

Nevien's Story

When did you arrive in Canada? In Huron-Perth?

I actually came to Canada, and more specifically Huron, about 26 years ago. My husband and I came to Canada after being married for just 2 years. While we are originally from Egypt, my husband, Micheal, was working in Saudi Arabia at the time. We were also starting a family and we thought, okay, let's try to move to a wonderful new country with great opportunities. Things were uncertain back home at the time, so we thought Canada would be that country with great opportunities. After our research, we liked everything about Canada (except the cold). During our research at the time, 26 years ago, Canada was ranked as one of the best lifestyles that people have in the world. There was always a lot of acceptance. Whether it be diversity, gender, race, anything. I was expecting my baby at the time as well, and thought this is great. The process actually only took 3 months, and we were accepted on the spot. This was due to the fact that there was a shortage of professional pharmacists at the time too.

Have you overcome any challenges you would like to share?

When we first came to Canada, we lived in the Scarborough, Toronto area, where there were much more immigrants. When we went from the city to Huron, we did turn a lot of heads. Being in a rural area and being new and unfamiliar, we realize how easy it was to stand out in a small community. Usually in areas like Huron, everyone knows one another, are close neighbours, work together, are connected through family, etc. It didn't take too long for us to realize that in smaller communities, it takes some time to break into the new fabrics of relationships with our neighbours and other community members. It actually took us a couple of years to even have a 'good morning' relationship with our neighbours.

It's definitely easier to blend into the city, so coming to Goderich was a different experience for us. Many members of Goderich were taking back when we first came in. When we realized how different the culture was between a rural and urban setting in Canada, we realize that members of Goderich had a healthy curiosity and focus more on building trust and relationships with those around them.

What are some good experiences you have had since coming to Huron-Perth?

When we came to our rural community, we both loved it. Both my husband and I, are originally from small communities, so we were used to that setting. Originally, we said we will come here for a bit, work our way up to be more comfortable financially, and then move back to the city. But 20 or so more years later, here we are! A huge difference we noticed when coming to Huron was that people here smile on the streets. Rural areas just have community members with stronger relationships. People really care for one another. In bigger cities, you don't get that warm welcome. While folks are curious, it helps a lot to take that step as a newcomer and introduce ourselves to others. Even having a mentor when settling in would be a great asset to moving into a new rural community as a newcomer. My advice for people settling in rural areas is share your stories, don't be shy.

I don't blame people for being curious, because we all want to know who our new next-door neighbours are.

Would you consider Huron-Perth a welcoming place? How so?

Yes, I would certainly consider Huron-Perth a welcoming place. Like I mentioned earlier, sharing your story and reaching out to others will help you build relationships. I always get smiles and get asked how I'm doing with community members, and we love it here! One thing that we all have in common, is enjoying good food. When we have new community members around us, and they are open to trying new food, it's something we can all share!