



# BVOR NEWS

Refugee  
Sponsorship  
Training  
Program

**Issue 31. April 2021.**

## **The Blended Visa Office-Referred (BVOR) Program**

The BVOR Program helps resettle refugees identified by the 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.



Nhung Tran-Davies with the Syrian mother she sponsored in 2016, her mother and one of her own family's 1979 sponsors.

## **Sponsored refugee grows up and gives back**

Sponsoring the stranger has a long history in Canada; many will remember the sponsorship of "boat people" in the late 1970s. Many of these former "strangers" have become a part of our families and communities. Many are making major contributions to their new home, even sponsoring "strangers" themselves.

Nhung Tran-Davies is one of those people. She arrived in Canada from Vietnam in 1979 at the age of five. One of thousands of "boat people" escaping the aftermath of the Viet Nam war, she, her widowed mother and five siblings were sponsored by an Edmonton-area church group. "Our sponsors ... helped us find a first home, took me to the dentist, registered us for school," Tran-Davies recalled [in an interview with CBC's Radio](#)

[Active program](#). "There were so many wonderful Canadians," she says. "It left a mark on my heart that forever changed my life."

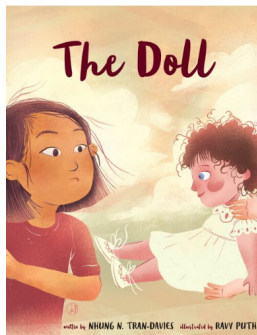
On arrival, one of the sponsor's children welcomed her with a doll. "This doll came to represent all the kindness and generosity and compassion of Canadians," says Tran-Davies. "I kept it on my shelf for 40 years as a reminder of their kindness." That doll is now touring Canada as part of a [Pier 21 Museum display about refuge](#).

In 2016, Tran-Davies, a physician in rural Alberta and mother of three, was moved to act when she heard the stories of desperate Syrian refugees. She pulled together a group to sponsor a Syrian family of eight. That group included some of her own sponsors. When the family arrived, "It was my turn to stand at the gate, to give a little Syrian refugee girl a doll," she recalls.

Photo: Copyright UNHCR/ Jimmy Jeong

Tran-Davies has written a children's book called *The Doll* based on her sponsorship experiences. The doll is a metaphor for an act of kindness passed from generation to generation. "A small act of kindness in a moment in time ripples beyond our doors, beyond our neighbourhood, into the world," she says.

The proceeds from sales of the book will go toward sponsoring a second Syrian family. "Books help create compassion and empathy," she says. The book "is also a reminder that we can't turn our backs on refugees, because they are only hoping for a better future, many of them for their children. Kindness is a positive force that can effect positive change in the world."



*The Doll*, by Nhung Tran-Davies is published by Second Story Press. [Order here](#) or check with your local library.

## [Subscribe to RSTP's Email List](#)

Get the latest updates on how COVID-19 is affecting refugee sponsorship/resettlement to Canada and details of all of our upcoming online trainings, workshops and webinars as soon as they are posted.

### **BLENDED VISA OFFICE-REFERRED (BVOR) PROGRAM**

For more information, visit [www.rstp.ca](http://www.rstp.ca) or email [bvor@rstp.ca](mailto:bvor@rstp.ca)

Refugee  
Sponsorship  
Training  
Program



**CCS**  
Catholic Crosscultural Services



Immigration, Refugees  
and Citizenship Canada

Immigration, Réfugiés  
et Citoyenneté Canada

## **Second COVID-19 test: video instructions now available in many languages**

The Switch Health video instructions for the second in-Canada COVID-19 test are now available in the following languages: Arabic, Amharic, Spanish, Somali, Tigrinya, Farsi and Filipino.

The videos are [available to download here](#).

English and French versions [are available here](#).

## **RSTP services to sponsors continue virtually**

RSTP provides a full range of virtual services to Canada's refugee sponsorship community during the COVID-19 pandemic. Check our website, [www.rstp.ca](http://www.rstp.ca), for dates and times of upcoming online workshops and courses.

RSTP trainers across Canada are available for virtual consultation from 9 to 5 each day, by appointment. Among the services they provide by telephone, email and virtual platforms are:

- Support with refugee sponsorship applications
- Guidance for sponsors with post-arrival issues

[See our website's contact list](#) for the  
name, phone number and email  
address of the RSTP trainer in your  
region.