



BVOR NEWS

Refugee
Sponsorship
Training
Program

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Opening doors



“Refugee sponsorship is the most powerful and meaningful thing you can do,” says Tyler Berglund, owner of Hamilton’s Doors Metal Bar and Taco Joint and BVOR refugee sponsor. It’s also “the most metal thing you can do – it’s very challenging, and it’s very hardcore,” he says. It’s been two years since Tyler, a self-described metal head, and his colleagues and relatives, all in their 30s, decided to sponsor refugees through the BVOR program as a Group of Five.

Through RSTP they were matched with a young family of four, Syrian Kurdish refugees living in a Lebanese camp, who arrived in Canada in the summer of 2018. Since then, the group has been learning on many levels. “Refugee is a complex term,” says Jamie Mallory, another sponsor. “Ultimately, you just approach people with care.”

St. Giles Presbyterian Church in St. Catharines provided early support. “We’re all atheists, and this really changed our perspective on churches and what they do,” says Tyler. A local interpreter, Rola Chatah, volunteers with them. “We’ve met so many good people through this,” says Tyler.

The Blended Visa Office-Referred (BVOR) Program

The BVOR Program helps resettle refugees identified by United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) as the most vulnerable in need of resettlement. It is called blended because it is a cost sharing arrangement. Immigration Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) provides up to six months of income support for the newcomers, while private sponsors provide another six months of financial support, start-up costs and up to one year of social and emotional support.

The family and sponsors have a warm relationship, as can be seen in [this RSTP video](#). “It’s been really helpful for me to spend time doing things ... outside my comfort zone,” says Caleb Collins. He’s a sponsor and drummer when he’s not working at Doors. “I feel like I’m better equipped now to address things in my own life.”

The group has embarked on its second sponsorship. “We plan to do this as long as we are able,” says Collins. They are also promoting refugee sponsorship to their growing circle of followers, helped along by this [CBC Hamilton web article](#) on their sponsorship (it features RSTP video footage).

Tyler’s favourite [metal blogs](#) have picked up the CBC story as well. The publicity is “spreading the message of love and kindness triumphing over superficial differences,” says Tyler. “Ultimately I hope it will encourage more to sponsor. Already I’ve been contacted by folks interested in joining us.”



Featured BVOR profile

Burundian woman looking for sponsors in Edmonton, AB

A 52-year-old Burundian woman currently in Tanzania, accompanied by her 19-year-old daughter and a 17-year-old girl she looks after. She has a Grade 9 education, work experience in farming and can speak French. They cannot return to their home country as they fear persecution based on their ethnicity.

The UN Refugee Agency notes that Burundian refugees in Tanzania "arrive to find camps full and only temporary shelters available. Health centres are struggling to cope with huge numbers of patients. Education is very basic, and children lack sufficient learning materials. Hundreds of children in Tanzania attend classes under trees."

To learn more about Burundian refugees currently in Tanzania please visit the UNCHR website: <https://www.unhcr.org/burundi-situation.html>

"Burundi's refugees are being forgotten. The world needs to urgently help these refugees and the countries hosting them." Catherine Wiesner, Regional Refugee Coordinator and Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework Champion for the Burundi situation.

Mark your calendars!
New BVOR profiles will be available on the RSTP BVOR Matching Database
Monday, March 1, 2019 at 1:00 pm EST.

Refugee populations in the BVOR program include:

- Syrian, Iraqi
- Congolese, Ethiopian, Eritrean
- Somali, Sudanese, Ugandan, Liberian

Particular vulnerabilities or reasons for resettlement include:

- Women and girls at risk
- Survivors of violence and/or torture
- Lack of foreseeable alternative solutions

To learn more about the countries BVOR refugees come from, visit: <http://www.rstp.ca/en/refugees/country-condition-information/>

Profiles of BVOR refugees needing sponsors can be found in the RSTP-BVOR Matching Database:

<https://cathcrosscultural.sharepoint.com/rstp>

RSTP will match you with a suitable profile and will help you through the process !

BVOR incentive for SAHs (reminder)

There is a special time-limited incentive for SAHs that sponsor BVOR cases between November 1, 2018 and April 30, 2019. For each BVOR case that a SAH sponsors during this time, they will receive an additional PSR SAH cap space in 2019. For more information contact bvor@rstp.ca

BLENDED VISA OFFICE-REFERRED (BVOR) PROGRAM

For more information, visit www.rstp.ca or email bvor@rstp.ca

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