border, and were accepted as refugees to a camp in Turkey. The camp's conditions were extremely harsh, as we faced the scorching heat of summer, reaching above 40 degrees Celsius, and below 0 degrees Celsius in winter. With the help of the God, the Turkish Government and the United Nations, we had survived the camp's hardships.

In 1992, the Australian government accepted us within their borders, as refugees. The Assyrian Wanderer gathered his family again and said to them "This is where your lives begin". Although the education achieved abroad meant nothing in this new land, he sacrificed all he had yearned for, in order to supply us with the chance to succeed.

Thank you Babi Tower, for the sacrifices you made, in the prospect of our futures. Thank you for teaching us to cherish, and love this country, and the opportunities which Australia has provided us. Last, but not least, thank you Australia, for the safe haven you've provided us and continue providing to refugees each and every year.

– DALA YOUIL, LIAISON OFFICER

Khakashan Shadid Abbasi hails from Pakistan, where she was a teacher, and her husband was a practicing tax lawyer. In 2006, Their son came to Australia as a student. Then in 2008-09 her daughter went to Canada to pursue her higher education and after finishing her studies, her daughter came back to Pakistan in 2013.

By that time, her son has already applied for the permanent residency in Australia for his parents. Eventually, she and her husband landed in Australia in 2015 as Permanent Residents.

For Khakashan, things take a different turn when she found a suitable match for her son in a Chinese girl named "Maria." After convincing her family in China, they happily got married in Pakistan in 2016.

Her daughter decided to move to Australia and live with her family and in 2016, based on her qualifications and work experience got her permanent residency.

Today Khakasha she feels blessed with two grandsons: 4 years and 5 months old respectively. Khakasha volunteers in the Meadows Community Garden and her husband supports their living here.

- KHAKASHAN SHAHID ABBASI

“ In 2008 I came to Australia with my husband, after he came to Lebanon and we were married.

When we arrived in Australia we moved in with my in-laws. After being in Australia for 3 months I received the devastating news that my brother in Lebanon had passed away.

Everything felt strange to me and I didn't like it. I missed my family and my way of life back home. After 7 months I started to get used to my new life here and found out I was pregnant. Unfortunately my husband then lost his job, but with some benefits we received from that job, we were lucky enough to be able to purchase our own home.

I started learning the English language and fell in love with this wonderful country I am lucky enough to call home.

- ASIYA

“

In my home country of Pakistan I studied business studies and homeopath medicine. I had my nikah (Islamic marriage ceremony) in 2017. I then received my visa and had my wedding ceremony within two weeks of each other before coming to Australia in January 2019.

I am currently a stay at home mum with an 11 month old in playgroup. I am planning to hopefully open my own catering business from home as I love to cook and share my traditional Pakistani food.

My goal is to one day be able to open my own Pakistani restaurant sometime in the near future.

- S. AZEEM

“

I am originally from Lebanon. I completed my studies in accounting at university in Lebanon before deciding to come to Australia with my husband. We have 3 children.

In 2013 we took a plane to Indonesia, then from Indonesia to Australia we came by boat. It was a small boat with a little tent that carried about 65 or so people. Water would constantly come into the boat. The small tent on the boat was reserved for the women and children, while the men remained outside of the tent. Even under the shelter of the tent, water would still come onto us. It was very scary.

The boat was old and unstable. It would rain heavily on us and the boat would rock constantly. The waves were very high and aggressive and the we were always thinking that we are not going to make it through the night and that we would not survive this trip. It was a very scary experience and I don't recommend anyone to try it.

- INTISSAR

“

I am originally from Lebanon. I finished year 11 before getting married and coming to Australia in 2010.

I felt like Australia was a nice country but when I first arrived, I didn't find much support around me so I didn't really like it here.

After about 1-2 years of being in this country I started speaking English, learning the language by studying at the local NMIT (with hours provided from my visa) and I began to fall in love with my new home.

Australia offers so much opportunity and there is a lot of help here. Back in Lebanon, if you have children, you cannot do anything like, study or work as a mother because there is not much support, whereas in Australia they help you with childcare services which gives you so much support and opportunity.

Australia is also a very safe country, where we don't have daily worries about things like war.

I love the education system here too. I love the idea that you can go to university here and they help you with the fees so that you can have more job opportunities, unlike back home, if you don't have money upfront, you miss out.

I have 2 children aged 4 and 10 and I am so appreciative of the opportunities this wonderful country can provide for them and their future. While in Australia I studied certificate 4 in hairdressing, certificate 3 in childcare and certificate 3 in education support. I want to work hard on my English language skills so that I can find a job in childcare

– HALIME HAMIE

“

In 2019 I was working as a paramedic on New Year's Eve. I was called to an unresponsive 14 year old at the Williamstown family day festival.

I drove around 2 kilometres with lights and sirens blaring, overtaking police vehicles with their own emergency sirens blasting! I arrived onsite heading towards the teen in need of urgent assistance, with the police officers offering their support and asking

me what they could do to help.

I helped the child in need while police maintained order around me, keeping everyone away from the scene so I could do my duties. It was a successful day and one of my most memorable, to say the least.

– TABITHA

“

JOURNEYS THROUGH ONE LIFETIME

When man made a remarkable step in history and landed on the moon in 1969 it was completely unbelievable for my Nan.

Nan was born in 1890 so the idea of a moon landing was an impressive and incredible achievement by mankind for her to witness. How could a man from Earth go into space, and land onto the moon? It was a massive deal and thought to be an impossible feat.

Nan had gone from the city to Dandenong to witness this great accomplishment. From horse and buggy to trains to cars then planes and finally a human being landing on our moon.

Nan witnessed all these achievements through her lifetime. Watching the future change before her eyes. Incredible.

Nan passed away in 1986 at 96 years of age.

– SUE

Nouha was born in Lebanon. Nouha's family comprises her parents, three elder sisters and one brother in Lebanon. At present, her siblings are three sisters and five brothers.

The war started in Lebanon and Nouha's family migrated to Australia when she was 5 years old and they lived with her grandparents. She had to leave her childhood friends and relatives because of a war and that makes her feel upset.

After moving to Australia, Nouha felt different with housing, environment and peoples of diverse backgrounds and she was diagnosed with hearing loss. Her father was a breadwinner in the house who was working with Ford Company.

Nouha's family was very close to one of her aunts from Sydney. They loved to gather during festivals and holidays, having a memorable time. Unfortunately some time ago, her aunt passed away following a few days of visiting with them in Sydney. This incident makes Nouha and her family feel very sad. Her grandmother living in Lebanon was very upset and ate nothing. After a few days, they received the sad news of her grandmother's death because of the unbearable trauma of losing her daughter. Her father was also very sad to lose his mom and being unable to visit her at her last moments.

Nouha is raised in Australia and married a man from her culture. They were living together happily and had one daughter and three sons. However, one day she became aware that her husband was hiding all the money allocated for their home loan and sent it overseas. Nouha felt that she cannot live in a relationship with a person without trust and sharing ideas.

Later, they got a divorce and Nouha and her 4 children were now homeless with little money provided from her husband. Her mother has supported her during this time.

Nouha's daughter married and Nouha now has a granddaughter. Unfortunately this relationship broke down and her daughter became divorced.

Later her daughter married another man and is waiting for the visa for her husband. Because of COVID-19, her daughter is living with Nouha in Australia while waiting for her husband to join her. Nouha and her daughter are searching for a permanent address to live. They both are in contact with the housing commission. Her younger son is studying in primary school and she is concerned about his future and wants to save some money for his higher study and a better future.

Due to COVID-19, Nouha's other sons, who were helping her to uphold all the expenses, lost their jobs which has made the situation worse for the family. They faced difficulty in paying rent and left the house and are now living with Nouha's mother.

Feeling she had not achieved sufficient schooling Nouha has returned to school to study English and is still paying her debts and searching for a job for herself. Nouha has a helping personality and enjoys taking part voluntarily in the programs conducted by Meadow's Primary School and Hub.

– **NOUHA ABBAS**

A Punjabi girl named Sandy is an international student who came to Australia in February 2019. She is a smart and talented girl who has achieved a gold medal from the University in Punjab. Her mother is a wholehearted supporter of her life and pathway. She is a sincere student and loves to be a part of new experiences. So, she came to Australia for learning new things and interested to help other people. When she arrived in Australia, she was excited to visit a new place and people. However, the lockdown has been started everywhere after a few days. Thus, she had faced problems managing her living expenses because of COVID-19. This experience has provided a greater strength that she feels she could survive in any situation.

– **SANDY**

Meelaaney, born in Somali came to Australia in 2004. She lived here with her uncle, aunt and cousins. In Australia, her relatives supported her. So, she is happy to live in Australia. She married a guy from Somali in 2004. In 2011, Meelaaney's husband came to Australia. They are living happily with four kids. She has completed the courses such as English classes, childcare and Personal Care Assistant (PCA). Because she has to take care of her family and kids, she is not doing any jobs. She has a best friend named Alisha (Australian) for the past five years. Both friends have four kids. They both have their labour pain for a 1st baby on the same day and delivered a baby on alternative days in the same hospital. However, they were unknown at that moment. Later they met each other in school while dropping their kids and starts a conversation. They share their ideas, culture and rituals. Now they are closer friends and become sisterhood "Not sisters by blood but sisters by heart." When Meelaaney was pregnant for 4th time, Alisha planned and celebrated the baby shower function. After giving birth to a baby, none of the outsiders may visit the mother and baby except her relatives in her culture. Alisha is the only one who has met that time as a sisterhood relation. That reflects how good friends became a sister.

- MEELAANEY

Leanne, aged 38 years old, is born in Australia. She is working in Meadows Primary School as a volunteer for the past five years. She is a light-hearted person who helps those who required help.

Leanne is a pigeon lover who has around 900 pigeons on her breeding farm recently. She has been around pigeons all her life. As her grandfather and father had involved in pigeon breeding and racing. That inspired and enthused her to be with pigeons. Now, she has a good connection with pigeons. Also, she can understand pigeon's feeling, sickness and help them. In 2008, Leanne travelled to the United Kingdom (UK) to attend the Blackpool Show. She loves to see pigeon racing and train her pigeons for racing.

She is a light-hearted person who helps those who required help.

- LEANNE

“ A TALE OF TWO SIBLINGS

On the 24th August 1935 Dad joined the British Army and embarked for India in 1937. While in India's North West Frontier (Now Pakistan) he decided to try and find his sister who he had last seen when she was a two year old. He asked a fellow soldier who was writing to his girlfriend in Dundee, which was Dad's birth place, to see if she may know of his little sister.

After some time his girlfriend realised her friend Agnes Noble was his mates sister's married name. Agnes was then able to make contact with Dad.

After the war Agnes and family moved to Elizabeth in South Australia and then later on to Preston Victoria. In 1962 our family moved to Australia and lived with Aunty Agnes and her family in Preston.

And there you can see the wonderful bond and respect formed between a big brother and his long lost little sister. Our "better life" here in Australia, was my father and his sister's dream come true.

- TOM

Eshaal is a nine-year-old girl who is born in Pakistan. She came to Australia in 2018. Her mom and dad live in Australia, but the entire family and good friends are in Pakistan. She missed them a lot and wants to go for a visit. Initially, she could not speak in English because of a lower confidence level. After joining Meadows Primary School, she learned good English and loved to work as a volunteer. Now, she has taken part as the student helper for breakfast. She is a girl with a light-hearted and helping nature.

Her favourite fields are science and technology. Also, she likes to read chapter books. She is writing a book named "Diary of the Dumb Warrior." According to her father, "God has created all of us with some unique skills to contribute." Hence, he inspired her to complete the book. Her father has promised for publishing her book on the website such as Amazon. Thus, children must get opportunities for lightening in the future.

- ESHAAL

“ I was born in Ethiopia, my first journey began when I went to live in Kenya with my 3 brothers. I was only 14 years old. We lived in Kenya for 2 years and 3 months before moving to New Zealand in 2001.

I was 17 years old when my sister sponsored my family to come and live with her in New Zealand.

In New Zealand I studied language. I also studied fashion design for 2 years receiving my diploma. I worked in a factory sewing clothes for 2 years. My sister then moved to Australia in 2005, followed by my brother in 2006 and I then joined them in 2007.

After moving to Australia, I struggled to find work for 1 year. I then was able to find work in a factory sewing and making clothes for 8 years. I got married, and cut down my days, working 2 days a week because I had fallen pregnant.

After I had my baby I returned to work for 3 days. Once I had my second baby, I stopped working to take care of my children full time and didn't return.

In Australia, I have studied and received my certificate in patient service assistance. I completed an education course and a childcare certificate. I am hoping to be able to find work in education.

– HASSAN

“ I am originally from Somaliland. In 2013 my mum passed away and then a year later my dad passed away in 2014. My siblings were all married with their own families. I felt extremely sad from my parents passing and wanted to leave my home country. I decided to come to Australia and live with my older brother.

I am the youngest of my siblings and was just 17 when I decided to migrate to Australia in 2017, having only just completed high school in Somaliland.

I am currently living with my brother and his wife and 6 children. My brother helps to support me and helps me forget my sadness.

In Australia I studied certificate 4 in health and science foundation, and I am currently studying IELTS, which I hope once completed, I can study nursing in the future.

I am currently working in day care. In 2021 I got married, but my husband is currently in Somaliland, waiting to join me.

In my spare time, I enjoy writing stories in Somali and love to share them with my brother, sister-in law and my nieces and nephews.

– NIMCO

“

My name is Naime. I migrated from Adana, Turkey to Melbourne, at the age of nine, with my family in May of 1969.

Being the oldest of three children, I was suddenly given a lot of responsibility including looking after my siblings. My sister was nearly seven and my brother was nearly 4. At the time, I felt that, I left my childhood in Turkey, where I was carefree and really happy, being with my relatives and friends.

I learnt enough English in such a short time that I was able to help my school principal to do enrolments for newly arrived Turkish children and help at parent teacher interview as well.

Years later, I have come to the conclusion, that migration is a process that leaves different feelings and emotions for everyone in different ways.

We were all uprooted from our home land and transported 20 thousand km away, to a new country that no one really knew anything about. They eventually and somehow worked through great hardship, misery, neglect and the heart ache of missing loved ones and their homeland. Families have been able to replant themselves in this new soil and managed to form new roots. A great many adapted quite well and blossomed into beautiful hybrid flowers, whilst some unfortunately withered away and struggled to find an identity, being stuck in two countries with two different cultures.

When I use to visit Turkey, I would find myself murmuring the song, 'I still call Australia home'. Yet when I'm in Australia, I find myself missing my relatives, my parent's village and my street where I use to play with my friends.

This has been my fate and journey.

Regardless of everything, I feel blessed.

– NAIME

“

My name is Linda, I am from a small village on the banks of a river called Khabur in Syria.

Our village is one of the 33 Assyrian villages. People there were dependant on agriculture for their livelihood. Life was simple and beautiful until 23rd February 2015 when ISIS entered. They killed people, demolished and burnt down the village. Most people left after this, my father stayed behind to defend the village but then lost my father four months later.

In 2014, we went to Lebanon with my husband, son and mother in law. My sister also joined us in Lebanon. We all stayed there for two years where we rented a house in a small village. My husband and sister found work there as well as receiving money from my cousin to help us out. During our stay there, we sent our papers to Australia seeking for Asylum. I gave birth to my daughter and it was that day they told us we got a visa to Australia.

Within two months we were in Australia.

– LINDA

“

BANGLADESHI STORY BY ENGLISH STUDENT, THARANGA

One day the hungry Crow went looking for food. He flew from place to place searching for something to eat. Finally, he found something that looked like cheese. He got it and flew to a rock to eat it. The Fox was also looking for something to eat. He saw Crow and the cheese and thought he could eat the cheese.

He went to Crow and asked, "How are you?" but Crow didn't respond.

Fox then said, "Crow your sound is very good, I love your sound. Can you sing a song please?"

Crow felt good and opened his mouth to sing. The cheese fell on the floor.

Fox said, "Foolish Crow! Now I will eat the cheese."

Poor Crow thought he will never speak to Fox again.

“

Hi, my name is Nervina. I come from Nineva, Iraq. I am 41 years old and I got married in 2005 in Baghdad, Iraq. I have 3 children: 2 girls and 1 boy.

I arrived in Australia in 2012 as a refugee.

When the war started in Iraq in 2003, a lot of the people we knew left the country, but we did not want to leave. After 2006, the situations became worse week by week. One day when my husband went to work at 6 am (he worked at a phone company) and because the company was only a 15-minute walk from our house, he walked to work. A car passed by him and stopped, and 2 hooded men (besides the driver) stepped out of the car. They took him and forced him inside the car and said to him, 'You don't know us, but we know you. We know your name, where you live and how many children you have. You have a choice to either convert to Islam (we are Christians), or get killed with your family, or leave this city.' Then they let him out of the car.

After that, he came home and told his family what happened. Within 2 days, we left and went to Syria.

We went to Syria on March 18, 2010. When we got to Syria, we presented our story to the UN and after a while, the UN contacted us saying that Australia accepted our story.

We came to Australia on 1st October 2012. I was extremely happy and finally felt safe when we got here (problems had started in Syria as well).

– NERVINA

TURKISH STORY BY ENGLISH STUDENT, NERIMAN

“

When Neriman was a young girl in Cyprus, during the war years, her mother told her many traditional Turkish stories before bedtime. This is one of them.

Keloglan (Bald Boy)

This is the story of a young boy who, since the day he was born, did not have any hair on his head. And so he was known as Keloglan, which means “Bald Boy”. Keloglan was a poor villager. One day his mother told him to watch the door while she went down to the village shops. Keloglan watched the door for a long time. Eventually, he got fed up so he took the door off its hinges, strapped it to his back and carried it down the street to his mother. When his mother saw him, she was furious and demanded, “Why did you take the door off?”

Keloglan answered, “Because you said to watch the door.”

His mother put her hands to head in disbelief. During that time thieves went into the house and stole all their things. And from that day forward Keloglan's mother always made sure that she explained things more carefully to make sure that he understood.

“

I am originally from India. I never wanted to travel. I wanted to stay in my home country, but my husband wanted to travel to Australia, so we agreed it was for the best. I got married then came to Australia to continue my studies. I previously studied BCOM(bachelor of computers) in India .I then fell in absolute love with this beautiful country and I do not wish to leave.

In Australia I studied MPA (Masters in Professional Accounting). I took a break from my studies because I fell pregnant. I have a 3 year old daughter who is currently in playgroup and I'm pregnant at the moment with baby number 2. I plan to continue my studies once I have my baby. I hope I am able to receive my citizenship. I would love it if my daughter could go to school in Australia as I really love the education here.

Australia is a very helpful country. When I needed it most, they helped me. They are very supportive. During lock down, when it was hard, the government and the Muslim community helped me and I am very thankful.

– NAZIA PARVEEN

“

HAEFA'S STORY

The streets were filled with pedestrians walking on the sidewalks and weaving between vehicles in traffic jams. Many vendors were attempting to sell trinkets, clothing, and food.

Life was beautiful here. Loud busy streets filled with people chatting amongst themselves, wishing each other the best. The sun went down and the moon was shining.

It was dinner time, I was in the kitchen with my daughter Reta, making her milk when the booms started going off. One after the other, never-ending. I grabbed my daughter and went to the room. I sat there and prayed, prayer after prayer I begged God to make it stop. After hours of booming and the sound of people screaming for help, it was over for now. The following morning, my friend and I went down the street to shop. With booms and guns fired from the top of our heads and buildings tumbling down. We saw fresh blood on the ground and dislocated body parts. On our way to the shops, we saw our local shop owner being dragged by four armed men wearing masks. They covered his face and tied his hands, dragged him into the van, and never saw him again. While experiencing enduring loss and grief caused by the death of hundreds of thousands of civilians and soldiers, growing up in exploded neighbourhoods and looted houses, internalizing and suppressing wartime anxieties.

I was scared for my husband. The following night, I was putting my daughter to bed when there was a knock on the door. My husband opened the door and ten U.S. Army soldiers walked into my house and started to search for weapons. They asked us a lot of questions and my husband told them that he worked as a republican guard. After a year of bombing in Iraq, my mother called and told me to come to Syria, we sold our things and my husband left his job. We went to Syria by car and every hour the police would stop us to search our bags to make sure that we are not hiding any drugs, weapons, or terrorists.

I got to Syria safely, I visited my family members. After three months in Syria, I gave birth to my other daughter Aneta. Three months after that, we saw my brother-in-law on the TV talking about the damage that the terrorists have done. A day after this, we got the news that they had killed him and his friends.

We stayed in Syria for almost a year because my husband got stabbed and family problems started to get worse. When we went back to Iraq things were way worse there. My husband didn't have a job, we didn't have money and there still was bombing. We stayed in a small house with my two daughters, husband, and mother-in-law for a year and a half. We went back to Syria because my brother-in-law and his wife were starting drama. In Syria, we were waiting for an Australian visa application to be approved. Unfortunately, it was unapproved and we had to go back to Iraq again.

After a year and a half, we went back to Syria to start a new Australian visa application. They finally accepted my application and I was approved to go to Australia. Thank god my family and I came to Australia safe and sound.



“

TORN BETWEEN TWO!

My story begins in 1969, the year that my parents migrated to Australia from Turkey. I was 4 and my sister was 6 months old at the time. My parents often tell us the story of how they came to Australia with two suitcases and some cash that would get them by until they found a job. When we first arrived, the army barracks at Broadmeadows became our new temporary home. I cannot even begin to imagine the hardship and isolation my parents must have experienced back in those days. I have a great deal of admiration to the early settlers of this country for their strength, courage, and resilience. My respect for my family and all others that set out on this journey is immeasurable.

Growing up as an Australian Turk was confusing, and this often made me feel lost. What did it mean for me to grow up in the middle of two different cultures? There were two sets of rules in my life, one at home and the other at school. My first few years of my childhood were spent in the high rise flats at Richmond, where many other newly arrived families landed. Despite questioning my own identity throughout my childhood and adolescence, I couldn't deny feeling like I belonged to my community. This comforted me through those times where I felt conflicted.

My parents worked two jobs each, alternating their shifts so that my sister and I were not alone for too long, and when we were, I was responsible for her. At the end of the working day, my parents still managed to take us to the park in the housing estate. There, we met with our newly acquainted family friends, and each of us would bring food to share. One would brew the tea, one bread bring the bread, while the other brought the cheese and olives. Just like the food, the love and compassion was shared abundantly. My mother was forced to leave my baby sister with a non-qualified child carer in her flat whilst she went to work and I was at school. My mother still has tears as she tells the story of the many times my sister would come home with scratches on her face and her diaper wet as a sponge.

By the age of 8 or 9, my parents relied on my support in many ways. A clear example I can recall was often being their interpreter at the doctor. This meant I needed to grow up way before my time. I was also my parents dream for the future. They both invested a great deal of faith in me and from a young age, taught me how important it was to live our values and culture. Alongside my primary school education, my parents ensured I kept speaking Turkish, and I went to language school on the weekends. For this I am grateful, as I am proud to be bilingual. Being Australian did not mean I had to let go of my culture, values, and traditions. Practicing this way of life was not a challenge whilst living in a high migrant community, but changed when we moved to Lilydale. In 1978, my parents built their dream home.

This was the first time I really felt that I was different from my peers. When I was in high school, I felt alienated and isolated because it was a community that didn't welcome migrants or diversity openly. It was hard enough going through puberty and adolescence, let alone going through a search for an identity. For the first time I felt torn between two cultures, and what often felt like, two worlds.

My father had attempted to open a kebab shop during the time we were living in Lilydale, but as you can expect, that was not very successful in an area with a high Australian population that had not yet embraced multiculturalism. Within a few years, he had declared bankruptcy, and in many ways, this was a blessing in disguise for me because it meant that we moved. It had created serious damage to my family, as we lost our dream home, but looking back, it was a big part of my pathway to my success. My parents being the strong determined people that they are, did everything in their power to establish a new life. My youngest sister was born that year, and we moved to Reservoir. Her birth brought prosperity and happiness back into our warm and loving household. Living in Reservoir gave us an opportunity to reconnect with a community that we belonged to, and were surrounded by friends and other community members who understood the migrant experience. I was safe and happy once again. During my final years of high school, my parents were adamant about sending me to university, and that was their next goal in life in ensuring I get an education. I'm very happy and proud to say that I succeeded in this, and started studying at La Trobe University.

After graduating from a Social Sciences degree, I travelled to Turkey, partly as an adventure and partly to continue searching for my identity. I returned home in the year 2000, home being Australia, because I could confidently call myself and Australian Turk by this stage. My love for my birth country will never die, but Australia is my home. This time I did not return alone, I brought back my husband and two gorgeous daughters. We came back because we had a dream, just like my parents did in 1969.....

Our dream was primarily to give our children an education and show them the way to a satisfying and fulfilled life. My children are now 25 and 26 years old. They love going back to Turkey to enjoy all the tourist attractions but they never doubt that Australia is their home. They are living a happy, and successful life. Living and working in Hume has been one of the most rewarding experiences for my husband and I, and we are both honored to be part of this community.

— FAHRIYE



A Nepalese girl named Sarvada is a person who loves travelling. Thus, she had visited some parts of India such as Bombay, Pune, Mysore and Bangalore.

During lockdown people in Australia could only go outside for unavoidable reasons. Sarvada is an international student who luckily came to Australia one day before lockdown.

She was upset because of lockdown, as she has to stay at home and has no work to do. Also, Sarvada was unaware of the places such as shopping centre or nearby parks safe for walking.

Staying home increased her body weight and decreased her confidence level. She has to stay at home without working, which affected her physically as well as mentally.

Sarvada has joined college to study in Australia but has to attend classes online. This has challenged her because she was attending online classes for the first time in her life. Sarvada was also unaware of the systems, technologies and assignments.

However, she has her husband for emotional and financial support. Hence, she applied for a job and waited for a year at home.

Finally, after a year, she got a part-time job that helped her talk with peoples, understand a different culture and develop self-confidence.

– SARVADA BHANTANA

Explore the idea of Woman

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY 2021





Hume City Council

1079 Pascoe Vale Road, Broadmeadows
PO Box 119, Dallas, Victoria 3047
Telephone 9205 2200

contactus@hume.vic.gov.au
hume.vic.gov.au

HumeLink

Hume City Council's
multilingual telephone information service.
General enquiries: Telephone 9205 2200

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