January 2020

The Canadian South East Asia Refugee Historical Research Project: Hearts of Freedom

Background paper on the archival media research: *Toronto Star* and *The Globe and Mail* (1975-1985)

Dr. Filipe Duarte
Assistant Professor
School of Social Work
University of Windsor
Ontario

This background paper offers a detailed overview of the archival media research conducted on the historical records (microfilms and online databases) of two Canadian newspapers – the *Toronto Star* and *The Globe and Mail*, between May 1, 1975, and December 31, 1985. The archival media research reviewed between 20,000 and 25,000 results, on both newspapers, over a five-month period (February-June 2019). Research was undertaken by searching selected keywords identified in the book *Running on Empty: Canada and the Indochinese Refugees, 1975-1980*, written by Michael J. Molloy, Peter Duschinsky, Kurt F. Jensen and Robert Shalka. The keywords identified were: *refugees*, *boat people*, *southeast Asian*, *Indochinese*, *Vietnam*, *Laos*, *Cambodia*, *Vietnamese*, *Cambodian(s)*, *Laotian(s)*, *resettlement*, and *sponsorship*.

Subsequently, the analysis of the press clipping then proceeded by grouping the findings according four different categories and stages: (1) beginning of the arrival of refugees (migration journey, etc.); (2) public and political/government opinions; (3) sponsorship – individuals, churches and groups; and (4) resettlement and integration into Canadian society.

The beginning of the arrival of refugees

The analysis of the findings under the first category – "beginning of the arrival of refugees", showed that, the first refugees, a family of five, landed at Toronto airport on May 8, 1975. They had already a family member living in Toronto. One month earlier, 53 orphans also arrived in Canada. On May 9, 1975, another 133 refugees landed in Montreal. One day later 95 more landed in Toronto. Newspapers reported that refuges suffered a cultural shock upon arrival, they were not

familiarized with western culture. For example, eating "American" food like bacon, eggs and toasts. Also having to accept help and living at the expenses of others upon arrival was very challenging for some refugees and for their culture.

Since the airlifting of refugees begun in early May 1975, around 1400 Vietnamese and Cambodian refugees arrived in Canada as a result of the resettlement plan set up by the Canadian government. Immigration rules were waived, and military planes airlifted the refugees from Guam's United States military base, near the Philippines. The earlier refugees arriving in Canada were sponsored by the Canadian government with all the expenses paid off for up to a year. While the earlier Vietnamese and Cambodian refugees were airlifted to Canada from the U.S. military base of Guam, the majority arrived between 1977 and 1980. They spent between six and eighteen months in the refugee camps in Malaysia, Hong-Kong, Philippines and Thailand. Findings also confirmed that, refugees arriving in Canada between 1975 and 1979 fled Vietnam on a boat. The majority had a dangerous and exhausting migration journey. Findings demonstrated that some refugees had to pay for their freedom. For example, Nguyen Don Phu, his wife Tran Hoang Yen and their two children fled on a boat from Vietnam. They paid 50 ounces of gold to buy their freedom. Luckily, they were rescued by a Malaysian vessel and taken to a Malaysian refugee camp in Pulau Tengah island where were already 4,000 refugees. By the end of the 1978, Pulau Tengah island refugee camp reached 10,000 refugees. This story shows the journey of the boat people, from when they fled Vietnam until they arrived in Canada. A journey marked by typhons, exhaustion, starvation, and diseases. Thus, the arrival of "boat people" in Canada that began in May 1975 was marked by a bureaucratic immigration screening process, under a monthly quota.

Public and political/government opinions

The second category addresses the "public and political/government opinions" on "boat people" refugee policy. A compilation of the opinions and positions collected from the newspaper sources mentioned above appears below.

In May 1, 1975, several "letters to the editor" in the *Toronto Star* were complaining about Canadian diplomats' behaviour in Vietnam. Canadians were feeling ashamed by the fact Embassy officials in Saigon only cared about their values and cars, leaving behind visa applicants. Letter opinions were calling them "materialistic as the Americans". On the same day, Canada agreed in

accepting 3000 Vietnamese refugees, 2000 evacuated by the United States and 1000 who get out on their own.

A *Toronto Star* editorial on May 3, 1975, entitled "All immigrants need resettlement help" was pointing out that, the key to success for refugee resettlement is good planning and coordination with volunteer groups. It also demystified the ideas of seeing "boat people" as competitors while addressing the surrounding factors of social tension and eventual racist reactions related with the influx of Vietnamese refugees.

On May 9, 1975, *The Globe and Mail* reported that Canada's Immigration Department officials considered Vietnamese refugees as a very skilled group upon the arrival of 133 Vietnamese refugees in Canada. Among them were doctors, lawyers, pharmacists and teachers.

On May 31, 1975, *Toronto Star* quoted Robert Andras, Canada's Immigration Minister, saying that "Viet refugees should not fear persecution" as a result of the investigations on the former Vietnamese General Dang Van Quang, living in Montreal at the time. Robert Andras considered Vietnamese refugees "very fine people".

In early June 1975, a Joint Parliamentary Committee on Immigration Policy held public hearings in Toronto. On the last day of its public hearings, demonstrators tried to disrupt the hearing of the right-wing group Western Guard who defended the deportation of non-whites from Canada. The Joint Parliamentary Committee on Immigration Policy was responsible for getting public opinions from across Canada on the future of Canada's immigration policy to report back to the Parliament in Ottawa in the fall of that year.

In January 16, 1976, the Federal government made a written appeal to all Service Clubs across Canada, inviting them to sponsor refugees, under the proposed annual refugee intake. Jack "Bud" Cullen, the immigration minister at the time said, "by giving refugees 'a new lease on life, Canada gets much in return'. He further added that 'Immigrants create jobs, provide skills and became consumers of Canadian products which in turn will contribute to the Canadian economy.

In January 29, 1979, the *Toronto Star* reported that "compassion" for Vietnamese "boat people" was growing across Toronto Metro area. Both individuals and church groups in Toronto area were available to help "boat people". *Toronto Star* received hundreds of letters and phone calls. It was clear that a wide support in sponsoring "boat people" was growing. All the contacts were being directed to the nearest refugee centre.

On the same day, *The Globe and Mail* reported that Immigration Officials were “not proud of charging Vietnamese refugees, speaking on the policy that required Vietnamese refugees to reimburse the Canadian government with the cost spent on their airfares.

By July 3rd, 1979, a “letter to the editor” published in the *Toronto Star* was claiming that letting “boat people” in was “acting against Canadian People” and the Canadian labour market. In response to those who oppose accepting “boat people”, another letter entitled “enough land for boat people” argued that “they can live self-sufficient in farming communities”, although considering the plight of the "Canadian Indians" as less severe than of the "boat people". Another “letter to the editor” questioned how those refugees could afford a $2000 fare in gold to fled Vietnam. Similarly, on July 7, 1979, other letters were claiming that “we cannot afford to take them in”. That Canadians had no duty on “boat people”.

On July 5th, 1979, a “letter to the editor” published by *The Globe and Mail* labelled Canada’s immigration screening as “utterly shameful” considering the extreme circumstances and needs of the “boat people”. Helen Slampova from Toronto questioned why Canada was insisting in processing the “boat people” applicants “according the various standardized immigration procedures to see which lucky one will fit smoothly into Canadian way of life.” Helen considered that by adopting such procedures, the Canadian government was not showing any act of mercy. On July 7, 1979, another “letter to the editor” published by *The Globe and Mail* offered a totally different tone. It was proposing to give land and animals to “boat people” in the countryside.

The Globe and Mail reported on July 14, 1979 that the Ontario Government will match every dollar raised by the Canadian Red Cross in Ontario to help “boat people”. This announcement made by Premier William Davis occurred after the nation-wide campaign launched by the Canadian Red Cross to rise $500,000 to provide emergency relief to hundreds of thousands of Vietnamese, Cambodian and Laotian refugees trapped in crowded refugee camps in South Asia.

On July 19, 1979, a *Toronto Star* editorial entitled “a challenge for all Canadians” was affirming that “it took a lot of time and public pressure for Ottawa to act”. Moreover, while the refugee quota was being extended up to 50,000 refugees. However, the responsibility to meet that quota was being transferred to individuals and private groups. The editorial questioned why were Canadians called to determine the number of refugee entries?

The Globe and Mail also published on July 19, 1979, a “letter to the editor” on refugees, calling the crisis of the “boat people” a new holocaust. The author, Dr. Paul E. Begin said “if we

will help the "boat people", we will surely help ourselves." Another letter was written by Reuben C. Baetz, the Ontario Minister of Culture and Recreation, clarifying that the Ontario government has made provision to health coverage to all refugees through OHIP, since they arrive in the Province.

In the following day, July 20, 1979, an op-ed from Gerald Utting published by the *Toronto Star* with the title "Can't Canada do a little more for boat people" was offering some criticism for Canada's federal government don't bring "boat people" more easily (into Canada).

However, on July 21, 1979, "a letter to the editor" published by the *Toronto Star* was claiming that rights of Canadians were being pushed aside. J. Murray from Scarborough argued: "we know where all thousands of 'boat people' are going to settler: not next door to the politicians but will take housing from folks like me." He further claimed, "we are mad at the way our rights have been pushed aside by the previous government. We are mad at the open-door policy on immigration and want it stopped."

Under the title "Immigrants can contribute to 'prosperity'", several "letters to the editor" were published by the *Toronto Star* on July 24, 1979, backing the "boat people". For example, John Lynn from Toronto, criticized those who were saying that Canada should accept only immigrants from nations of the same background. He labelled such opinions as "racists". However, Mr. Lynn agreed that immigration should be restricted. Surprisingly, the *Toronto Star* edition on July 24, 1979, included letters pro and against immigration and "boat people". One of the letters was from Lin Poon, a Vietnamese refugee living in Toronto. Mr. Poon said, "as a recent immigrant from Vietnam, I cannot understand why there are so many letters against us." He further added, "those anti-boat people seem not to realize" that Canada is made up of immigrants.

In the following day, the *Toronto Star* (edition of July 25, 1979), continued the publication of several "letters to the editor" on the "boat people". The main heading was saying "Boat people belong in Vietnam", an example among several others with a common message "Canada has enough people", "help Indians before boat people" and "generosity has gone too far".

On August 4, 1979, *The Globe and Mail* asked the following question in its section "letters to editor" – *Boat people: bonus or burden?* Several letters were published in the previous days criticizing the resettlement process of "boat people" to Canada. The rise of unemployment was being used to justify the anti-immigration sentiment.

On August 20, 1979, Dick Beddoes reported in *The Globe and Mail* that in Hamilton one Vietnamese refugee looked richer than his sponsors, but such cases were rare. While in Regina, one elderly ethnic Chinese was being suspected of running a house of prostitution in Saigon.

A few days later, on August 24, 1979, *The Globe and Mail* was discussing the controversial National Citizens' Coalition advertisement attacking the federal government policy on Indochinese refugees. The federal Immigration Minister Ronald Atkey considered the ad as incorrect and full of racial prejudice.

The debate about the controversial advertisement from National Citizens' Coalition continued in *The Globe and Mail* over the following days. On August 29, 1979, the attacks on the plan to bring 50,000 refugees was considered exaggerated. The debates sparked a reaction also in the "letters to the editor", all condemning the so-called racist advertisement.

On September 7, 1979, the *Toronto Start* reported that "boat people" were the new target for racists. The warning was being made by Walter Pitman, the author of a special report on violence against the South Asian community.

One week later, the *Toronto Star* of September 16, 1979, was reporting similar concerns. Kim Abbot, a former director of Canada's Immigration services warned that "an influx of too many Vietnamese refugees too fast could end in "racial problems".

On September 21, 1979, the *Toronto Star* reported the concerns of the Toronto Department of Health regarding the suffering of "boat people" caused by serious mental, dental and health care problems.

On December 6, 1979, *The Globe and Mail* reported the shift in Canada's immigration policy, announced the day before by the Immigration Minister Ronald Atkey. The new plan announced by the federal government abandoned the government goal for bringing 50,000 refugees, leaving the onus to private sponsors. Under the new plan, the federal government will match every refugee privately sponsored.

On the same day, *The Globe and Mail* also published "an open-letter to Immigration Minister Ron Atkey" from the National Citizens' Coalition. In the title was being affirmed that "63.6% of Canadians disagree with your position on Indochinese refugees."

Two weeks later, on December 28, 1979, Arthur Donner wrote in *The Globe and Mail* that "boat people" will create jobs for Canadians. He also considered that the shift in Canada's immigration policy was a reaction in the backlash on "boat people".

Such position was reaffirmed by the Canadian Council of Churches in *The Globe and Mail* on May 10, 1980. In a brief sent to the Immigration Minister Lloyd Axworthy, the Council criticized Government's selection process for refugees considering that such policy was putting much emphasis on jobs and language skills while overlooks the most needed people.

On May 3rd, 1983, the *Toronto Star* reported that social workers were pleading for more help to "boat people". In a symposium that took place the day before, it was concluded that "boat people" were encountering several and severe adjustment problems. Social work professionals were demanding more funding for hospitals, social service agencies and other institutions in order to offer more and better support services for "boat people".

By May 15, 1985, Canada's Immigration policy was being reviewed by Immigration Minister Flora MacDonald. On that day, the *Toronto Star* reported that, a letter signed by the representatives of Canada's six major denominations, plus the 13-member Canadian Council of Churches, was emphasizing the importance of caring and sharing instead of targeting primarily economic growth. The letter advocated for a more humanistic approach when compared with the advices Immigration Minister Flora MacDonald was receiving from the Conservative majority in the House of Commons. By mid-1985, the new vision and policy direction on immigration policy was to attract more economic skilled immigrants, preferably with money to start their own businesses.

Sponsorship – Individuals, Churches and Groups

The third category "sponsorship – individuals, churches and groups" explores the events related with different types of support offered by Canadians - individuals, churches or groups, aiming to sponsor the resettlement of refugees from *Vietnam*, *Cambodia* and *Laos*, to Canada.

In August 1975, a *Toronto Star* article reported their own generous offer to pay a round-trip ticket to Northern Florida for Indo-Chinese refugee, Tran Nhat Duong. Tran was 40 years old at the time and had a wife with two children, Huy (6) and Phuong (2). Tran lost his family within the last days of fighting in Saigon and received news indicating his family's whereabouts in a Floridian camp. U.S. Consul-General J. Raymond Ylitalo provided Tan a temporary visa, granting him the opportunity to find his family.

By August of 1979, *The Global and Mail* announced the birth of a group organized to encourage private sponsorship of refugees, known as *Operation Lifeline*. Originating in Toronto

and led by York professor Howard Adelman, this group had already accumulated 9,036 applications by individuals to sponsor refugees. The government had also agreed to match private sponsors, setting a goal of processing 50,000 refugees by the end of the year 1980. Immigration Minister, Ron Atkey, and External Affairs Minister, Flora MacDonald, announced to the public a chance for a new proposal if they felt the public could exceed the quota. However, Atkey said the private sector still has an aggressive demand of 21,000 more sponsorships before considering to increase the quota. Citizens were criticizing government's policy to take only the most successful of the refugee applicants, but Atkey defended their policy by stating they were only doing their fair share.

A paper released by *Toronto Star* in the new year of 1979 announced an update of the current displacement of Indo-Chinese refugees. Canada had admitted 7,351 refugees by August of 1978, including 600 from the infamous freighter off Malaysia, the Hai Hong. However, most refugees were scattered all over the South East Asia, landing on countries such as, Philippines, Thailand, Hong Kong, Malaysia, and even some left in Vietnam. That year, Ottawa had announced to take in 6,000 more refugees into Canadian territory. The United States of America had reportedly taken in 200,000 refugees, and ironically France, who had once colonized Vietnam, was helping them in their time of need by taking in 40,000 refugees. The "boat people" were allowed to land in South Korea, Taiwan, Japan, Philippines, and Malaysia, but were kept in camps and were not allowed to integrate into society. Australia, New Zealand, and West Germany accepted a handful, but Norway and Sweden could have given more aid. A representative of the United Nations demanded the privileged countries to help Vietnam in their time of crisis. Canada set an example by taking in thousands of refugees despite high unemployment rates.

A report published by the *Toronto Star* on April of 1979 had brought to light the admittance of fewer and fewer immigrants since 1974. By comparison, Canada admitted 218,465 refugees in 1974 and only 100,000 refugees were admitted in the 1978. The decrease of admittance over the years was due to Canada's inability to absorb immigrants as well as it once did.

By June of 1979, *Toronto Star* published the birth of a new group located in the federal riding of St. Paul, known as *The Campaign to Save the Boat People*. Organized by Howard Adelman 6 days prior, the campaign's goal was to sponsor 50 families. Impressively, the campaign had enough applicants to sponsor 23 families on such short notice. Ten other riding groups established their own campaign to save the boat people in response to the initial campaign. Don

Valley West, for example, had set out a goal to sponsor 100 families. Church organizations, businesses, and community groups were known to have the most involvement in the sponsorship programs, adding to the 7000 refugees entering that year. Adelman said it was no coincidence the program started in Immigration Minister Ron Atkey's riding, as he exemplified sympathy towards the current problem and needed support to show Canada cares. Adelman made known the financial demand of $2,000-$8,000 to sponsor a family, with consideration of their size and the time they need to become self sufficient. The refugees had a one-year time limit to settle, and the money provided by the sponsors should support goods, services, accommodation, food, and miscellaneous expenses.

About one month later, *The Globe and Mail* published an update stating it only took *The Campaign to Save the Boat People* 9 days to reach their goal of sponsoring 50 families. In that time, the campaign had already spread and established their program in 58 riding and towns across Ontario. Offers of different types of sponsorship aides rose in response to the refugee crisis. For instance, a small group of 100 people gathered enough funds to sponsor six families. One Jewish couple shared their sympathy towards racial persecution and hosted a block sponsorship to sponsor one family. Another Jewish businessman rounded 20 other businessmen to sponsor 20 families. *Operation Lifeline* not only showed citizens how to organize sponsor groups, but also acted as a pressure group, asking the government to take more than the 12,000 refugees it has taken in so far. Employees had also come forward offering a total of 50 jobs to date. A small grocery store had also volunteered to provide one-year worth of fruits and vegetables for one family. One supermarket chain was in the midst of setting up a food voucher system in Ontario and a food processing firm and clothing manufacturer had offered their company supplies to support the movement. Howard Adelman realized Ontario's health insurance plan would not cover the first month of their stay, so he asked his brother and head of cardiology at Mr. Sinai Hospital, Dr. Allan Adelman, to pull a few strings. Within the few days, Dr. Allan Adelman was able to organize all departments to provide voluntary medical care to uninsured refugees. In response to this virtuous act, Sick Children's Hospital followed Mt. Sinai Hospital's lead and volunteered to provide free pediatric care.

On July of 1979, *The Globe and Mail* brought to light a new group with a plan to bring 4000 refugees into Canada, called *Project 4000*. Ran by the project interim coordinator, Michael Lubbock, this 6-day old project had set out a goal to find 1000 individuals to sponsor refugees for

one year. The government estimated a total of $9,000 to cover food, shelter, clothes, and medical needs to support a family of five. In light of other news, the government had generously provided more than $1,000 worth of airfare loans to transport refugees from Indonesia to Canada. 300 member of the *Ottawa Chinese Community* and nine Chinese organizations had also reached out and offered to sponsor a total of 116 refugees. Efforts had also been made to find "neighbourhood sponsors" to take charge of finding condominiums and apartment units to offer as shelter for the refugees. *Project 4000* also planned to execute a letter writing campaign with the goal of persuading the government to increase the maximum quota of 50,000 and to be less selective of applicants. Lubbock feared for the children and the paraplegic. There is an estimated six months to process a refugee into Canada. In response, the Roman Catholic and Anglican Archdioceses of Ottawa signed an agreement with the government to help efficiency of processing. In addition to a benevolence of services, *Project 4000* had also set up a donation box for sponsors who were in need of extra funds.

Federal Immigration officials were very meticulous of the screening process. The process included personally interviewing two members of each group. Each group was required to have a minimum of five adults who had $2,500-$8,000 worth of material resources to support a family of five or six. The families were usually able to support themselves within two to four months, but the screening process asked sponsors for sufficient resources to support a family for one year. The first family brought by *Operation Lifeline* has announced their arrival by the end of August 1979. About a dozen refugees were already residing in Toronto thanks to a number of Church groups who acted before the mass evacuation. Immigrant Officials were overworked with the overwhelming demand of meeting with unexpected floods of council groups and organizations. *Operation Lifeline* had already been established in 58 ridings across Ontario. Adelman said sponsorships could be as simple as establishing a group of five to ten working people of lower-middle class.

An article published by the *Toronto Star* on July of 1979 acknowledged the Catholic Archdiocese of Toronto for sponsoring 1000 refugees. Father Brad Massman said they were specifically looking for refugees the government didn't usually take, such as the ones who were less healthy or educated. Cardinal Gerald Emmet Carter ordered Massman to go to California, where they had set thousands of refugees over the past ten years to pick up tips on how to run efficient refugee programs. In California, Massman observed committees in each parish helping

the refugees with setting up their home, doing their shopping, and even enroll their children to school. The Catholic Archdiocese of Toronto has modeled after California, where only 5% of the refugees were unemployed. Cardinal Carter said the real problem was not helping the refugees find jobs, but to help them adjust to an entirely different culture. Relatively, the Canadian Catholic Bishops of Relief Organization for Development and Peace raised $25,000 in funds to provide financial relief to Red Crescent of Malaysia. The Canadian Catholic Bishops have also sent out telegrams to External Affairs Minister Flora MacDonald and Immigration Officer Ron Atkey to ask them to increase the government quota and widen the range of acceptable applicants. All religious denominations across Metro reached out offering services to support the national movement. To name a few, St. Michael's Hospital had offered free dental and medical care, and a newly established fund called *Project Rescue Boat People* has been found by Canada's largest Jewish service, B'nai B'rith. Additionally, *Operation Lifeline* in the riding of Beaches had reportedly raised $7,000 in donations and received pledges and offers of four homes.

In July of 1979, *The Globe and Mail* had announced the launch of a letter writing campaign introduced by Operation Lifeline, with the goal to convince Ottawa to use Military Aircraft to transport refugees. Citizens were concerned due to a shortage of federal government staff processing refugee applications in Malaysia and shortage of civilian aircraft only allow the transport of 80 refugees per week.

On that same month, the *Toronto Star* published an article sharing the government's similar desire to take in more refugees, but had brought to light obstacles in the way of streamlining the process, such as lack of transportation and shortage of officials to screen private sponsorships. 8,000 of the 12,000 refugees were expected to arrive in Canada soon, in addition to 2,000 from private sponsors and 2,000 more sponsored by refugee's relatives residing in Canada. A representative for Ron Atkey asked the public to give Atkey some breathing space, as he has exhausted himself from attending intense briefings, cabinet meetings, and from pressure by community groups to release plans of action to support refugees. A chartered ocean liner, chartered commercial aircraft and a few military planes were considered by the government to help transport refugees, however using these resources became quite difficult due to short notice, existing booked flights, and the inability to use cargo aircrafts to transport refugees. The government had used transportation arrangements to capacity, allowing Canada to transport 700 refugees every month. Though unsure of when and how many, the government announced a plan to send more processing

officials to Southeast Asia. Immigration officials were worked to exhaustion as there were only 10 Canadian field workers interviewing 360,000 refugee applicants in all of Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Hong Kong and the Philippines. Meanwhile, church and community groups were unhappy with the length it took to grant approval of sponsorships. Immigration Officials rebuttal by saying the criticism was unfair because they are always trying their best. Kirk Bell, head of Immigration Recruitment and Selection, wanted to point out the 73 sponsors that signed on the month of March alone, when the program had been around for already a year. After the program was widely promoted through churches and humanitarian groups, by the end of June there were 350 sponsors ready to take 1500 refugees. The number of sponsors were intensely accelerated due to the amount of publicity it received.

On that same day, *Toronto Star* mentions *Operation Lifeline* receiving support from Toronto Mayor John Sewell by clearing out an office on the second floor of City Hall to make room for *Operation Lifeline*'s day to day operations. The organization was said to be cooperating with employees from the Stratford Festival to receive financial support from pledges and proceeds of a benefit performance hosted at the Festival Theatre in Stratford. *Operation Lifeline* had also invited a specialist to an organized event made to teach sponsors about tropical diseases and to share what they have experienced so far within the first steps of the sponsorship program.

On July 11 of 1979, an article by *Toronto Star* reported a mass rally sponsored by Toronto's Chinese community to ask the government to provide more support for the boat people. Politicians, church representatives, ethnic leaders and refugees took part in the 1.5km march from Grange Park to Nathan Phillips Square, and even asked Toronto Mayor John Sewell to participate. Booths were set up in Eaton Centre, Chinatown and various other popular Toronto locations to encourage Toronto citizens to sign petitions urging the federal government to take a leading role in the upcoming United Nations conference in Geneva. The Toronto Chinese community had also set up a refugee sponsorship fund and hoped for Canada to organize rescue ships, emergency refugee camps and increase Canada's overall quota of 50,000. Two days later, *Toronto Star* announced that as of right now, 360,000 *Vietnames*e, *Laotian* and *Cambodian* refugees remain crammed in temporary camps. The arrival of a major flow of refugees after chartered aircrafts were freed from tourist holiday flights scheduled between the months of September to November. Immigrations officers placed in South-east Asia were fully aware of the demand to increase the quota and speed up the processing of the immigrants, however, policy has

made the process of sending reinforcements difficult due to the procedures of negotiating between respective governments. Canada planned to use the months of July and August to organize backlogs to ensure efficient work. Workers involved in the refugee screening operations ask for private sponsors to restrain from "tailored requests" often found in refugee applications. Screening operators thought it was difficult to find refugees that meet specific requirements in an already overworked and overcrowded environment. Since the start of the year, five immigration officers stationed in Singapore have already selected 5000 refugees to come to Canada, and single officers stationed in Hong Kong, Thailand and the Philippines have selected hundreds more. Immigration officers usually stay in a camp for one week before travelling to another camp to stay for another week. Every month, the officers report back to headquarters to complete a stockpile of paperwork waiting for their return. On that same day, 2000 people were jammed in Ottawa's Civic Centre in support for *Project 4000*, Ottawa's plan to resettle 4000 refugees. Announced two weeks prior, the program had already gathered 1000 people offering various forms of aid. The event hosted live entertainment while volunteers walked about finding sponsors.

Led by Joe Caruana, *Someone Cares Committee* is a Calgary church-based organization established to help support the international movement of helping the boat people. Calgary Mayor Ross Alger says the city is affluent and fortunate and should be helping. To support the committee, Mayor Ross Alger proposed to airlift 8,000 refugees to Calgary and has met with Alderman Robert Simpson, an Immigration Official, and 9 other members of the committee to discuss proposed plans of Calgary's involvement in support of the cause. The committee asked for council endorsement, $250,000 of financial support, and office space to conduct their daily operations. The office space could be provided, but the financial support could not be honoured until the federal government approves of the plan and were presented a budget for the council. Caruana was pleased with Alger's support and stressed the urgency of saving the refugees before they are "raped, robbed, drowned, or die[d] of starvation or thirst." Alberta Manpower Minister James Horseman says the province of Alberta will not imposed on a quota and says everyone is welcome.

Only July 19 of 1979, *Toronto Star* published an article stating the government of Ontario expecting to settle 13,000 refugees within the next 8 months. Premier William Davis promised to welcome all who come to Ontario back when only 3000 were expected. Toronto Mayor John Sewell has expected 10,000 of the 13,000 to settle in Metro. Davis' Culture and Recreational Minister Reuben Baetz said the government had a short-term responsibility in caring for the

refugees and more responsibilities will fall on the provinces in the long run. Officials did not expect the increase in refugee quota and are unable to predict how the province can provide housing, medical care and housing for the influx of new Ontario settlers. Baetz said the Chinese community had done a remarkable job at settling the refugees so far, but is concerned they can't handle 13,000, compared to the 3,000 promised prior. President of the Toronto Chinese Community Association Dr. Shui Kong pushed for the recruitment of Chinese Immigration Aid by the federal government to speed up the settlement process and thought it would be a good idea to assign their personnel to a refugee camp so they would be involved throughout the whole process. Bill Wen, a council representative of the Toronto Chinese Businessmen Association said Canada was the best country to sponsor refugees, and expects the refugees having no trouble finding jobs because of their exemplary work ethic.

The *Toronto Star* published an update of the current plight of the refugees as of July 21 of 1979. Out of every 2000 refugees trying to escape, 1000 drown at sea, and those who survive the churning seas, pirate ambush, sickness, hunger and exhaustion arrive at neighbouring countries. Malaysia had 80,000 kept in camps and have requested patrol ships to tow incoming boats back out to sea and to shoot them if they return. Malaysia deliberately makes camps as horrible as possible to discourage refugees to come. This cruel response towards the boat people was due to extremely high refugee population and lingering fear of the Vietnamese military attacking their country for helping. By December of 1979, there were roughly 1 million Vietnamese citizens seeking refuge. Japan had taken in 3 permanent residents, whereas the United States had taken in 500. Much like Malaysia, Hong Kong had 58,000 refugees in camps and could not take anymore in. Thailand had 161,000 and Indonesia had 32,000 kept in camps as well. In comparison to Canada's population of 6 people per square mile, Hong Kong had 11,000 people per square mile. Canada at the time, had only taken in 8,000 refugees, so people were wondering why the Western world was not doing more to help.

On July 26 of 1979, *Toronto Star* published a list of requirements to be deemed eligible for the sponsorship program. Sponsors should belong to a legally incorporated organization, such as a church, club or group, and there should be a minimum of 5 members. All members must be Canadian citizens or landed immigrants with the combined earning of at least $100,000. Sponsors should be prepared to support a family or individual for one year, though it usually takes 3-4 months before they become self-sufficient. It is required for each adult to provide a minimum of

$2,500 to support a refugee family for one year. Expenses were expected to cover housing, food, pocket money, clothing, health care, and furning. However, the cost of sponsoring a family would be less if housing or food is donated or if the family become self supporting before the one-year time limit. *Operation Lifeline* estimated it could cost as little as $2,000 per year for a family of five. It usually takes 2-4 months for their sponsored family to arrive, and sponsors were required to meet them at the airport for moral support. Information kits made by *Operation Lifeline* were available, and so were representatives for each riding, if anyone had any additional questions. Announcement of a new campaign called the *Action Committee for Refugees in Southeast Asia* had formulated to conduct seminars for sponsors and refugees. Donations of all sorts were also being collected by other organizations. Cash, jobs, and lodging proceeds were forwarded to the Canadian Jewish Congress. Clothing was sent to Cadet Cleaners. World Vision was open to accept donations for rescue operations and relief camps. Canadian B'nai B'rith was collecting monetary aid to assist sponsors in the program and the Toronto Chinese Community Services Association was collecting donations to help provide resettlement services.

According to an *Operation Lifeline* volunteer, Metro organizations were doing extremely well with gathering money and sponsors. *Operation Lifeline* had already collected 500 sponsors in 1 month. People were offering places to live and work, while churches were mobilizing members to sponsor. The Toronto archdiocese had collected an impressive 26 applications just the week prior. Toronto Mayor John Sewell was confident in Toronto's ability to provide assistance such as housing, finance and medical coverage to 12,000-15,000 refugees. On the other hand, City Planner Nathan Gilbert was concerned that problems of accommodation and social problems could arise with the sudden influx of refugees arriving all at once. The Canadian government pledged to accept 50,000 refugees, and 40% of them were staying in Toronto. Toronto Alderman Gordon Cressy insisted critical need for coordination of services, and that all 3 levels of government should work together to ensure their smooth transition into Canada.

By July 29 of 1979, *The Global and Mail* announced a small town participating in the nation-wide movement of supporting the boat people. The town of Shelburne, Ontario had a population of 3,000 people and had gathered 33 citizens willing to sponsor the boat people, fitting to support 1-2 families. A past *Global and Mail* article had said that the town of Shelburne was opposed to taking in so many refugees into Canada, but Shelburne residents argue that it was not representative of the entire community. The sponsors had established a fund and had already

collected $5,000 in proceeds. Relatively, a branch of *Operation Lifeline* located in Barrie had also collected enough proceeds to sponsor 5 more families.

Metro's Multicultural Coordinator Rosanna Scotti was concerned of Canadians overlooking the real problems that come with trying to accommodate the sudden influx of refugees. In this article by the *Toronto Star*, published on August 11 of 1979, Scotti mentioned that refugees were in fact, good for the economy. They usually took jobs Canadians won't do, would start to earn wages, would purchase goods and become consumers. However, Scotti was aware of the support needed to take care of the refugees and thought Toronto was not prepared for the task. Looking back, in the last 9 months, 1,000 refugees had arrived, and officials were already scrambling to find apartments. Toronto leaders urged for faster, better planning so funds from provincial and federal government were shared equally between taxpayers and refugees. The overall goal was to assimilate refugees as painlessly as possible into Canadian society and not let them become victims of backlash and red tape.

A study of refugee services was conducted and a list of concerns of potential problems was generated. First, there was little thought put into the suitability of a house because if Toronto's minimal turnover rate and scarce low rent housing. Teachers were to establish accommodating programs for the refugee children but were unable to predict how they would learn in school after spending years in camps without education. Federal and provincial governments were drawing out volunteers from the Chinese Ethnic Community to help settle refugees, but counselling those who have lost family members, suffered extreme hardships and now only have 1 year to adapt to a new culture may be too much to ask from a volunteer. Many Vietnamese were also susceptible to Canadian illnesses, which may require immediate support in case of an emergency. *Operation Lifeline* was then 6 weeks old and had already 1,200 private sponsors ready to support 5,000 refugees. This was great news, however the government's pledge to match private sponsors was a concern on its own. At the time, sponsors were only responsible for the refugee's immediate placement upon arrival, but there was more to consider for the long run. Mike Molloy was the Sr. Federal Coordinator for the Refugees and was fully aware of the extraordinary expenses, so he emphasized on doing it right. $50-$60 million has been donated from the board to help with the settlement process. Two streams of refugees were to be considered; private and government sponsored. Privately sponsored refugees had housing, food, health needs, clothing and pocket money supplied by their sponsors for one year. Private sponsors were also urged to help refugees

find jobs upon arrival. Government sponsored refugees had allowance for incidentals, food money, rent money, OHIP and had access to training classes. There was an incredible pressure to purchase low rent housing and it was difficult to find one that met regulatory health standards. However, Director of the Vietnamese Association John Chu had said the refugees would have been grateful for any accommodation, "Just a roof over their heads after facing such a strife life." Though, Director of Metro's Family Services Association Bob Couchman had a different perspective. Vietnamese clients were already reaching out with practical problems such as poor housing. 70% of low-income housing in Toronto were already substandard and poor, so Couchman questioned how long the refugees could possibly live in their sponsor's basement. The province on Ontario had come up with $600,000 going towards the Culture and Recreation Ministry to fund refugee settlement programs. An addition $285,000 was donated to support other community groups. *Operation Lifeline* also received $33,500 from the province to continue training people to work with sponsors. Scotti advocates for spending money on things that will cost more down the road, such as special education teachers to help the refugee children, expanding daycare services so mothers can go to English classes and counselling services to accelerate their integration into society.

On August 17 of 1979, *Toronto Star* had announced a special 3-hour appeal broadcasting across approximately 20 televised stations all over the country to help the refugees. Presented by the Canadian Association of Christian Broadcasters and hosted by Ian Stanley, "Don't Let Them Die" hoped to raise at least $50,000. All proceeds were donated to World Vision International to help airlift food and medical supplies to refugee camps. Another 3-hour special was aired on September 14th featuring Canada's most popular entertainers to help raise money for *Operation Lifeline*.

By August 22 of 1979, *The Globe and Mail* held the spotlight on an organization devoted to encouraging private sponsorship of refugees; *Operation Lifeline*. Originating in Toronto and led by York professor Howard Adelman, this group had already accumulated 9,036 applications by individuals to sponsor refugees. The government had already agreed to match private sponsors, setting a goal of processing 50,000 refugees by the end of the year 1980. Immigration Minister, Ron Atkey, and External Affairs Minister, Flora MacDonald, announced to the public a chance for a new proposal if they felt the public could exceed the quota. However, Atkey says the private sector still has an aggressive demand of 21,000 more sponsorships before considering increasing

the quota. Citizens were criticizing government's policy to take only the most successful of the refugee applicants, but Atkey defended their policy by stating they were only doing their fair share.

By September 13 of 1979, *The Global and Mail* announced that private sponsorship programs have been doing extremely well. Immigration Minister Ron Atkey was confident in Canada's ability to support 50,000 refugees by the end of the year, which was one year earlier than expected. As of that time, 14,000 refugees were already sponsored by private sponsors. The government of Canada was then to match their total in addition to the 8,000 allowed into the country earlier that year.

In an article by the *Toronto Star* on October 15 of 1979, the city of Oakville, Ontario welcomes the arrival of their first Vietnamese family, thanks to the help of the Congregation of Central Baptist Church. Chu Chay Lu had been living in a Malaysian refugee camp with his wife and children 5 months prior to their arrival to Oakville. They tried to flee Saigon, but officials caught their boat and imprisoned Lu for 9 months while detaining his wife and children for 6 weeks. When they were finally able to leave, pirates robbed them and sank their boat. Soon after, a German boat rescued them and took them to Malaysia. Lu did some investigating and thought Canada would be the best country for his family. Lu and his family were presented as special guests at a gathering for Central Baptist Church members to welcome them into their community. The family host furnished them with the basics they will need to begin a life in Canada. They aimed to provide the family with necessities without taking away their independence.

Heartbreaking news surfaced Canada on December 6 of 1979. Published by the *Toronto Star*, the federal government announced their withdrawal to match private sponsors. Only 4 months into their commitment, Ron Atkey announced the government of Canada had decided to redirect their concerns towards war-torn Cambodia and to shift the quota responsibility to private sponsors. Atkey said the government was willing to sponsor 3,000 more in addition to the 12,000 already sponsored by the government. The final tally including private sponsors equalled to 26,000. The Secretary of the United Church of Canada's Mission Division, Reverend Clarke MacDonald, criticized the government for putting a price on the refugees. Atkey said in response to the public pressure to do something dramatic to help, the government agreed to take in 50,000 refugees by the end of 1980.

One day after, the *Toronto Star* published a news piece articulating the intolerable burden felt by private sponsorship programs. Toronto Regional Director of *Operation Lifeline* Patricia

Fritz-Turner discerned particular concern of *Operation Lifeline*'s ability to help settle 9,000 more refugees into Canada without further assistance from the federal government. Despite the program's success, sponsoring 9,000 more refugees would put an intolerable burden on *Operation Lifeline* and other private, community and group sponsors. *Operation Lifeline* had emergency funds in case sponsors were no longer able to support refugees, but orientation and education programs would suffer without back-up services provided by the government. In response, External Affairs Minister Flora MacDonald said the tragedy in Kampuchea (Cambodia) and Laos surpassed the tragedy in Vietnam and million in Kampuchea are highest priority as of that time.

Reaction had been extremely negative towards the federal government for forwarding most sponsorships to the private sponsors. Church and community leaders involved in the settlement process were disgusted by the government's withdrawal. Reverend Dennis Murphy was the General Secretary of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops at the time and said the government had "caved into an anti-immigrant, anti-refugee lobby," and their act was a "breach of faith." Leaders around Canada, such as Joe Caruana, the founder of a sponsorship advocacy group in Calgary, said the government should have honoured their commitment and not back down. Meanwhile, House of Commons Toronto Liberal Peter Stollery accused Atkey of changing the policy so External Affairs Minister Flora MacDonald could fulfill a pledge she made earlier this month to provide $15 million in financial and supplementary aid for Cambodia.

By December 14 of 1979, *The Globe and Mail* announced private sponsors sending letter to Prime Minister Joe Clark, asking the government to reconsider their decision to withdraw from sponsorships. The letter criticized the government for mixing emergency relief matters with refugee resettlement programs/budgets, expressed how community and church groups were not ready to release the government of their commitment to match private sponsors and how they expected the government to consult with private agencies before making decisions that would affect the program. Private sponsors did not appreciate policy decision being made in secret and only announced for implementation. The letter was drafted in a 2-day meeting in Montreal with 60 leader form across Canada involved with the settlement process. News conferences were scheduled to share their concern and copies of the letter were sent to Prime Minister Joe Clark, Immigration Minister Ron Atkey, External Affairs Minister Flora MacDonald and Secretary of State David MacDonald. Atkey understood their concern and have announced the government would contribute $1,300 for each refugee sponsored privately, who would have been otherwise

sponsored by the government. The public's concern also reached Flora MacDonald and in response, she said individuals can continue to sponsor refugees despite exceeding the initial target of 21,000 by 5,000.

A news article published by the Toronto Star on December 15 of 1979, stated that church groups have been the most involved in the sponsorship program in Halifax, Nova Scotia. Bill Hamm was the manager of the Canada Immigration Center at Halifax International Airport and he felt that private sponsors were doing a much better job than government sponsors because of the genuine concern and personal contact provided for each refugee coming in. St. Bernard Catholic Parish had sponsored a family of 4 plus 1 individual, while one of their members had already sponsored 5 refugees. A church group in upper Stewlacke Area had sponsored a family of 8 and Hamm says the requests keep coming in with sponsorship activity taken place in all 50 parishes or the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Halifax. Some churches even hired full time worker to operate a daycare while parents would study English. This program even takes care of the children's medical needs and is welcome to all refugees, not just the boat people. A few citizens questioned Canada's involvement with outsiders, considering there were already so many Canadians out of work. Despite the negativity, Hamm says people under unemployment were better off that the refugees who didn't have a country to call their own. Nova Scotia had expected to provide home for 700 refugees by 1980.

Announced by the *Toronto Star* on December 24 of 1979, St. Michael's Church had already raised $13,000 in the past month and had already sponsored a Vietnamese family into Canada. Hong Quan and his wife, Lin, were separated when Quan had to leap on his motorcycle and swim across the river in the middle of the night after hearing nearby Laotian police. At the time, Lin was with her parents and she soon reunited with Quan two months later. Quan and Lin were the first 2 of 5 Laotian refugees to arrive in Toronto. Quan was grateful to everyone involved in helping them start a new life. Quan was anticipating the arrival of his 2 sisters and 1 brother, who were also being sponsored by the church and were patiently waiting for their passage to Canada. The Quans were living in a 3-bedroom home rented by the church while studying English, eager to start his new job at a drycleaning firm in the new year.

Published by the *Toronto Star* of January 11 of 1980, North York Controller Irving Paisley ran into some unexpected trouble trying to establish a campaign to help the boat people. In August of 1979, Paisley organized a volunteer committee which could help Vietnamese refugees settle in

North York. He felt like the plan had a bright future back when the federal government remained committed to the cause. The North York council had voted $2,000 to help sponsor a family and agreed to lend out typewriters and office equipment for clerical work. The North York council had also asked the province for $25,000 and asked to rent out an office space that had been vacant for 2 years to help establish a centre to coordinate their efforts. Mayor Mel Lastman asked the Minister of Government services, Doug Wiseman, for the office space but Wiseman said he could lend it out for only 6 months because the space had scheduled renovations. Wiseman's representatives also met with Paisley's committee and said rent would cost more than $2,000 for the 6-month period. Lastman had asked Wiseman to terminate the charge in consideration of the important issue while Paisley was trying to get the funds affirmed by the Ministry of Culture and Recreation. Paisley had written a letter to the ministry reminding them of the many discussions of funding and he had yet to obtain them. He received a letter in return stating the response from organizations and the general public had exceeded the ministry's expectations and has caused delays in the processing of funds. Paisley said it was obvious they "...don't intend to do anything." His committee has disbanded and in Paisley's last efforts, he asked the council to donate the $2,000 to Operation Lifeline in addition to the $1,000 he collected in private donations.

On January 12 of 1980, Toronto Star announced the arrival of 20 boat people sponsored by Blythwood Road Baptist Church. With less than 400 members, they were able to provide housing, furnishing, financial backing, support in starting their education, job training and familiarization of Canada customs.

Readers of *Starship* helped sponsor a family into Toronto in the summer of 1979, and they have finally arrived on January 21 of 1980, declared by the Toronto Star. Ung and Huv Tang had brought with them their 6 children, ranging from 8-19 years of age and their 18-year-old niece, Mai Hunh. Starship had contributed $886.40 to a University of Toronto fund ran by Father Art Roberts with a grand total of $15,000 donated by contributors all over the country. Father Roberts was grateful for the opportunity to demonstrate Christian values and to have brought joy during the sponsorship pairing. Father Roberts had no doubt the family would be self sufficient soon enough, as Mr. Tang was a mechanic's assistant and Mrs. Tang was a seamstress. Despite the language barrier, Mai was able to speak on behalf of her family to give their thanks for treating them well. The family had no home for a long time. They went to Hong Kong when they had to

leave Vietnam and since then, had stayed in 3 different camps while waiting for their papers to be processed. They were very happy to finally end up in Toronto.

On March 1 of 1980, Toronto Star had reported a noticeable change in Canada within the last 50 years. People were less afraid of change and no longer expect only one way of thinking. For example, the Waldorf Astoria Hotel in Toronto started off as a posh hotel, where it later became a place for travelling theatre companies to stay. Eventually, the building had provided their rooms to rent out to government sponsored refugees while they took their time to accommodate themselves into the new way of living. Binh Chuong Hang, his wife Dai Nu Hang, and his 3 children were residents of the newly modified Astoria Hotel. Binh and Dai arrived 3 weeks prior and had already started working. Hang expected life to improve during the 1975 treaty. Hang stayed hoping for a representation government to be formed, but it never happened. Life was good for the Hang family. They had an industrialized sewing machine they used to make and sell shirts. They were seen as potential loyalists to Beijing despite being 4th generation citizens of Vietnam. First, they had restrictions on their liberty then schools replaced Chinese instruction with Vietnamese instruction. Eventually, word of a re-education camp would soon be established, where they would be starved and beaten. Exchanging their life savings of 40 oz gold in exchange for a boat was their only resort to safety. They eventually landed in Manila, Philippines where they lived 6 months on an 18-man vessel which had been pushed to carry 2,000 people, docked on a harbour. Eventually, a Canadian official arrived to conduct interviews and they were then transported to a camp for medical examinations one week later. Hang was grateful for the safety of his family but was worried about how he would be able to operate an unfamiliar electric sewing machine. News of two sponsors from the Presbyterian Church had met with a refugee to escort him from the airport to the welcome house. Reporters asked to conduct an interview with the newcomer but one of the sponsors denied the reporters offer, adamantly suggesting to first take him home to rest for he had already been through so much.

Published by the *Toronto Star* in March 10 of 1980 reported the new Employment and Immigration Minister Lloyd Axworthy to have reviewed the sponsorship program policy with the aim of continuing to match private sponsor, even it exceeded 50,000 by 1980. The year prior, the previous Employment and Immigration Minister Ron Atkey made the promise to match private sponsors to a total of 50,000 refugees by the end of 1980. Canadians rose to the challenge and cities, towns, villages, churches, community groups and neighborhoods all rose to the challenge to

rescue as many Vietnamese families from drowning at Sea. Citizens of Canada rented apartments, found them jobs, collected furniture and clothing, arranged reading classes and enrolled their children in schools. Canada's overall generosity exceeded 25,000 and it looked as though private sponsors were able to bring about 35,000, so Atkey decided to draw back from his commitment. Canadians rose to his challenge and were left to feel betrayed by his actions.

On September 9 of 1980, the *Toronto Star* put the spotlight on *Operation Lifeline* volunteers for spearheading the program's unfathomable success. The Founder of the program, Howard Adelman, believed the difference between private and government sponsors is the "human support factor," and the secret ingredient was the time devoted to help the boat people adapt into the Canadian culture. Adelman was empathetic and though it was important for the refugees to have someone who talks to them, cares about them and encourages them to live the best they can. Adelman pointed out some difficulties that came with having varying sponsors. Apart from setting aside $1,000 for each refugee and encouraging the head of the house to enroll in English classes, the government made no regulation or guideline on how to discharge the financial and moral responsibilities tied to becoming a sponsor. One sponsor had pushed both husband and wife to study English before seeking work, while another sponsor had pushed both to find work at once. The amount of grocery money distributed to the families was also a varying factor. The average amount given for groceries was between $33-$117 per refugee, and according to a study conducted by sociologists Lynn Clark and Gertrud Neuwirth of Carleton University, the refugees couldn't help to compare the difference amongst each other. Adelman said this was the first-time voluntary sponsors had been tried at such a large scale and the program was doing well as a whole, but if done again, he would construct firmer guidelines. As of that time, there were currently 21,600 refugees from private sponsors, 12,000 of which were the government's responsibility. 16,000 more were to be expected by the end of the month and 10,000 more by the end of the year.

Adelman shared some insight with the Toronto Star on refugee activity upon their first days of arrival. Refugees were first transported from the airport to Waldorf Astoria Hotel where manpower and immigration counsellors tell them how much money they had for food, what kind of housing to look for and where to look for housing. Counsellors also assessed the head of the family to see if additional lingual training was necessary. Most refugees sponsored by the government knew some English, but most of the privately sponsored refugees knew slim to none. Government sponsored refugees were sent out with a map after a lecture on how to get about on

the subway. If they had additional questions, they were to attend lectures held by Ontario's Ministry of Culture and Recreation. In the lectures, government and private sponsors introduced to Canada's postal system, were taught how to open a bank account, learned how to send telegrams, were taught how to count Canadian money and how to distinguish between a dime and a subway token. They were even briefed with the precarious distinctions between Miss, Missus and Mister. Adelman felt as though government sponsored refugees were left to fend for themselves. Unlike the privately sponsored refugees who were looked after by their corresponding sponsor, government sponsored refugees were not taught when to use and where to find resources like libraries, daycare, skill training services and the majority even miss out on health care. Adelman was proud to say private sponsors provided the "human support factor" in resettling the boat people. They would rush the family to a physician for a medical examination then to the dentist to get their teeth fixed.

Tinh Huyng was a refugee boarded the last U.S. plane to leave Saigon in 1975. He travelled to Guam, where he stayed in Camp Pendleton to apply himself into the sponsorship program to join his brother in Toronto. Huynh became a Canadian citizen, trained to become and optician and since then had been a consultant on refugee resettlement with the Ministry of Culture and Recreation. According to Huynh, refugees from private sponsors had the most attention, but were pushed too quickly find work. Often, refugees would get struck at low level jobs as dishwashers and car polishers with no chance to speak English. This was troublesome because without practice, they would never be proficient in the language. Huynh also felt as though housing refugees in sponsor's homes was another mistake, as both families living under one roof varied in religions, tastes in food, ways of disciplining children and standards of housekeeping. Some families were amazed at the amount of room that was provided for lodging, as it was common to fit a family of a husband, wife, children and grandparents in one room. One Laotian family placed in a 3-bedroom apartment had gathered their beds together at night, so they did not feel alone.

Another study conducted by sociologists Lynn Clark and Gertrud Neuwirth of Carleton University found that 93% of refugees had found jobs since 1975. They speculated there would be complications on the employment process. It could have been as simple as a welder wanting to be a welder or a shopkeeper wanting to own a shop, but some required additional time to acquire their previous occupational status. Lynn and Gertrud found that refugees had often worked the jobs that Canadians did not want or were not able to fill. They also observed how wives were able to work

while the children were in school and very often earned more than their husbands. This was because chambermaids received higher wages than that of a dishwasher. Considering Canada's unemployment statistics at the time, Adelman was shocked to hear 900 jobs were available for the taking.

The Toronto Star also shared some insight on how Canada may have benefited from the refugees. The Refugee Officer for the Canadian Council of Churches, Kathleen Ptolemy, had said this was the first time for many Toronto citizens to have come in contact with someone outside their social groupings and felt as though prejudices have made way as citizens developed friendships from other cultures. A member of the Mennonite Central Committee, Arthur Drieger, had said his church had helped refugees before, but never people from a different race, culture and religion. The members of his church were shocked at first but were soon rewarded with a wider view of the world. The First Reformed Church of Harriston, Ontario had sponsored 2 refugee families within their 50-family congregation, which was even more impressive considering the town's modest population of 2,000 people. The Church's minister, Reverend Harry Dekker, had said some people were bound to convey a negative reaction, but noticed a complete turn around as the refugees were greeted warmly upon their arrival. The First Reformed Church of Harriston had gathered an outstanding donation of $9,000 within a day, and Reverend Dekker was overjoyed for the opportunity to demonstrate Christian love. The Coordinator of the United Church's Refugee Sponsorship Program, Don Groff, cautioned the public to focus on integration, not assimilation. Canadian citizens were encouraged to celebrate differences to create a mosaic, rather than a melting pot. He reminded Canada to be sensitive towards the grieving they felt after leaving their lives and losing their loved ones.

On November 29 of 1980, the *Toronto Star* wrote an article reminding Canadians of Hai Hong, the freighter escaping Vietnam with 2,500 refugees on board. The freighter was shunted from port to port until the United Nations High Commission for Refugees pressure Malaysia to allow the vessel to anchor onto Port Klang. Canada's quota was risen slightly and was able to select 600 refugees boarding on Hai Hong. The article also shared the experience of a Chief Canadian Immigration Officer for Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia and Burma. After working for over two years, his hair had turned completely gray, he had lost 42lbs and spent 5 weeks in bed due to the hepatitis he had picked up in the camps. His experience brought light on the difficulties and treacherous events that took place in developing countries tarnished by the by-product of war.

As of December 7, the Federal Government had announced their compliance to allow Canadians to bring in 60,000 refugees.

The *Toronto Star* had announced as of May 1 of 1980, the provincial government of Ontario contributing $500,000 to community agencies to help resettle refugees. As of 1977, 24,000 refugees have settled in Ontario alone. The additional was supplied to help the remaining 7,000 arriving by the end of this year, said Reuben Baetz, the Culture and Recreation Minister of Ontario.

On April 11 of 1983, the *Toronto Star* published an article with special adherence to voice the perspectives of a few refugees sponsored by Willowdale Presbyterian Church. The congregation was celebrating 4 years of helping refugees start a life in Canada. So far, they had sponsored 8 families. Thuong Ha and her family were sponsored by parishioners of the church. Despite her husband being laid off, Thuong was happy to have access to her cleaning job and for her sons acquiring work in a restaurant. She was proud of everything her family had accomplished since arriving 2 years prior, and felt as though Canada can do nothing more to improve her stay. A young refugee by the name of My Lee had spoken on behalf of her family, giving thanks to the people of Willowdale Presbyterian Church. Her family were amongst 240 people travelling on a 16m boat escaping Saigon. She had witnessed pirates taking over their ship, confiscating jewelry, all while watching children die drowning at sea. A young boy by the name of Suoi Quach was a paper boy and his father had worked at a bakeshop every day for 4 years. He was thankful for the people of the church for assisting them find work to provide for his family the means to become self-sufficient. Willowdale Presbyterian's Boat People Committee had assigned a guardian family for each of the 8 families, so they had someone to phone if they were ever in any trouble. Garland & Belle McCoy and Len & Betty Sobridge were the corresponding families for Mong and Thong Ha and their sons, 19-year-old Lee and 18-year-old Mark. Belle and Betty taught Thuong how to operate appliances and drove her to and from the hospital for check ups. Betty drove Mark and Lee to restaurants until they were able to land an after-school job. The congregation and their friends had raised $36,000 since Reverend Merill Reside started the fund in 1978.

On June 31 of 1984, the *Toronto Star* published an interview of a 38-year-old bachelor who shared his bungalow with 11 refugees. Bryan Buchan had previously lived with his sister before she married and moved out of his house. At the time, his church had announced their engagement with the sponsorship program, and Bryan decided it was the perfect time to sign up. By 1979, he received a family of 6; a married couple with 3 teenagers and 1-year old baby. Over

the next 2 year, he had taken in 5 more children. He had adopted 7 these children so they were able to legally reside in the country. Bryan had once taught grade 7 & 8 and wrote children's books. He believed everyone had a responsibility to share the load and every person must do their part. He said they all work together as one big family unit, taking turns and helping each other wash dishes and make the beds. He confessed to fantasizing how life would have been if he had remained living the bachelor life. He would have had a fancy furnished house, had travelled to Australia to teach, or even gotten married. Nevertheless, Bryan had never regretted his choice and said the experience "[had been] been enormously rewarding."

Resettlement and integration into Canadian society

And to conclude, the analysis of the fourth category "resettlement and integration into Canadian society". On January 15, 1975, *Toronto Star* announced Canada's promise to take in 5,000 more refugees in addition to the 6,000 originally planned in response to the sympathy felt by Canadians to the devastating plight of the boat people. According to a senior immigrant department official, Canadians should help those who can benefit from living in Canada the most, as there were more refugees around the world than those Canadians can help. That meant bringing in those who were able to support themselves, as Canada had no refugee camps to temporarily support refugees. Thailand criticized Canada for skimming the cream of the crop, leaving other nations with dependent unemployables. The United Nations had also disparaged Canada for charging twenty-dollars per head for medical screenings, in contrast to Thailand, who only charged three-dollars per head, totaling $1,000-$1,200 to resettle each refugee in Canada.

On May 2 of 1975, *Toronto Star* had informed their readers of 2,000 refugees soon to join Canadians from camps in Guam and Wake Island. Canadian immigration officers had been sent out to determine which refugees were in genuine fear of persecution if they were to return to South Vietnam. Immigration officials were not certain where in Canada the refugees would reside, but predicted the majority would settle in Quebec, as most Vietnamese immigrants in the past had decided to do so. Canada had granted immigrant status to about 6,700 refugees within the last 3 years and 122 war orphans had flown in before the fall of Saigon.

Several months later, on June 5 the *Toronto Star* published an article illustrating how difficult it was to find housing for the refugees within the Greater Toronto Area. Not all refugees resettling in Ontario were as fortunate as Hai Long Phan, Toan Van Le and their families. Despite

the cobwebs, peeling paint, absence of furniture, broken stove, broken fridge and having to fit 14 people in 8 rooms, they were thankful for their new 3-storey duplex. 65 refugees were being boarded in downtown hotels until accommodations surfaced and almost 300 refugees have already moved into permanent housing. Ontario manpower program specialist Mike Rafferty claimed the biggest headache was to find housing for large families like Le's, who had 7 children ranging from 22-year old twin boys to a 9-year old girl. In fact, the Le's were only housed because the Phan family agreed the share their house. Even Mrs. Anderson, who was coordinating a Metro appeal for clothing, furniture and housing for refugees had described the situation as "desperate, absolutely desperate," as her program struggled to find furniture to donate to the newcomers. The Interfaith committee, federal and provincial immigration agencies and the Toronto Vietnamese committee worked hand in hand to find homes for the new arrivals. In the meantime, Mike Rafferty had asked Montreal – the city where most refugees were entering Canada – to stop the flow of refugees coming to Toronto for a few days, as hotel vacancies were no longer available. Everything depended on hotel capacity and how quickly people moved into housing.

The refugees were prepared to adjust to a different standard of living. Phan knew the life they lived in Vietnam was in the past. He believed the Vietnamese to be aggressive people, hard-working and capable of success. Being only 38-years old, Phan was a former assistant sales manager of a large sugar company. In contrast to owning two houses in Vietnam, his new residence in Canada was in the bottom floor of a house, paying $175 per month for rent. 45-year old Le was a former deputy mayor of Vung Tau and owned 2 houses. He lived on the top floor of the house, paying $225 per month for rent. Both Phan and Le met at a refugee camp in Guam. They stayed in a hotel for one month before eventually moving in together. More than anything, Phan did not want to continue receiving allowances because he did not want to burden the Canadian system, and even more so, wanted to show how thankful he was to the Canadians who treated him with such kindness.

A week later that same year on June 12, the *Toronto Star* released an article describing how refugees were adapting to Canada so far. Refugees have taken a liking to Canada's clean leaves, unlike the ones in Vietnam. The boat people adore the cleanliness of the country and the friendliness embodied by Canadian citizens. Most especially, the refugees were most in love with the fact of being alive and living as free residents of Canada. Nguyen Huu Tai (46) was once an owner of a factory in Saigon and had lost everything except a few hundred dollars to start a new

life in Canada with his wife and 3 children. When Tai first arrived in Toronto, his brother described him as "a skeleton, a man in shock from the war, from the escape." Despite living in a sparsely furnished flat on a busy street and finding no luck with employment Tai was "so happy words [couldn't] express [his] feeling[s]." He left his apartment every day to check with manpower for any jobs available. Nguyen had applied to laboratories in Quebec, hoping to be hired as he had previous experience in the pharmaceutical business, was trained as a production and business manager and was fluent in French. Tai was willing to work in Quebec while his family would continue to reside in Toronto. His family loved the friendly people in Toronto and were particularly fond of Niagara Falls. Like most refugees, Tai maintained a rice-based diet and has gained 10lbs since his arrival. Him and his wife were also expecting another child and they had planned to name the baby Frank or Francis in honor of Frank Lennon, a *Toronto Star* photographer who was especially kind to them when they first arrived in Canada.

Wife of CTV vice president Tom Gould, Nhi Gould recollects horrific memories of being pursued by Khmer Rouge communists throughout Thailand and Cambodia. Nhi had since then lived in a luxurious oriental style townhouse and had welcomed her two sister who migrated to Canada 7 years prior to the interview. Her sister, Nguyen Nga, was a widow with 7 children ranging from 10-24 years of age. Nga's greatest joy was knowing her 7 fatherless children would have a real future in Canada. Nhi's other sister, Phan Nhan, had migrated to Canada along with her husband Luu who was a former math teacher in Saigon. Both sisters have moved into a home with their families. Their experience with food from living in refugee camps had made them reluctant to trying new dishes besides the traditional Vietnamese diet. They had left Vietnam with only the clothes on their back and have made adjusting to their new life in Canada their main priority. Nhi said her sisters would cry one minute and laugh the next minute. She knew her sisters missed their homeland but are trying their best to love Canada just the same.

Several months later, *Toronto Star* published the story on August 9 of Tran Nhat Duong, a 40-year old Vietnamese refugee about to depart to a Floridian camp to search for his wife, Kim, in hopes to reunite his family. Duong arrived in Toronto with 2 of 4 children and had received information regarding his wife's whereabouts in Florida. He had heard that she remarried 2 weeks prior as she believed her first husband to be deceased. The two separated during the last days of war. Kim managed to escape Vietnam on her own with two of their children. United States consul general J. Raymond Yitalo agreed to grant Duong a temporary visa when *Toronto Star* offered to

pay for his round-trip ticket, ensuring his return. Duong was very grateful, even to say as this was a dream he would never forget. Yitalo promised Duong that the government of Florida would expedite his request to enter the United States later on as a resident. Months after, Duong asked permission to enter the United States claiming he was unable to remain in Canada without a relative to look after his children while he searched for work. In response, Yitalo said that would no longer be an issue because Duong was now a landed immigrant in Canada. The children couldn't believe they were going to see their mother again and Duong was crying tears of joy. He was a lawyer, living a comfortable life in Vietnam, in contrast to the lonely life he had been living as a refugee in Toronto hotel rooms provided by Canada's manpower and immigration services. In Saigon, Duong had a nice house and Kim was only responsible for looking after the children. Duong's wife never wrote to him. Kim's cousin informed Tran of her whereabouts. Duong was willing to go through any obstacle to get her back. They met as high school teachers and she had many suitors. Duong went straight to her father to ask for her hand in marriage. On the night of April 28, bombs were bursting as Duong arranged plans with Kim if the Cong cam and killed him. The next day, soldiers over-ran the streets of South Vietnam and they lost each other in the panic and confusion.

That same day, *Toronto Star* published an article describing the lonely and empty lives refugees have led in Canada so far. Usually living in sparsely furnished apartments with no pictures, ornaments or rugs, children are left to play on empty floors. On most cases, an apartment with four rooms contained only one sofa, one table and two mattresses. Refugees were living day after day searching for jobs, applying from one position after another, rejected again and again. Cupboards were bare and many newcomers had only a few clothes that were donated through the church. Most haven't eaten meat in weeks as they were too expensive to buy. Much like Tran Nhat Duong who lost his wife and children amid the war, as was mentioned in the previous Toronto Star article, most families have gaps. One of many refugees, Tho Nguyen felt "[he had] lost [his] ideology" and approximately 5,500 others who arrive in Canada were determined to fill the vacant spaces in their lives. Rebuilding for the refugees started with learning the English language, the details of day to day Canadian life, and finding work. Most of the refugees have relatives living in Canada. The Canadian government agreed to accept 14,000 refugees sponsored by family members and 3,000 unsponsored refugees. Many refugees who could have been sponsored weren't able to escape South Vietnam before the communist government took reign at the end of April

1975. Refugees who resided in Canada at the time were looking for work while the government paid for rend, food, clothing and transportation. The living costs were like welfare rates and varied depending on the size of the family. Ontario reception coordinator Mike Rafferty said that most South East Asian refugees admitted to Canada were highly qualified people with backgrounds in areas like teaching at the University level and industrial management. Many newcomers were wealthy in Vietnam, comfortable enough to own houses and cars.

This was Tho Nguyen's 3rd chance at starting life from scratch. He had abandoned possessions twice before fleeing Saigon. The year before around the same time, he was a librarian and a retired army lieutenant-colonel. Fast forward to his life in Canada, he had found work paying him $2.50 per hour on 12-hour midnight shifts. Tho had lived a full life in his 54 years. He had worked all his life in Vietnam to get a 3-bedroom house with a small car. He had planned to live a comfortable old age, spending his time tending a vegetable garden and raising chickens. Despite the tragic set-back, Tho continued to pursue looking for creative and productive work. The federal government gave him and his wife $115 per month for rent and $27 per week for food, adding to the funds his son contributes, they manage to pay the $230 monthly rent, and were able to feed and clothe themselves. Tho was able to escape Vietnam because he worked at an American embassy in Saigon arranging evacuations for others.

Van Ky Cuong (Henri) Nguyen was rich in Vietnam. He owned a private school and taught math at the University. A week prior to the interview, he had been rejected the position as a short order cook. Henri and his wife, Dany, and their children, Anni and Michael slept on a mattress laid down on the floor of their small apartment. Most refugees unable to find work were grateful for government assistance but found it vexing to live off handouts. Henri had to go to manpower every week to claim their rations. He wanted to earn a living and eventually grew depressed for not being able to support his family. His daughter Anni dreamt of becoming a nurse once the family was back on their feet. In the meantime, she worked as a baby-sitter to supply the $51/week they receive from manpower.

One refugee by the name of Phan were one of the luckier ones. He was the vice president of a sugar manufacturing firm in Vietnam and had since been hired at a sugar packaging plant in Oshawa, working 12-hour midnight shifts. Phan, along with his wife and children, shared a house with another family. He spent weekdays sleeping on a room rented on top of an Oshawa pub and works on weeknights. On weekends, he goes back to Toronto to spend time with his family. Mrs.

Phan spoke no English upon her arrival but had been using a translator less frequently since applying to daily English classes. She dreams to acquire a job at a nursery school as soon as she becomes fluent with the language.

Le Hoa Tong was a former lieutenant commander in the Vietnam navy. He was one of the many newcomers who were struggling to start a new life in Canada. He was the only member of his family who could speak English and he feels an extreme amount of pressure to find a job to support his loved ones. Tong lived with his mother, brother, sister, wife, two preschool daughters and two other people who weren't related to him. They had only one small sofa between the living room and dining room in their 2-bedroom apartment. Tong was in the navy since he was 18 years of age. His work experience had taught him how to kill, but not how to live. He looked through newspaper ads to find work and often found a demand for meat cutters and welders. He hoped to land a job as a driver to support his family while they all learn English. He's willing to work for any amount, but most jobs require the worker to have Canadian experience. He planned to take courses on welding or any practical skill once everyone had acquired work. Tong had three houses in Vietnam. He was not bitter about what he had left behind and felt very lucky to have survived. It was a difficult time for newcomers to arrive during a peak of unemployment in Canada. Vietnamese refugees were arriving to Metro three times per week. So far, 4,000 of the 5,500 refugees landed in Quebec, as most Vietnamese knew how to speak French and only 500 settled in Ontario. Housing had become a serious housing in Toronto. Manpower program specialist Mike Rafferty had found it impossible to find rental accommodation. Many refugees left Vietnam because they felt their lives were at stake due to their relationship with Americans or the military. Tho Nguyen had been fighting the communists all his life and he would have been killed if he stayed in his homeland. In the words of Le Hoa Tong, "People who left Vietnam were neither corrupt nor wealthy, just lucky enough to know the right connections to escape."

On March 26 of 1976, *Toronto Star* published several comments from citizens speaking out on the cruel injustice refugees must face, having to pay Canadian air fares. In Bob Penington's article "Vietnamese in Metro," he had questioned the federal government's compassion and it ought to be a national disgrace to force the refugees to pay 1 cent for airfares. He described it as a cruel injustice to unfortunate victims caught in circumstances beyond their control. Toronto Vietnamese Fraternal Association president Hoang Ngo had said no other countries accepting refugees were billing them in this way. He tagged the term as "humanitarian tax" for forcing airfare

loans on the refugees. Canada had made a commitment and a moral obligation to help these people. They have gone through untold hardships, suffering and humiliation and Canada should be doing everything in their power to help, not hinder.

A report by *The Globe and Mail* on April 10, 1978 illustrated a glimpse into the lives of 450 refugees residing in Edmonton, Alberta. These are success stories of healthy and well-educated young men willing to work hard to lead a new life in Canada.

One man of 27 years of age searched a way to leave Vietnam after working with the Americans during the war. He knew he would be imprisoned or even killed if he stayed. He found a small, old boat and shared the vacant space with 97 others packing only water and no food. They landed in Singapore where they met with authorities who were not overjoyed to see another boat filled with refugees landed on their shores. They gave the evacuees food and placed them in a hospital for drug addicts as there were no vacancies in their general hospital. After one week, they were given fuel, food and water and were told to never come back. After four days of travelling through the South China Sea, they reached a United States naval base in the Philippines. The crew was blessed with calm seas throughout their journey. The man was transferred between refugee camps in California before being accepted as a landed immigrant in Edmonton. He spoke very little English but eventually found a job as a pipefitter.

All men interviewed had similar stories. They left Vietnam in fear of their lives and don't want to reveal their identity because they are afraid of being found and putting the loved one's they left behind at risk. They felt alone. They knew they would never be able to see their families and friends again and most would like to learn more English, but they didn't qualify for training. Canada manpower and provided English classes when their inadequacy of the language prevented them from finding work. Although all the men spoke very little English, they found jobs soon after arriving. They could have taken night classes, but they were usually too tired to pay attention from working all day. Most of the men interviewed have been in Canada for at least two years. At the time of the interview, they were able to speak fluent English, and a few were able to read and write with proficiency. Most of the men have a trade or skill but didn't have the papers to prove their competency. Although there were exams, they could have taken to prove their competence, there were no special English courses to teach them the technical terms. Most of the men have found work but considered themselves underemployed and only had the language barrier to blame.

An electrician once had to do the wiring in front of his employer to prove his competence. He wanted to learn English but couldn't stay awake at night after working a job with such high demand. He wanted to learn to English to advance to a higher paying job. Another man had been working on a warehouse loading dock for two days after arriving in Edmonton. He asked Canada manpower for permission to study English, but officials refused his request because they believed his English was good enough. He continued to work in the warehouse for nine months before resigning, as he thought the most important course of action was to learn English. He paid for lessons out of is own pocket because Canada manpower wouldn't subsidize him. He continued to attend English lessons until his money ran out weeks later. He found work again in a factory assembly line, where he was able to speak and practice English amongst his co-workers. Fast-tracking 2.5 years later, he had been accepted in an upgrading program sponsored by the province and hopes this opportunity would lead to better things.

On January 17, 1979, *Toronto Star* published an article describing how the Vietnamese refugees are settling so far in icy Toronto. Duong Canh Than settled in Toronto with his wife along with 7 of their children. They were amazed at the sight of snow and the children were already throwing snowballs at each other. From supermarkets, streetcars and skyscrapers, everything about Toronto was a new experience for the Duong family along with 177 Vietnamese refugees taking their first steps towards establishing a home in Metro. Thirty-seven families who have arrived in Toronto six weeks ago had already found places to live. A few settled in Scarborough and North York, but most settled in houses or flats in areas with large Chinese populations. Sixty-three school age children were taking intensive English courses geared towards immigrants who couldn't speak English at Greenwood and Ogden public school. Other children were scattered in other schools offering a similar program. Adults looking for work have been settling for positions far below the levels they reached in Vietnam.

Duong worked all his life to own a paper mill business in Saigon. He lost his business when the communist regime came to power. He lost his freedom and came to Toronto to start over. Since arriving, he has worked as a dishwasher at a restaurant earning only $60 per week. His two eldest children were high school graduates and wanted to continue their education through a college or university, but that wasn't a possibility because they had to find work to help their parents. The Duongs almost gave up hope as they subsisted on tiny rations in the crowded hull of the Hai Hong freighter, living 40 days of grueling fear. The Duongs were amongst the 604 people

boarded on Hai Hong to start their new life in Canada. The family has since been full of hope and happy to be alive and together.

One-hundred and seventy-seven new arrivals to Metro have been placed in aparthotels for up to five weeks, where they were given food, clothing and transportation allowances. Community groups, including the Welcome House organized orientation sessions for the Vietnamese refugees. The Welcome House was a provincially funded organization to help Canadian immigrants. In the orientation sessions, refugees and immigrants were taught how to use streetcars, subways and volunteers accompanied them to look for houses. Federal aid had supplied many of the refugees for another seven weeks. If they were still unable to support themselves, they were to receive similar aid on a 6-month manpower program where they would attend English classes and continue to search for jobs with assistance from organization personnel. Austin Allen, head of immigration settlement, was confident that most of the 37 families would have at least one person working within a one-year time span. The Welcome House had been working with the Toronto Chinese Community Association and had helped 10 people find jobs in factories, stores and restaurants.

The Welcome House and Chinese Community Association had helped 56-year-old Huynh Phiew Mai find a job processing bean sprouts in a shop for $118 per week, a job unlike his independent job as a textile merchant in Vietnam. He had migrated to Toronto with his 6 other family members where they shared a house with another family with three members. Huynh had been struggling to adjust to wearing jackets, coats, boots, scarves, hats and mittens, as it was the necessary gear to tackle Canada's cold weather. His children were learning English at an amazing rate. Jack De Groot, the principal at Ogden, had taken in 20 Vietnamese students between the ages 5-12. He believed it was much easier for younger children to learn a new language. The children had been enjoying the cold weather to ice skate and making new friends in their new school. The 50 children enrolled in Ogden and Greenwood English programs concentrate on language but also took classes in geography, history, home economics, industrial arts and math. Contingent on their ages, the young students were to move from Ogden to senior public schools. Older adults or teenagers couldn't pass through the school system as quickly. Vera Liebster, a high school English teacher said it would take at least 6 years for the new arrivals to complete grade 13, in contrast to the usual 5 years. She believed the Duong teenagers, Klen and Tran, could learn basic communication in 6 months because they were reasonably bright. She believed the direct approach

to learning English was the best way to learn the language, and that was to speak only English amongst each other.

Phuong Thulan arrived in Toronto with his family of seven. He would do anything to make sure his children received schooling and became a strong asset of the country. He dreamt of learning English to start his own business once again as he once owned a small drug store in Saigon. He loved Toronto and was set on being a Canadian citizen. The buildings fascinated him, especially the CN Tower and luxury stores like the Eaton Centre. His wife, Tran Muoi planned to find work in several years, but for the meantime was occupied raising their 2-year old daughter. Phuong, Van Hung and Duong Canh Than all boarded the Hai Hong freighter and were standing in Toronto, ready to fight their way back at life. Welcome House counsellor Ai Su Chong said free food from churches, parties and entertainment were all fine welcomes, but advised everyone to allow the newcomers to prioritize working towards self sufficiency. In the opportunistic words of Van Hung's oldest son, who had recently found work at a lamp manufacturing company, "there [was] a future here for [them]…[they] must make it happen."

Immigration minister Bud Cullen believed the refugees to be the ideal type of individuals for learning the language quickly and getting work within weeks. He urged service club members to adopt boat people to greatly boost the number of refugees able to come to Canada. Cullen strongly believed that the refugees were strong and dynamic people who became self-reliant relatively quickly.

On January 19 of 1979, *The Globe and Mail* published a precaution by Toronto liver specialist Dr. Murray M. Fisher, stating all Southeast Asian refugees should be tested upon their arrival to Canada to see if they were hepatitis B carriers. According to Dr. Fisher, evidence of hepatitis B were 20-40 times higher in Southeast Asians than Canadians residing in Ontario. Out of the 114 refugees brought to Canada from Hai Hong in 1978, 15 were potentially infectious and 62 had the disease but were not infectious. In one Swedish study published that same year, a family who adopted Asian children carrying the hepatitis B antigen later caught the virus and developed permanent liver damage. In line with Dr. Fisher, Canadians had a responsibility to refugees who may not know they carry the disease and to sponsors who ran the risk of interacting with the refugees. Before the Southeast Vietnamese refugees were allowed into Canada and into their sponsor's homes, they had to follow specific health procedures. Medical officers overseas took their medical history, conducted physical examinations, took chest x-rays for people older than 11

and ordered stool samples to detect parasites. Children under 11 were x-rayed only if symptoms of medical history suggested they had the infection.

In April 19 of 1979, the *Toronto Star* published an article looking into the lives of children who had arrived in Canada without their parents. Bich Nga was the eldest and functioning leader of 2 girls and 2 boys. It sickened Nga to leave them, but their mother forced them to flee Vietnam on a 20ft fishing boat. The children and 400 others went 4 days without food or water. Nga kept her bothers and sister together for the following 5 months in a Malaysian refugee camp, sharing water taps and skin diseases with 5,000 others. Their parents fled Vietnam shortly after and have landed on a Malaysian refugee camp. They hope Canadian authorities can bring their parents to Canada by next month. The children had been afraid of the cold, amazed at the surplus of meat and fascinated by NHL hockey, as sports were considered a luxury in Vietnam. The children had been enrolled in school to attend a program for new Canadians, where they will continue to learn English.

The *Toronto Star* also covered the details of the special night where 35 Vietnamese refugees became Canadian citizens. The citizenship was presided by Judge Peter Murray and was held at the request of the Vietnamese Fraternal Association. According to Murray, that was the type of thing citizen court wanted to do in Toronto, as "[it] [brought] the court to the people and "…remove[d] some of the fear people [had] of courts."

Nghlen Van Nguyen and his family were among the 35 Vietnamese who became a Canadian citizen that night. He was an artist in Saigon who earned a good living decorating Buddhist altars in homes. When Saigon fell, panic hit the streets and people ran towards boats headed to the open seas. Nguyen was with 10 others in a small rowboat when a US ship had delivered them to Wake Island. From there he moved to California before joining his son Noi, in Canada where he had been living for 3 years to become a systems analyst. The rest of Nguyen's family followed him 4 months later.

On June 14, 1979, the *Toronto Star* published the first case of tuberculosis found among the boat people and Indo Chinese refugees who arrived in Toronto within the last 8 months. Dr. R. Wood was the senior consultant for immigration medical services with the federal health department. He said the refugees were to receive thorough medical examination before arriving to Canada. The policy as to continue with the 5,000 refugees form Vietnam Canada pledged to take this year from overcrowded camps in Southeast Asia, however the exception was the 604

Vietnamese Canada rescued last fall from the 3,700 passengers jammed aboard Hai Hong. The vessel had anchored off Malaysia for 50 days. Malaysia refused to let the refugees land. Malaysia wouldn't even permit the Vietnamese ashore to conduct chest x-rays, so examinations had to be conducted on the ship. It was a difficult procedure to conduct on a crowded ship so full examinations weren't conducted until the boat people reached Long Island, Quebec. The refugees were dispersed across Canada before the records were ready. Federal and provincial health officials had to work close together to follow up treatment on people who needed care.

Published by the *Toronto Star* on June 23 of 1979 was the story of Don Nguyen. He was an ambassador to Laos and received military training but was never involved with politics. He had two jobs: as a teacher of mechanical engineering at Saigon Polytechnic University and an Engineer for an American Firm – Esso Eastern. Don knew he would be marked because he worked for an American firm. The day after Saigon fell, the communists nationalized Esso Eastern and Don lost his job. Don had to attend political lectures at the university conducted by members of the political police. They made attendees repeat slogans against the imperialists and middle-class people. One teacher was sent to a room where he had to spend everyday writing paragraph denouncing himself and was made to resign without pension for speaking out. Don felt he had kept his job only because there was equipment in the school the North Vietnamese did not know how to operate. As most University teachers, Don's pay was cut in half, now bring Don to 25% of his usual salary. Don struggled to buy food and resorted to selling his possessions, dipping into his savings and buying from the black market. Don knew he would soon be replaced by a communist trained to do his job and he knew his children would never be allowed a higher education because they were considered children of class enemies. Don and his wife agreed their children would not have a future in Vietnam, so they gathered 33 others to escape. After 3 nights and 2 days, they were excited to see oil rigs, indicating they were only about 100 miles from Malaysia. Not long after, a Malaysian warship latched on to their boat and towed them 200 miles out. They begged them to take the women and children, so they did. The small boat sank and the men were left bobbing onto empty fuel cans. 30 minutes later, the warship returned. The captain couldn't stand the idea of leaving the men to be eaten by sharks. Everyone was taken to Pulau Tenggah island and the Nguyens were interviewed by a Canadian official from Singapore. Don's qualification as an engineer, his education ins the US and his fluency in English indicated he would fit easily into Canadian life. The Nguyens arrived in Canada and Don was assisted by the manpower centre to get a hob at a

metal working shop earning $3.50 per hour. They resided in an upstairs flat in the Beaches area and thought Toronto to be a wonderful city. After some time, Don found a job far away form home as a helper in a machine shop, where he earned $5 per hour. Don has found it difficult to find access to jobs like ones he worked in Vietnam. However, he is not complaining to be labelled as overqualified for the jobs he has applied to. Don did not want to ask favours from Canada and asks only for understanding to their circumstance.

An article by *The Globe and Mail* was published on June 28 of 1979 was the story of the lonely life Chu Chad Thang has led so far. Chu and his wife had to drug their children with sleeping pills and strap them onto their backs as they pushed their boat into the night hiding from patrols. According to the Vietnamese government, all Chinese were exploiters. To Chu's knowledge, he has never exploited anyone. All he wanted was to work, provide for his family and give his children an education. Officials working with Vietnamese say Chu was typical of the 842 refugees living in Toronto. Almost all were Chinese origin, almost non were fat capitalists, most arrived with nothing and were working people. Chu arrived in Toronto with his wife in the cold month of March. It took him 2 months to find a job in Toronto. At the time, his wife was pregnant, and they spent their days walking around Toronto looking for a place to live. It was very difficult. Chu had found work in a garage where he made $4 per hour. He started off only earning $3 per hour and charged free labour for one week to prove his skills.

Coordinator of Ontario Welcome House Neil Anderson had thought of the newcomers as "…particularly industrious people, good, adaptable immigrants." Most of the 842 who were able to work have found jobs. They would take almost anything, no matter how high their qualifications were. 118 were in school learning English. Chu gave everything they had to flee with their two small sons. At the time, the government would not let people leave, but they soon started collecting bribes, 10 oz of gold was the price to pay to flee by boat. According to Hong Kong intelligence, the Hanoi Regime had collected million in bribes from the escapees and were using that money to repay Russian aid and arms sales. Some sources in Canada even speculate Hanoi stalling immigration agreement with Ottawa because they wanted more income from bribes.

Canadian officials from manpower and immigration department gave the Chus visas and airfare, which they must repay. When they arrived in Toronto, manpower and immigration department gave them $500 for furniture, paid for their hotel stay and rent for their flat while Chu was out looking for a job. The Chus were on their own. They had rooms to live in, his son started

senior kindergarten and the newest member of the family was born two weeks prior to the interview. Mrs. Chu planned to get a job once the baby was a little older. In the meantime, she wanted to sew clothes for her children. The Chus furniture consisted of 3 beds, a couch, a kitchen table, 6 chairs, a fridge and a stove. There were no pictures on the walls, no covering on the floor and they had no television, only a radio which transmitted inaudible static. They led a lonely life in Toronto. Their only Canadian acquaintances were men Chu worked with and a woman Mrs. Chu met in one of her English classes. The baby has kept Mrs. Chu busy, preventing her from taking proper English classes. In the meantime, she learned English on her own, reading labels in the supermarket and picks out products without asking for help. Their social lives were almost nonexistent, but they sometimes met with other refugees at the Welcome House. In fact, their best friend is a counsellor at Welcome House, Ai Su Chong. She helped them rent a flat, find a doctor for the children lent them money and helped Mr. Chur find a job. Ai Su was a former teacher's college professor. She came to Canada to escape racial persecution in Malaysia.

Before Saigon fell in April of 1975, Canada had about 2,000 immigrants from Vietnam. It has since increased to 12,500 in addition to 2,700 expected by the end of 1979. Canadians worked hard to bring as many refugees into the country. Ottawa officials were trying to move towards and agreement with Hanoi, but after almost 3 years of negotiating, Canada had failed to persuade Hanoi to sign an immigration pact. The UN High Commission for Refugees reached a paper agreement for orderly exit of Vietnamese refugees. In the meantime, the only way to escape Vietnam to arrive to Canada was to escape by sea, get to a refugee camp and wait for the designated number to be call up in the quota system. Facing harassment, loss of jobs, closing schools, setting curfews and fear of being kept in detention camps, Chu figured "It [was] better to die at sea than to stay in Vietnam."

On July 11 of 1979, the *Toronto Star* announced the arrival of Lucky, the first child born to Vietnamese boat people in Ontario. The McMaster Medical Centre and other doctors gave Lucky and his mother and 130 other refugees under federal sponsorship free medical care. Lucky's name derived from his father, Trinh Cuong, who believed he was a lucky child and they were a lucky family to have survived 12 days at sea before crossing paths with a rescue boat.

On July 12 of 1979, the *Toronto Star* interviewed a local good Samaritan. 40-year-old sales manager, Ron Wilson, drove to refugee's homes every week to deliver fresh fruits and vegetables. He delivered his produce on his way to work, keeping 20 people supplied. Produce varied from

fresh corn, cabbages, squash, lettuce, onions, tomatoes, cherries and pears. Wilson had an acre of land where he regularly grew 200 to 300 cabbage heads, other vegetables and 200 pounds of cherries every year. He usually sells the surplus of food but thought giving it to those who needed it the most was more rewarding. His route covered all over Hamilton and Metro. To Wilson, distance did not matter, as long as he showed up once per week to give the refugees hope for a brighter future.

Two days later, the *Toronto Star* published a letter from a Vietnamese newcomer expressing how ashamed he was to be a refugee. The writer, who wished not to be named, read a letter from a Toronto Star reader criticizing the boat people. He felt that the Vietnamese were being rejected everywhere, even in their homeland. Despite it all, the writer wanted to thank the majority of Canadians for showing kindness during such a difficult time.

Another letter by the name of F.B. Chan wrote to Toronto star challenging contrary opinions from Edward Carringan and Jack Sims who expressed in an earlier letter their thoughts on the Chinese leaving Vietnam to return to China. Chan explained how most of the Chinese escaping Vietnam were born in Vietnam, even their father's fathers were born in Vietnam. If Carrigan and Sims were to maintain their ideology, Chan believed they too should not be called Canadians.

Another letter by J. Cooney appeared on a page of the *Toronto Star*. He was uncomfortable seeing the refugees parading down Ottawa demanding Canada to take in more refugees and questions their place to make such demands.

Published by the *Toronto Star* on July 18, 1979, most of the class of '75 refugees had found work in Canada. John Do Tronh Chu was an example of someone who made the most out of his experience in Canada. He found a job as a superintendent at an apartment building paying $900 per month, far from his previous position as a consul general for Indonesia, chare d'affaires in Australian and economic and cultural counsellor in Thailand. He was accustomed to living in large embassy homes with servants, chauffeurs and big chandeliers. He was surprised how similar his job as a super intendent was to a senior diplomat of Vietnam. He settled disputes, looked after the elderly when their children called worried about them, collected rent, was the median between tenant and owner disputes. In fact, he felt he "needed all the diplomatic training [he] had" to feel competent in his new workplace. John eventually made his way to becoming an interpreter for the Vietnamese Association of Toronto. His family settled easily into Canadian life. His son, Tom was

a theatre student at North York University and pumps cars in a gas station for extra pocket money. John's second son, Ted was in grade 13 and was a member of militia reserve in the second field of Engineers. Robert, the third son, was a summer camp counsellor in Orillia and Kate, John's daughter, was bugging her dad permission to get a driver's license so she could drive herself to her part time job as a library assistant. John wasn't rich but he was happy.

Immigration officials and even supervisor of Ontario's Welcome House, Peggy Mackenzie had recognized the Vietnamese' ability to be most adaptable out of all refugee groups since World War 2. Though there were no existing official statistics, they knew of hardly anyone who was unemployed. It only took an average of 4.5 months before they became completely self sufficient and it only cost the government at average of $1,500 per person for resettlement, less than many other immigrant groups. Immigration officials believed the Vietnamese refugees who first left Vietnam were better educated and stood higher in the class structure than the refugees Canada received during the 2nd wave. Many 1st wave refugees were army officials, doctors, dentists, academics and professionals.

A research study analyzing the refugees' Canadian experience was conducted by Nguyen Quy Bong from the University of Quebec, making it the only academic survey done so far on backgrounds and progress of the 1st wave refugees. In his study, 70% of the 7,000 admitted to Canada before 1977 chose to live in Quebec, and 65% of the 7,000 resided in Montreal. Toronto had become increasingly popular due to job availability. At the time of the study, 700 refugees resided in Toronto. Out of those living in Toronto, 27% were former members of the armed forces, 30% were civil servants and members of the diplomatic corps of the former Saigon regime. 10% were teachers and 15% were students. All but 10% were working, all of whom were housewives looking after their young ones. A small minority of professionals worked in their proper fields as engineers and technicians, as most were doing manual work in factories as machine operators. There was one count of a restaurant and grocery store owned by Vietnamese refugees in 1977. Since then, one other family had opened a chain of sandwich shops all over Toronto. A *Toronto Star* survey of about a dozen families who had been in Toronto since the mid 1970's confirmed the claims of Bong's findings. Almost all members were working in jobs well below their qualifications, all expressed a high degree of independence, they were opposed to living on welfare and most had experienced considerable happiness despite early difficulties.

Kim Ming Hoang was a teller at the bank of Nova Scotia and had recently been promoted to the accounting department. Upon their arrival to Canada, they had only $10 and no friends. Immigration officials paid for their hotel room while they looked for jobs. Her husband was a law student in Vietnam. He found it difficult to find jobs, as he spoke only Vietnamese and French. They had no money for transit fares, so they had to walk to their destination. Immigration officials gave her family $76 per week as long as they continued to look for work. Renting out a 1-bedroom flat for $100 per month, they struggled rationing their income between food and rent. After 3 weeks of job searching, manpower decided her lack of fluency of the English language was impeding her ability to secure work, so he prompted her to enroll in English courses. Kim argued to believe her English was good enough and she didn't have time to take English courses because her family needed money as they no longer wanted to live off welfare. She soon acquired a job at City Savings Trust Company and was promoted to the accounting department, making $350 every 2 weeks. Her husband followed through with the English courses and earned $200 per week as a shipper with a car dealer in Rexdale while taking a course in computer programming at Ryerson. With their hard-earned money, they were able to rent a nice 2-bedroom apartment in Jamestown, purchase a nice care, bought two colour TV sets and a piano. Kim shared a few kind words with the Star proclaiming her gratitude, "I have become a Canadian citizen and I am very proud of it… Now we have freedom and it is very wonderful."

Only a few, like Dr. Le Hoa and his wife, who were both dentists, had been able to continue their professions in Toronto. Dr. Le Hoa and his wife arrive to Toronto with only $15. He tried to look for a job right away through newspaper ads and eventually landed a job selling encyclopedias. He realized the job wasn't very good as he hadn't sold any encyclopedias, so he quit. In his 6th day in Canada, he acquired a job as a dental technician in Brampton. Hoa's wife didn't speak very good English, so she took English courses in George Brown and soon after, found a job as a bank teller. They saved $1,600 in 1 year to pay for the Ontario dental examinations. Dr. Hoa passed the examinations in 1976. Hr. Hoa's wife delayed writing the exam because she was occupied, taking care of their baby. By the time she was ready, the fee had raised to $2,000. Dr. Hoa established a practice in Don Mills. With Mrs. Hoa joining the practice, their total net income would come around to $50,000 annually. With their income, they had bought $10,000 worth of dental equipment and a $165,000 home. Though a huge chunk of their money went towards Canadian

taxes, Dr. Hoa doesn't mind. He said it was a way to repay Canada for all it has done for them and their people.

On July 19 of 1979, *The Globe and Mail* issued a comic relief featuring the "Vietnamese Name Game." West Dundas Employment Centre immigration settlement official john Harte has 280 files and 27 of them have the same last name – Nguyen. To make it even more difficult, not all children had the same last names as their parents, often families headed by the mother who kept her maiden name. Immigration settlement personal were responsible for providing federal sponsored newcomers with lodging, food, clothes and whatever else they need. The newcomers were "…so grateful for whatever…" they were given. Harte had settled and found employment for 200 refugees. However, he had trouble with those within the 16-20-year-old age bracket, as they lacked the work experience. The most he could do was send them to school to learn English. He enrolled the women who did not know English to industrial power sewing classes, where language wouldn't be a problem. In most cases, the Vietnamese refugees were not very fluent in the language but were rated very high by assessment officers often out of compassion to send them out of the camps. Occasionally, he would come across a distinct case. For example, he sent a man to find work as a television manufacturer but had difficulty taking the colour discrimination test, as he did not receive education on the proper terminology for the job.

On July 26 of 1979, the *Toronto Star* had announced the Metro staff of the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) were ready to put the boat people in empty foreclosed homes. The team had received advance notice of their arrival, so they have been preparing. 3,000 empty dwellings, including condos, original rental and apartment units were made available for $200 per month. 300 were in Metro, 500 in Mississauga, 200 in Oshawa and 300 in Hamilton. Mayor John Sewell was confident in the city's ability to find housing and provide financial assistance and medical care for the 12,000 to 15,000 refugees settling in Toronto. However, City Planner Nathan Gilbert had opposed Sewell's pledge, proclaiming serious problems of accommodation and other social problems would arise if refugees arrived in large numbers. Toronto Alderman Gordon Cressy agreed for the critical need of coordination between services to ensure the boat people were able to preserve their roots while being assimilated into Canadian society.

On July 30 of 1979, *The Gloel and Mail* published an article illustrating how several refugees had made their stay so far in Canada. Waldorf Astoria was home to most of the 152

refugees who arrived in Toronto late Friday night one week prior. They were housed in the hotel while they looked for permanent accommodation. Teens usually stand idly outside the Hotel, socializing amongst each other, enjoying their cigarettes as they glance curiously at new environment which surrounded them. Most were still bewildered by their surroundings and refuse to answer telephones or open doors. Lam Thanh was one of the residents of Astoria. Lam and his family arrived recently after taking a military flight from Hong Kong to Montreal. He came under close scrutiny when the communists took power because of his history as a former office worker for South Vietnam's army. He said his family were lucky to stay in a camp that was better than most. Being one of the first evacuees, the camps were still generous with food and water. They had chicken or beef on Saturdays, and they had plenty of fish, canned meat and vegetables the rest of the time. "If [they] had stayed in Vietnam, it would have mean[t] death for sure." Mr. Lam expressed nothing but gratitude for Canada. He was not sure what kind of work to expect but was willing to do any job "…to keep [him] and [his] family going."

On August 8 of 1979, *The Globe and Mail* announced the department of Immigration unsure of accepting the 2,000 housing units Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) had made available for the refugees. The CMHC announced the availability of housing two week prior but failed to mention the requirement of a lease signed by the government or tenant in addition to no guarantees of rent increase. According to the minister responsible for CMHC, Elmer MacKay, the units were intended for short term subsidized housing for 6 months. Afterwards, the tenants had the option of moving out, continuing to rend or purchase a new home. While wanting to provide as much help as he can, "[CMHC] would be severely criticized [by Trustees of Canadian taxpayers] if [they] didn't have some sort of lease arrangement." Andre Pilon, the Regional Director of Refugee Resettlement in Ontario, thought hey situation was not yet critical and "the flow [was] just starting." Toronto Immigrant Settlement Counselor Ken Allen fully disagreed with Pilon's assessment of the housing situation and though of the situation as "a bit of a bloody screw up." The number of units available were estimated around 3,000, shared between federal and private sponsors. However, due to the disarray, the number of units available were considerably less, according to a CMHC official. Toronto CMHC Manager of Administration and Finances Scott MacDonald was expecting 300 units available but was now reduced to about 100 units. Toronto was under a lot of pressure with only 3,000 units available and even so, not all were physically adequate to use.

Five days later, *The Globe and Mail* named 2 condominium corporations hesitant to open their doors to more than 2 or 3 Vietnamese families due to "unfairness and possible internal problems." Ed Thorton managed one of the corporations. He questioned how they could explain the concepts of condo living to a refugee when it was already difficult to explain to Canadians. Thorton was worried they could unintently damage common appliances, as they would have difficulty understanding the rules. Bob Johnson, president of condominiums in Newcastle, believed the unemployed and welfare families should be prioritized for the vacant units. Owners in his corporation were worried property values may drop if they brought in the newcomers, who received subsidized housing.

Published by the *Toronto Star* on August 11 of 1979 was a brief summary of how Don Nguyen had experienced life in Canada so far. He reluctantly admitted his settlement in Toronto had not been easy. His wife was attending English classes at the time and grew more and more depressed. His children had no playmates and his 9-year-old daughter had to be left home alone after school, as there was no body, they could rely on to look after her. Meanwhile, Nguyen Anh Duc was happily living in his Oak street apartment with his wife and 3 young daughters. He was delighted to move into such a comfortable and clean apartment after previously living in a roach infested 1-bedroom apartment.

Published by *The Globe and Mail* on October 6 of 1979, Owner of Butcher Engineering enterprises LTD. Chris Butcher continued to operate and hired 5 boat people despite a strike by the United Auto Workers (UAW). He did not think it was a sensitive time to hire Ind-Chinese refugees. He would happily hire Canadians, if they wanted to work. The Local 1285 of the UAW described it as an act that could increase negative feelings Canadians had towards boat people. Local 1285 President Terry Gorman believed had filed a complain to the Canadian labour Congress (CLC) in Ottawa and believed the refugees were being used by the company as scab labourers. Ralph Ortileb of the CLC's Ontario office was empathetic and felt the boat people were only unaware of the customs in Canada.

On August 27 of 1979, the *Toronto Star* covered an event organized by the Action Committee for Southeast Asian refugees to explaining to newcomers how to best cope with their new environment. Tran Lac Hoai was among the 250 refugees gathered at Cecil Community Centre in the heart of Metro's Chinatown. For the past 4 weeks, he had felt like a stranger in a strange land, struggling with the language, strange customs and strange food since he arrived in

Metro as a government sponsored refugee. Though he was grateful for the $115 he receives per week to feed his family, accommodation at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel and for all other aid he received from government agencies and private sponsors, there were times when he felt "completely strange," lost and overwhelmed by the newness of it all. Like most of the refugees, Tran was highly ambitious of getting a job to earn enough income to support his family. Nellie Chau, who had fled Saigon 4 years prior, warned the newcomers about feeling depressed during the cold winter months, in contrast to their usual tropical climate. At first, she dreaded leaving her apartment, but gradually developed an interest in figure skating. Miss Chau advised the refugees to "overcome the difficulties by working hard" and to "learn about the country's social service system…" but not to abuse it. She said the refugees could prove they weren't a burden to society by becoming independent as soon as possible. Committee Chairman Dr. Joseph Wong had cautioned the refugees about discriminatory behaviour amongst a segment of Canadians. Wong had recently found content in last week's newspaper by the National Citizens' Coalition to be "racist." A Research and Resource Group had been formed by the committee to counter charges in newspaper content with facts.

On September 12 of 1979, a letter from one of the Vietnamese boat people had been published by the *Toronto Star*. Ngiem Cam Toan wanted to clarify some misconception in response to a letter written by E. Christie, titled "Who Can Blame North Vietnam." In his response, refugees didn't feel as if Canadians owed them anything. Canadians could have left them in camps and perhaps then, all the camps would have been considered Vietnam's second home and everyone could have lived miserably. The refugees did not come for the hamburger stands or shopping centres. Refugees loved their country, but they didn't have a choice but to flee for their lives. Vietnamese people living in Vietnam under the communist regime lived everyday without hope. North and South Vietnam were not run by the same government. It was not only South Vietnamese who escaped the country, but also some North Vietnamese citizens. Ngiem asked E. Christie not to condemn South Vietnam, but instead condemn the war and the authors of all wars. South Vietnam wanted to build a country under a democratic regime, realizing it was the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The North Vietnam government sent an army to South Vietnam to "liberate" people. They did not do as they promised but instead forced the people out of their land to take their property. If the South Vietnamese were classified as traitors, then so were all 50 million Vietnamese people were traitors because nobody loves a communist regime.

Another letter was written by Samuel Ross of Willowdale, demanding Walter Pitman to apologize to the refugees for a previously published letter declaring "The Vietnamese refugees [would] be the next target for racists in Metro. Pitman predicted without valid substantiation of valid proof of his statements. Ross thought highly of the refugees as they were an educated class of people, skilled in business and trades, and have but the desire to live at peace with their new neighbours and not seek conflict. Ross was outrageous at the very thought that the refugees would feel unduly alarmed, feel unwelcome and living in fear once again. He demanded Putman to allay the fear and let them understand that every Canadian would embrace them with open arms.

On September 15 of 1979, *The Globe and Mail* issued a report on the determination of 4 Vietnamese refugees making the best of life in Inuvik, North Western Territories, a town north of the Arctic Circle. Fuan Van Nhan and his wife, Ngueyet Ha, lived in a sparsely furnished one-bedroom apartment in a town of 3,100 people. The Nhans and the couple who came along with them, Chi Sinh Ha and Thi Hao, did not speak a word of English when they arrived in Canada from Hong Kong. After Mr. Ha learned the English language, he had plans to move elsewhere. The couples were uneasy about the winter weather up in North West Territories, where the temperatures stayed well below freezing for months and the hours of darkness outnumbered the hours of daylight. Mr. Nhan was afraid the weather would get too cold for them to get to work, and he would not be able to earn money. The couples worked at the 79-room Eskimo Inn 7 hours per day, 6 days per week and earned a little above $3 per hour. The women were chambermaids, Mr. Ha was in the kitchen and Mr. Nhan was maintenance. Hotel manager Felix Rohmer asked the federal employment and immigration officials to help him solve chronic staff shortages. He said there haven't been any problems since the couples have moved in to work in the hotel. He would need an interpreter at times, but everything else was fine.

On another note, former moderator of the United Church of Canada, Dr. Robert McClure, initiated an idea that help locate refugees in countries with more temperate climates. He believed the cost of $10,000-$12,000 to accommodate a refugee family into Canada would be better used in helping tropical countries accommodate them. Dr. Robert not only understood the cultural shock associated with moving to a new country, but also understood the physical shock they endured during the winter climates and snowy weather. Although Canada had "don't its stuff" in helping refugees, if the government could guarantee a tropical country such as Borneo, $2,000 per refugee family, the refugees could live better lives, easily adapting to a familiar climate.

On September 25 of 1979, the *Toronto Star* reported 1,856 jobs offered by employers to the boat people, announced by Operation Lifeline, an organization made to assist the Southeast Asian refugees adapt smoothly into Canadian life. In a benefit dinner, it was made known that Ontario would have 20,000 refugees by the end of 1980. 10,000 of them would be settling in Metro and as many as 3,500 of the 10,000 would join the Metro workforce. Soon after the announcement, a flood of job offers came rushing in. 40% of the offers were unskilled employment and 60% of the offers required skilled workers.

Four days later, the *Toronto Star* informed their readers that tests and treatment were under way for the Vietnamese Hepatitis carriers. Under the federal government was a new program to discover and treat as many as 1,500 refugees who were believed to be carrying the infectious Hepatitis virus. Details of the program were discussed by officials from Health and Welfare Canada, the medical and dental professions and the Federal Immigration Department. Government officials were afraid the special tests for the Vietnamese people would brand them as outcasts, although health officials believed there was a real health risk to the public if carriers were not detected. Earlier in the month, a newly created government task force under the Canadian Dental Association and the Canadian Red Cross Society was made to test a group of refugees headed towards a Canadian armed forces base near Edmonton. The task force met the refugees at Toronto International Airport and took them away for blood tests, testing between 200 to 400 refugees. Results showed that 14.6%, more than 14 times the normal carrier rate for native-born Canadians, were carriers of the virus. Theoretically speak, there could be as many as 1,500 "silent carriers" already in Canada. Dental Association officials and doctors on the team of advisers believed all refugees should be tested for Hepatitis while still in Malaysian transit camps. The refugees were presently given a full physical examination, chest x-rays and urinalysis before entering Canada. Some age groups were also being tested for sexually transmitted diseases and tuberculosis. The search for Hepatitis was nothing more than a simple blood test. According to Canadian liver specialist Dr. Murray Fisher, "the risk to the general population [was] real… [they] just [didn't] know how great it [was]." Carriers ran the risk of not only possibly spreading the disease, but also run the risk of unknowingly developing chronic liver disease. Dentists were concerned because many refugees needed dental work upon their arrival to Canada, and the silent carriers could expose them to the virus. Pregnant mothers were considered as high-risk because they could pass it on to the child.

On October 4 of 1979, *The Globe and Mail* announced the release of a new film starring an 11-year-old refugee, *"Letter to Vietnam."* Garry Son Hoan was a student at Fairmount Park Senior Public School. He arrived in Canada one year ago on the first planeload of boat children seeking refuge in Canada. Garry escaped from a repressive political regime, survived sailing the South China Sea on a crowded boat and shark infested waters, while battling starvation, filth and squalor in a Malaysian camp. He became the first Vietnamese refugee to star in a feature film. The movie entailed the letters Garry wrote to his mother in Vietnam since his settlement in Toronto. The movie was sponsored by a "Wintario grant" and obtained through the Romanian Canadian Fold and Art Society and profits were donated towards the resettlement movement for refugees in Canada. Producer-director Eugene Buia used the film footage from the National Film Board and U.S. Department of Defect and scenes of Garry's life in Toronto to create the movie. In Garry's letters, he contrasted stopping at a supermarket, skating at City Hall, visiting a green house and enjoying the Santa Clause parade to the bombing of the last days of Saigon and his plight boarding Hai Hong. Garry's letters could never be received by his mother, so Mr. Bulia decided to create a movie based on Garry's letters to somehow hopefully find his parents. Bulia hoped to push more Canadians to sponsor refugees after seeing what Garry went through. The movie "show[ed] the reality of the camps – those children, beautiful and smiling now." *Letter to Vietnam* was used by libraries, schools and information organizations like *Operation Lifeline* to create awareness. Garry had received praise for how quickly he had learned English and enjoyed Bruce Lee and cowboy movies dubbed in Chinese. His real name was Hoan Benh Thuan but chose the name Garry from a John Wayne cowboy movie to signify his new life in Canada. He was more concerned about fitting into life in Canada than maintaining his reputation as a celebrity and was more concerned about trading in his black-and-white television for a coloured TV. The film opened in New York, San Francisco festivals, London and even festivals in Germany and Switzerland.

Published by the *Toronto Star*, on October 9 of 1979, Bao Chuong celebrated his birthday for the first time in 23 years. People didn't usually celebrate birthdays in Vietnam. Eating cake was part of the new world he and his family were trying to settle in. Bao and his family arrive in Metro at July, as part of the 2nd exodus. When Bao's plane landed in Toronto International Airport, he was frightened and concerned as to what was going to happen. Two months later, he had found work in a computer centre at Confederation Life's downtown office and was able to conduct an interview without the aid of an interpreter. He was preparing to become self-supporting next

month, starting by renting out a 2-bedroom apartment for $272 per month. Immigration staff and volunteers were bracing themselves for another 2,500 to arrive in two months. Metro's coordinator for Multicultural Relations, Rosanna Scotti, says "[they] [didn't] have any expertise with this kind of operation," and was ready for "…a bit of confusion in the first couple of months." Bao's job hunt lasted 6 weeks because he wanted an office job. Most job offers were plant work and 12-hour workdays in Mississauga. Tinh Huynh was a resettlement officer working with Toronto United Mennonite Church. He said life in the city provoked anxiety with some of the immigrants who lived in rural areas. One family didn't go out of their house for a few days upon their arrival. In his experience, refugees found work within two months. They were expected to find jobs right away so the church could bring more people in. Refugees had been finding work manly within service industries as kitchen helpers and waiters and assembly line work. Women usually went into the garment industry. Austin Allen, supervisor of the Immigrant Settlement Unit, met with employers who had been looking for workers for months. The lack of employers could be due to the dirty environment and remote area location. With residents refusing the job, the refugees were ready to adapt. There were refugees who would walk about a mile and a half in the pouring rain from the bus stop just to get to work and that impressed employers. Metro sponsorship organizations, such as *Operation Lifeline*, were fearful of receiving anti-refugee backlash due to feelings stemming from job insecurity.

On October 24 of 1979, the refugees were flooded once more with job offers. Published by the *Toronto Star*, Peter Tran – coordinator of the Vietnamese Association of Toronto – announced Canada's generous offer of over 2,000 more job offers than they were able to distribute. Most of the refugees were working, with unemployment estimated to only be 5%. By the end of the year, 2,000 refugees, including 400 orphans were arriving in Toronto, making that a total of 40% of the refugee population setting in Toronto. Tran said the Vietnamese refugees were having problems finding jobs related to their occupation back in Vietnam. Tran knew 6 medical doctors and 10 pharmacists working on their internships but were first hired as security guards. Professionals such as lawyers and engineers found it more difficult, but Tran encouraged them to take any job and prove they were good workers. The Southeastern Asian refugees also experienced difficulties renting apartments, but Tran suggested families to rent a house together on a short-term basis. 10% of the refuges spoke English and 20% of them spoke French. The older refugees had more trouble speaking English than the younger ones, who took an average of 3 months to learn the

language. Dental care was a major problem amongst them because of bad nutrition in refugee camps. Tran had asked agencies to help with dental care. Tran believed the Canadians wouldn't find the boat people as a burden, and instead would make meaningful contributions to society. *Operation lifeline* had set up centres in North York to assist refugees and sponsors who were unable to get to the Welcome House in Toronto so they have a place in the community to meet, socialize and attend classes in English. *Operation Lifeline* planned to open a clothes depot to add to the already existing furniture depot in North York.

On November 18 of 1979, the *Toronto Star* published an article describing what it was like for a Southeast Vietnamese refugee to learn English. Chi Cuong arrive to Canada early October and had since enrolled to Jones Ave. School. Cuong and his classmates, who were mostly boat people, were learning English by learning how to live in the city. He learned what "snow" meant after catching a face full of flurries waiting for the subway and learned how to use the subway. In the process, he learned new words, like "token," "transfer," "southbound," and "map." Principal Joe Sterioff of Jones Avenue School believed "you can't really teach English," and it was important to provide the right conditions for the students to learn themselves. He didn't believe in the use of the parrot system, but instead relied on cultural cues to translate the language for them. His class toured the high-end condominium suites to add common household articles to their English vocabularies learned inside the classroom. Though, they were mostly fascinated by the homes priced above $100,000.

Almost all 450 students enrolled at Jones Avenue School were landed immigrants. The language program launched 4 years ago. The classes were free and class times were between Monday to Friday, from 9am to 3:15pm. "Often the students [had] to learn a whole new set of symbols… Chinese characters and our alphabet [were] totally different." The Southeast Asians had to adjust to reading left to right, as they were accustomed to reading from top to bottom. The Oriental languages possessed no tenses. They had difficulty learning the idea of writing past, present and future tenses as they were people who had no concept of writing in that manner. A few students were frustrated to be dependent on others, and Principal Sterioff labelled it as the "breadwinner syndrome." Most students had been self-sufficient, some were even professionals in their own country and as a result, a few students dropped out to get jobs. Sterioff had never seen any group like the boat people, who were especially eager to work. All the students could ever talk about was getting work, paying back their sponsors and taking English crash courses to learn the

language within a month. Sterioff was worried about this behaviour and invited a Vietnamese speaker to help the students understand that all of their goals needed time. The students were receptive hearing it from someone who had been through their struggle. The students were continuously motivated and posed not trouble at Jones Ave. School. One of the students worked as a chef from 5pm to 2am and was in school every morning at 9am. Sterioff didn't believe in the melting pot. He wanted people to communicate in English while retaining their heritage. There was a special relationship between the student and teachers, according to one of the English teachers. It was "deeper… informal. They [thought] of [teachers] more as a friend than a teacher."

On December 20 of 1979, *The Globe and Mail* published an article announcing the first 2 unaccompanied Vietnamese refugee children to arrive in Ontario. Le Binh and his brother Gia Phu were stunned by the snow and cold. The boat they took from Saigon to Malaysia was attacked by pirates 6 times during their 5-day journey. The boat was 50ft long and carried 509 passengers, too crowded for anyone to sleep. Their parents decided to ship their children to a refugee camp in hopes of a better future for them elsewhere. Le Binh and Gia Phu were 2 of the 400 children chosen by Canadian immigration officials to come to Ontario by the end of 1980. They only knew Vietnamese and Cantonese and were eager to learn English quickly so they could thank their new parents.

On Christmas Eve of 1979, *The Globe and Mail* reported a Vietnamese family in Whitehorse, Yukon hating the cold, but overall enjoying the Christmas season. It was the first time Quoc Hoa Hua and his family had celebrated Noen (Christmas) since 1975. Mrs. Hua decorated the tree with the children and could not hold back her tears repeating "thank you, thank you, thank you friends, friends." They spent over $3,000 in jewelry to get their family on a boat to Malaysia, arriving to Canada 6 weeks prior to this interview with nothing. Unlike the 22 other refugees living in Whitehorse, the Hua family spoke no Chinese, and no one can translate for them. Their biggest problem was adjusting to the climate. The family did not understand the cold. They thought they would die when they first arrived. One of the children froze his fingers and started crying. Given some time to adjust, the Huas were ready equipped with warm parkas, boots and mittens, though they were still reluctant to venture out of the house and kept the temperature in their house above 20C/68F. Mr. Hua bravely walked to school where he worked as a custodian and Mrs. Hua, who wasn't as brave, was driven to the stores every week. The family also added cookies as part of

their stable diet, along with rice. Furniture had been donated by their sponsors and the family's next goal is to save enough money to purchase a TV.

A heartfelt reunion that took place in Toronto International Airport was published by the *Toronto Star* on January 18 of 1980. For five months Truong believed his wife and their baby daughters were dead. His wife, Tu Muoi, also believed Truong was dead after receiving reports that his boat had exploded. On the night of January 17, the couple hugged one another for the first time in almost one year. Tu Muoi was able to arrive on an Air Canada flight from Paris without a visa. The immigration official said that was the first time she had even seen anything like this happen, but she Muoi was not in trouble. It just meant a lot of extra paperwork and a few trips to the airport.

On February 24 of 1980 the *Toronto Star* published an announcement from Peter Tran, a coordinator at the Vietnamese Association. He mentioned the language barrier as one of the refugee's biggest problem. Only 10% of them spoke English and 20% spoke French. Lecturers across the province had to be educated on their backgrounds and how they can help them adjust to their new life in Canada. Tran had only encountered one hostile citizen opposed to the refugees, otherwise the "response everywhere [had] been compassionate and generous."

On that same day, the *Toronto Star* looked into the life of 39-year-old Nhan Nguyen, who fled Vietnam 8 months prior. He took a stroll to the subway on his way to college, wanting to pinch himself. Comparing the orderly life in Toronto to the war-torn country of Vietnam, he felt like it was all a dream. Nhan and his family took their time polishing their limited English, taking job training courses, finding homes and enrolling the children to school. Most refugees had no regrets choosing Canada before any other Western countries. Nhan was swayed by his friends living in Canada saying it was paradise. Nhan said he naturally wanted to stay with his people, even if it meant living under the communist regime. After spending 3 years in prison-of-war camps, he thought it was very wrong to think he could have continued living under the communist regime, like what most Vietnamese thought. Nhan and his 3 sons would never have been allowed to attend university because they were sons of former army majors. From Malaysia, Nhan chose to emigrate to Canada. They flew directly to Toronto on an Air Canada Jet on July of 1979. The Nguyens were amazed at the help received from government officials, Operation Lifeline and the Toronto Vietnamese Association in Toronto upon their arrival. From the words of Nhan himself, "they give you help with anything that you want." The whole family took English classes and

Nhan quickly got a job at Ford-Philco plant. Even though he was laid off 2 months later, he refused to get depressed, instead he went to manpower and asked for a job, "…all [he] wanted to do was work." Jobs were in short supply, so he enrolled at George Brown College in an 11-month course on business equipment servicing. His wife earned $500 per month working in a downtown soap factory and also volunteered at the Ontario Welcome House. Their total monthly income was $960, enough to pay rent for their 3-bedroom apartment and $75 per month to repay the $2,600 in airfares from flying from Malaysia to Toronto. The family bough all their traditional foods at stores in Chinatown or ethnic supermarkets. Settling in Toronto had been painless for the Nguyens. Nhan had an interest in Canadian government and followed the federal election with interest, however, he was not fond of the communist party.

On February 24 of 1980, the *Toronto Star* published the response to a controversial letter written by former immigration official Kim Abbott and Vancouver columnist Doug Collins. The letter was published in a newspaper ad by Nation Citizen's Coalition last summer. The letter stated the flow of Asians, West Indians and other non-whites were eroding Canadian society. "Our system was inherited from the United Kingdom. We must limit the entries to numbers that can be absorbed without changing the cultural balance to retain Canada's basic character." People belonging to immigrant groups gathered, denouncing Collin and Abbot as racists and staged a protest. Abbott admitted that their views may sound racist, but Canada wasn't trying to become the world's Welfare state and it was time to put Canada first for a change. A counter-conference was organized by the Committee to depend immigrant rights against racism.

On February 24 of 1980, the *Toronto Star* covered a special 3-hour salute staged by the Southeast Asian refugees to Canada. More than 600 people crowded in ceremony held in York Quay Centre's Brigantine Room at Harbour Front, where a song and dance were performed in 4 different languages. Victor Tang recited a speech, calling Canada "a very thinkable country," saying "[they] were lucky to be alive. It is you beautiful people out there who gave us an option to rearrange our lives.

One day after, *The Globe and Mail* published an article announcing the thank you party that took place. Coordinated by the Action Committee for Refugees in Southeast Asian, about 1,600 refugees in Metro said thank you to their sponsors and friends. The show had traditional Indo-Chinese dance and martial arts demonstrations. A member of a sponsoring church said the congregation's action "started out as charity, but it developed into something much more than

that." The 3 refugees sponsored from Rehoboth Christian Reform Church expanded to 12 after meeting with Vietnamese in Metro who have refugee relatives. The Action Committee for Refugees in Southeast Asia is Toronto based and was found last spring. It had 150 volunteers and 4 paid employees. They had recently donated $18,000 to Red Cross and United Nations' refugee committee. Thankful, a refugee by the name of Nam Ha said "they're very nice to me. They keep me speaking English." In the 10 months of his arrival, Canadians helped him get a job as a welder and adjust to a new way of life. Though, his wife was still in his hometown and he was unsure if she will be able to join him.

Earlier that day, 145 refugee children were invited as guests of a TV network at the Garden Brothers' Circus. Most children were delighted to see dancing bears, tightrope walkers and other acts. The newly arrived children were intrigued and fascinated by ice cream vendors. 11-year-old Mary Tram had a blue rabbit head balloon with a colouring book and popcorn box in hand and thought the whole experience was just "terrific."

On March 4 of 1980, Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation manager of real estate for Peel Region, Les Rosza, announced through *Toronto Star* than housing of boat people in Peel Condominiums was a temporary arrangement. The refugees neither rented or bought the units and said the move was initially met with resistance but had eventually been accepted. After a lengthy discussion, most homeowners understood what was happening and offered no resistance. People were afraid of the diseases brough into the country by Indo-Chinese refugees and asked why more has not been done to house the homeless Canadians. One of the residents of Peel Condominium in Mississauga, Jenny Turner, says she was caught in condominium backlash characterized by shabby workmanship, a depressed market and high vacancy rate. "Thing can only get worse with recent influx of boat people… with Vietnamese moving in, no one wants to live here." She had bought the place hoping to establish a home, but life in the unit had made her a nervous wreck.

On May 23 of 1980, the *Toronto Star* covered the inordinate work of previous Saigon principal Huynh Huu Tho, who was hired by Ontario's education ministry to help teachers understand the ways of new Vietnamese pupils. Tho believed Ontario teachers may be losing interest of some Vietnamese children by being too nice to then. In Vietnam, teachers were highly respected individuals who didn't cater to personal needs of their pupils. Tho was hired in November, working for $275 per week. He assisted teachers as well as helped refugee children adjust to the new way of life. Most of the children liked school but were confused as to why the

teachers weren't so strict. He advised teachers not to be so familiar with their students and to keep a distance. Tho said Vietnamese teachers were expected to provide moral examples for the children. If teachers failed to do so, they would lose the respect of the child and their parents and would be banished to teach at schools in large cities. Tho never ate in restaurants in the cities where he taught. He didn't want his students to believe he was not devoted to teaching and was only out to enjoy life. He was hired to travel around Ontario to explain Vietnamese customs to teachers, as he understood the social and emotional adjustments the refugees were going through. Tho was also the first man contacted by frantic Canadian sponsors worried about an elderly Vietnamese woman who tried to take her own life. The woman was not accustomed to the cold and was isolated in an English-speaking community. Tho was the only person in the city of Kenora, other than the woman's granddaughter, who could speak Vietnamese. Her grand daughter was trying to learn English while working, leaving the woman so depressed, she tried to hang herself. Tho suggested the sponsors to giver her a job, even if it was just babysitting, and to take her out to eh mall so the cold weather wouldn't bother her as much. Tho knew how difficult it was to start life in Canada as an adult, having to adjust to a new way of life. Tho was in the process of arranging bringing his family to Canada through the immigration department. He was very happy to be in Canada but can never erase thoughts of the family he left behind.

More than 16,000 Vietnamese refugees had arrived in Ontario since January 1 of 1979. Education ministry officials realized the influx would place a burden on school boards, which the majority were not equipped to deal with large number of immigrant children. Bob Hunter, coordinator of the Indo-Chinese Refugee Settlement program, hired Tho because they wanted someone to explain the educational teaching system in Vietnam to the teachers. Tho had written reports of Vietnamese culture and held workshops for teachers on the differences of Vietnamese and English languages. Most Ontario teachers did not realize the Vietnamese alphabet had 29 symbols instead of 26 and there were no letters to substitute F, J, Z or W. There also weren't any working ending with the letter "s" or the suffix "-ing" and there were no derivatives of the verb "to be." After travelling through the province, Tho noticed most of the young children were fitting in well. Older students, such as ones attending senior high school grades, were getting frustrated and were quitting school because they didn't understand the language. In the United States, they found the most successful program was to enroll students in 6 months full time English immersion classes before beginning academic programs, though this was an expensive route to take and the

federal immigration department had not provided funds for school boards to provide special education for the refugees.

On May 23 of 1980, writer Sylvia Levine reminded the *Toronto Star* readers of the struggles of a refugee. They must leave their country in a hurry only to endure more pain and sadness than most would like to imagine. The change of government had thrown their lives in turmoil and had made future living in their native land look hopeless. Theatre Lifeline had created a play to tell their tale. Performed in schools across Ontario, *From Saigon to Sudbury* begins in Vietnam and depicted everyday life in Vietnam from the American War to present day. Year of war, hardship, famine and occupation by other countries were portrayed through acting, dancing, narration and music. The 5 cast members captured the different life of a young Vietnamese person from that of a Canadian. The show also depicted the problems refugees had experienced adapting to life in Canada, such as the cold climate, different customs and foods, learning a new language, facing prejudice from people who didn't like Asians or from people who were afraid they would take away job vacancies, and the deep sadness and trauma from experiences before arriving to Canada. In a comical scene where the two cultures meet, there were harmless hand movements in one culture, that were translated as an insult by the other. The play was created in order to help Canadians and refugee immigrants understand each other. The play's producer, Tish Carnat, did 6 months of research before hiring a director for the play. Most scenes from the play were taken from real stories of the people involved. Theatre Lifeline worked very closely with *Operation Lifeline*; an organization involved with sponsorship of refugees.

On June 2 of 1980, the *Toronto Star* introduced a children's summer day camp where 4 Vietnamese children were enrolled. Community Centre 55 was in the upper Beaches area was 1 of 6 members of country camps in the 1980 Star Fresh Air Fund appeal for $110,000 to provide summer holidays for 14,000 needy children. Program coordinator Paula Hudson-Lunn said the old building used to be a police station, then a set for a film and was now a community centre with a nursery school. Lunn said they had a whole mix of children for day camps. They opened for registration and within an hour, the list was halfway signed up for the season. The camp dealt with 400 children over the summer. Most were white Anglo Saxon with a fair number of Chinese, Jamaican and other ethnicities. There were lots of overnight trips, so arrangements had been made for boat families to have sleeping bags of their own. Community Centre 55 was different from most camps because of their exceptionally low fee and their upkeep of 1 counsellor for every 10

children. Last summer, they sent 3 groups of children on a "cultural exchange." Each group had $3 as they strolled along Chinatown, Kensington Market and Regent Park. They conducted a show-and-tell the next day. Everyone had a good laugh when the children from Chinatown came back with a pig's foot, they purchased in a butcher shop. None of the children had ever seen anything like it before.

On September 8 of 1980, the *Toronto Star* published a story of embodying experiences of many sponsoring groups and refugees they undertook to feed, cloth and house for a maximum of 1 year. The journey of a sponsor usually started with a phone call from the immigration department saying their Vietnamese family had arrived. In this story the immigration department called a young lawyer. The jet pulled up the terminal gate and several dozen Vietnamese people straggled into the waiting room. Immigration officials sorted them into their family groups. One by one, they were introduced to their sponsors. They smiled, shook hands, patted their children's heads and carefully enunciated the names of their sponsors. Alan Farber, Cliff Prowse and Steve Ovens met siblings Tri and Ky. Several weeks later, they received another phone call from the immigration department saying their second family had arrived. Thong and Thu were in their early 30 and had children between 7-months to 4 years of age. Tri and Ky were not able to speak much English, but they were very eager to be self-supporting. The group thought it would be best of the siblings stayed in Steve Owens' house for the meantime. Within several days, Tri found a job paying $4 per hour in a plastics plant and Ky found a job working as a seamstress for $3 per hour. Not long after Tri and Ky arrived, on member of the sponsor group heard through connections from his law firm that a condo had been repossessed by Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation and was renting out for only $200 per month. They immediately grabbed to opportunity and Tri and Ky moved in. The group paid the 1st month's rent and the siblings never asked for a penny since. The group visited Tri and Ky a couple times and the siblings even sent the group a Christmas card. That's when they knew, the siblings were doing well on their own.

When Thon, Thu and their children arrived, their first home was in the basement of Chris Prowse' suburban home. The two families were at odds. On one occasion, the refugee baby, Mimi, had been crying constantly. To Chris' wife, Jan, the baby seemed malnourished. She prepared a serving of pureed baby food and motioned Thu to give it to the baby. Thu smiled and nodded but threw the baby food in the garbage as soon as Jan walked away. Jan grew tired of driving the new arrivals to the doctor, dentist, English classes and Oriental classes. It cut heavily into her time and

it even caused her to miss work. Mimi's constant crying kept Jan awake at night and the smell of fish sauce sickened her. After several weeks, Jan came down with a case of pneumonia. Thong found a job cleaning floors at a salmon cannery and angered his sponsors by buying a $200 radio cassette recorder with his first paycheck. He was even sending money home to his relatives. Then he dropped out of his English classes because he was afraid his West Coast Indian classmates would scalp him, as he had heard from word of mouth. The sponsor group thought the Prowses needed a break, so they scavenged for a house and found one in poor shape located in downtown Vancouver for only $75 per month. They sent a handyman to create a safe and comfortable living space for the family and the group donated furniture to fill the house. Thong found a job as a dishwasher at t Chinese restaurant but turned it down because it was too far from his home. Then he found a job in a wrecking yard but didn't show up after 3 weeks. Farber and his group of friends went to reason with Thong to take whatever job was offered to him, but Thong said the job at the wrecking yard was too hard and he refused to go back. The group had enough, and they weren't going to give him any more money. Thong accepted their terms and said they weren't good sponsors anyways. Thong knew some sponsors were letting the families finish their English classes before finding work. The sponsors still keep tabs on Thong and Thu. Last time they heard from them, Thu found a part time job and they were managing well. The group of sponsors wished they could have done more for Tri and Ky and less for Thong and Thu.

In an interview by the *Toronto Star* on September 8 of 1980, the refugees expressed amazement at the kindness and patience conveyed by the Canadian government and church officials. Though refugee Han Hoa Tran had a poor experience with Canadian officials keeping him and other refugees waiting just to yell out questions they couldn't answer and were asked to come back the next day, the officials were kind and never took bribes.

In the words of Thanh Quang Phu, him and his family had been treated with nothing but kindness and generosity from the government officials and their sponsors. Though his wife, thought otherwise. "The people where [she] [worked] [were] prejudiced and spiteful." The floorman gave her the hardest and dirtiest jobs in the factory. She showed the floorman how well sha can operate the machine, but he said those jobs were reserved for Canadians. Thanh had found a job assembling refrigerator doors. He liked the work but found coworkers unfriendly. He was surprised by Canada's work culture. All life was, was going to work, going home very tired and falling right to sleep. In Vietnam, he owned a small restaurant. "Back home, [he] would work in

the morning, go home for lunch and then come back in the afternoon. In the evening [he] went visiting [his] friends."

Somlie Nhouyvanisvong and his family live in his sponsor's house for several weeks. He was amazed at how hard his sponsor worked. He would come home from a full day's work and would still wash the car, tend the garden and mow the lawn. In contrast to his home country, Canadians worked to survive. He aimed to finish his English classes to join the work force and show how hard he can work, just like his sponsor.

Tinh Huynh was the program consultant to the ministry of Culture and Recreation. He knew the Vietnamese thought of Canada as a youthful country. Canadians were always active, never though old and everyone wanted to look like a teenager. When he first arrived in Canada, he felt embarrassed seeing grown women wearing shorts in public. The freedom given to young people surprises most refugees. One newcomer had seen men and women kissing and holding each other in movies and felt embarrassed being a witness to it. He realized it was important not to pass judgement on other people's customs just because of varying traditions. Margaret Tilbrook was a former language teacher, sponsoring 2 refugees and was a member of Orangeville church. She had sympathy for the refugees. She asked the readers if they would feel grateful for someone coming into their homes everyday to tell them what to buy, cook and feed to their children to help the readers understand a portion of what it was like to be a refugee in Canada.

On December 18 of 1980, *The Globe and Mail* focused the spotlight on a Vietnamese newcomer settled in Brampton caught in a middle of a dispute over plant layoffs. In the words of the Vietnamese woman in broken English, "Everyone. They say we take away jobs from Canadians. We are not. We need jobs badly… just like Canadians" and 3 young men agreed saying they were desperate. The 4 were working in Canadiana Outdoor Products Ltd. One of the workers interviewed said the boat people had replaced up to 42 workers in the past 3 months. The worker believed the company was slowly replacing all the workers with Vietnamese refugees and were even asked to bring in their friends and families. John Kopp was the director of manufacturing for the plant. He interrupted the interview and warned them about conducting the interview on private property. The Vietnamese workers quickly scurried into their sponsors' cars repeating "no thank you" to each question, in fear of being reprimanded. Anne Hume, the employment coordinator at *Operation Lifeline*, knew that layoffs were uncomfortable, and people affected by it "tend to lash out at the nearest vulnerable group." Brampton had two other labour problems with the Vietnamese

people since 1979. Terry Gorman, President of several United Auto Workers locals, was upset when Butcher Engineering Ltd plant didn't give in to union demands and brought in Vietnamese workers instead during a strike in 1979. In both cases, the unions had sponsored refugees and was angered by their hinderance in the movement. John Chu of the Toronto Vietnamese Association couldn't blame the refugees because he knew they were desperate. The reason they were hired in the first place was because they were hard workers and they did what they were told without question. According to interviews with some Vietnamese, laid-off workers and employed workers of Canadiana, and estimated 25-60 of 80-100 people out of the 200-person assembly line had been replaced. Thankfully, the Vietnamese newcomers were not being hired for cheap labour and were getting paid the regular rate of $5.40 per hour. The company wasn't receiving a federal grant to subsidize the refugees' layoffs. They had seasonal layoffs because it manufactured seasonal items like lawnmowers, rototillers and snowblowers. According to a source in Brampton and District Labour Council, the Vietnamese newcomers weren't usually involved with joining unions in fear of losing their jobs. Two others working on the assembly line said the remaining non-Vietnamese workers were feeling threatened of soon being replaced.

On February 10 of 1981 the Toronto Star interviewed one of the first newcomers to arrive to Toronto. Khan Khong's plane landed in Malton one night in 1979. He was the first Laotian refugee to arrive to Toronto. He only possessed a written instruction on a piece of paper, bearing the name of a downtown hotel used by the department of immigration to house newcomers. He tried to phone the hotel to ask how to get there but didn't know which coins to use to operate the phone. Eventually, the baggage handler escorted him to a bus connecting the airport to the subway. He made it in the subway but didn't know where to get off. In fear of approaching strangers with his broken English, he spent most of that night travelling back and forth on Bloor St. Kong could only imagine how a family from a rural area of Laos who had never seen a toilet flush, or an electric stove would handle that situation if such confusion was experienced by a University educated city boy such as himself. Kong arrived before the influx of refugees began on 1979. Fast forward to 1981, he knew he would be greeted by well-organized crew from Employment and Immigration Canada and cabbed downtown to be given a brief orientation at the Welcome House. Kong made his way into Canadian society. He signed up at Ryerson Polytechnical Institute for a computer course and volunteered at Operation Lifeline to assist in resettling the Southeast Asian refugees from Laos, Vietnam and Cambodia.

Operation Lifeline was calling for 200 volunteers to serve as "Friendship Families" to help boat people overcome initial months of the new and unfamiliar society. Canada was to admit 8,000 Southeast Asian refugees in 1981. 5,000 of them were privately sponsored and the remainder 3,000 were government responsibility. The department of Manpower and Immigration and Welcome House did their best, but it was not nearly as much support as they needed. Based on experience, the privately sponsored refugees were quicker and easier to adjust to Canadian life compared to the refugees who only had the government to look after them. The biggest difference was the time sponsors devoted to the refugees to take them to doctor's appointments, showing them how tot open a bank account, helping them find housing, steering them to jobs and enrolling them in English classes. People signing up to serve as a volunteer in Friendship Families were giving their time, friendship and moral support to give the human connection the government sponsored refugees were lacking. The program had already matched 100 volunteers to suitable refugees within their first year of operating. The greatest need was to match volunteers with refugees who came to Canada without families who may be feeling very lonely and lost. Barbara Cohan, a local psychiatric nurse and operator of a Catholic Children's Aid Group, thought the Friendship Family program was a great way to help. Back when *Operation Lifeline* asked for individuals to help sponsor refugees into the country, Barbara couldn't handle the financial burden. "The Friendship Family program [allowed] [her] to give comfort, advice and affection without making a financial commitment." She encouraged the refugees to call her "mom." She had them over for Christmas dinner and helped them get part time jobs while they attended English classes. They were shy at first, saying very little and not eating much. In almost no time they learned the complexities of the subway system and were able to get around town on their own.

On March 4 of 1981, the *Toronto Star* reported the dreams of as many as 12,000 Boat People who sought refuge in Toronto were slowly fading away. A task force studying resettlement of the Southeast Asian refugees in the Greater Toronto Area reported many living in overcrowded housing, were unemployed or receiving low wages, receiving insufficient medical and dental care and experiencing mental health problems as a result of the shock and devastation they experience overseas and in refugee camps, as well as experiencing a culture shock of having to adapt to a new way of life. Supported by the Ministry of Culture and Recreation, Department of the Secretary of State, Employment and Immigration Canada, Municipality of Metro and United Way, the 164-page report was complied after consulting with 200 individuals and 100 agencies involved with

the resettlement of the refugees. The report, critical to details regarding housing arrangements, teaching the English language, lack of retraining opportunities and available jobs for the refugees, spent nearly a year and a half on conducting the study under a $45,000 grant. Barry McCorquodale headed the 10-member task force. In an interview, he said the problems developed because so many people from a different cultural group arrived in Metro within such a short amount of time. The reports aimed to give better direction for the agencies involved in helping the refugees.

According to an *Operation Lifeline* researcher, competency in the English language and job security were major requirements for refugees to settle successfully. Unless significant changes were made, the refugees would continue to be unemployed or underemployed with limited competency in English. There was a wide variety of opportunities for refugees to learn English in Metro, although there was little collaboration among community colleges, boards of education and community agencies providing small English courses. The courses also lacked consistency, as levels of proficiency varied from program to program addition to insufficient direct program relationship between language training and employment. The 164-page report stated much evidence of unproficiency of language, despite attending 24-week English course and studies in Toronto and Ottawa showed very few refugees able to land jobs similar to those which they were employed in Indochina. Most jobs available for refugees were those of which are unskilled or require manual labour. Report also noted major health problems among the Southeast Asian refugees. 25 Vietnamese refugee doctors in Ontario were surprisingly receiving little support to qualify for practice in Canada. 14% of refugees entering Canada were Hepatitis B carriers, and while there was minimal risk of transmitting the virus, dentists weren't drawn to treat them. The refugees had a high incidence of dental problems. Very often, the work required was major and expensive and beyond sponsors' means and government mandate. *Operation Lifeline* arranged with the Faculty of Dentistry whereby faculty would do the dental work at cost price, but services were limited. Most refugees were experiencing intense trauma, such as a loss of country, family, friends, wealth, social status, dangerous escape plagued with barren natural and human elements and lengthy stays in refugee camps. Moving into a place where culture was vastly different from their own, had a strong emotional impact, as it could impede on the ability to learn and build relationships. There were also serious mental health concerns with refugee children, especially those separated from their parents. According to Wheatcroft, the children were confronted with the contradiction of what they learned in order to survive and escape into refugee camps and what

they must learn in order to adapt into the city culture. Refugees were having a difficult time finding housing as due to a lack of available housing in the Metro area in addition to the minimal federal allowances, insufficient to meet rent requirements. The task force urged Ottawa and Queen's park to compromise an integrated approach to resettle the Southeast Asian refugees in Metro, Toronto. They also recommended improvements in language training, career counselling and to improve mental health and child-care services for the refugees.

On March 5 of 1981, the *Toronto Star* interviewed two refugee families with contrasting lifestyles and experiences during their stay in Canada. Bul Hung and his family arrived in Canada with only $6 in his pocket. Bul worked midnights, earning $9.86 per hour as an assembler for de Havilland Aircraft of Canada Ltd. His family lived in a tidy basement apartment, renting it out for $250 per month. His son was in Grade 2, attending Ancaster Public School and his wife was taking English classes twice per week at a nearby library. Life for the Bul family in Canada couldn't get any better. "[They] [were] much luckier than the people in Vietnam… [they] [lived] in a free country with nice people. That's why [they] came here." The Bul family hadn't experienced any of the worries reported by the task force, such as overcrowded housing, unemployment, insufficient medical and dental care, or suffering from culture shock and mental health problems. Perhaps it was because the Bul family knew how to speak English and already knew a skill king $350 per month in Saigon as a maintenance man for Vietnam Airforce jet fighter planes. Bul wasn't certain why the other refugees weren't doing as well as he was but was certain it wasn't due to laziness. He understood the Vietnamese as hard-working people but didn't have much opportunity to land good jobs. He felt like more job training program and English classes were needed. "70-80% of the boat people [were] looking for jobs every day but they [didn't] have the Canadian experience." Greater cooperation between various agencies involved in helping the refugees was needed.

Chi Can Lam left a Malaysian camp 18 months prior to the interview and arrived in Canada as government sponsored refugee. He was ambitious to learn English in Canada and get a job as a diesel motor mechanic. It was an 18-month struggle for Lam to establish himself in Canada. Over that time, he became very sad and was no longer able to see a future for himself. To apply for a job, he was required to speak better English and have a mechanic's license. Lam was among the participants in the task report whose dreams were fading away. As written on the report, jobs and competence in the English language were major requirements for refugees to settle successfully

into Canada, and refugees would continue to be unemployed or underemployed if they didn't develop the competency or the language. Lam spoke very limited English when he arrived in Canada. He acquired a job in a factory as an unskilled worker and was laid off with 20 other men after working for one month. He asked manpower to sponsor a 6-month English class for him to attend, but manpower refused Lam's request as he assessed his English was competent enough. Lam was recalled to the factory after 1 month of unemployment and had since been working since September 1980, looking for work while taking daily 2-hour English lessons at the Welcome House.

In an article by *The Globe and Mail* on March 7 of 1981, the Chu family from a previous report had been revisited. Chu Cao Than was a part of a wave of more than 71,000 Indo-Chinese refugees who came to Canada since 1975. He arrived in Toronto 2 years prior to this interview. They were nervous living in a new homeland and were distraught by the trauma following their escape. In the most recent interview, she was "very, very good, no more worry." He acquired a job in the stockroom of a road-building company while his wife worked and "all three children [were] happy but they [didn't] like rice anymore. They [wanted] hot dogs and French fries." During his initial interview with *The Globe and Mail* two years ago, he looked 10 years older than his age, which was 41. The writer, Davin Lancashire, noticed his wrinkles have disappeared and seemed 10 years younger, despite having to wake up at 5am everyday to get to work and attending English classes 2 days per week. His main worry now was the fate of the relatives he left behind. He acquired his driver's license but didn't plan on buying a car just yet, not before buying a house. The Chu's arrived with nothing. Now he earned $3 per hour as a machinery repairman, making $22,000 that year. The government paid $220 for rent for the first 2 months and the Chu's paid for everything themselves ever since. Mrs. Chu thought "Canada [had] a very good Government… it [looked] after people." She hoped her children would do something good for the country when they were grown up. Refugee authorities said the Chu family was typical among the estimated 10,000 newcomers from Southeast Asia in the Greater Toronto Area. Settlement supervisor of the Ontario House, Eva Allmen, believed the refugees to be hard working, willing immigrants and most seem to be settling well, 'they just go out and get jobs and they [were] making new lives for themselves." Michael Quiggin, a researcher of the 160-page report said "most [were] adjusting well and adapting to their new conditions… but there [were] difficulties." According to Quiggin, Ontario's social services were not well-suited to serve people who did not speak English and

Ontario had no overall resettlement policy. English language lessons available to the refugees did not prepare them for the job market, they may not be getting the medical treatment that they needed and the 25 Vietnamese doctors in the province were still receiving minimal support to qualify for practice in Canada. There was also a language barrier to mental health care. More than 75% of the Indochinese population needed dental treatment and only a few receive it. Dentists refused to treat refugees who were carriers of the Hepatitis B virus, though the risk of transmitting the disease was minimal. Welcome House counsellor and former college lecturer, Ai Su Chong, said most Southeast Asians wanted to avoid welfare. She handled 200 refugee cases per month to help them find work and housing, and only knew two who had taken welfare. One of them was an old man who found himself a job as a janitor and telephoned to cancel welfare the day he acquired the job, and a pregnant woman who tried to commit suicide when her husband left her. She soon obtained a job in a factory making water beds. According to Ai Su, jobs were getting harder to find but still managed to give work to 4 more refugees.

A new problem had arrived in Toronto, and that was the 2nd migration. The refugees from small towns all over Canada were moving in Toronto by the hundreds. Ai Sy Chong said the sponsors were only responsible for 1 year and the refugees who couldn't find work in places such as Belleville or Smooth Rock Falls were coming to Toronto to look for jobs and housing. "[Toronto] [did] not have enough of either." Settlement supervisor at the Ontario House, Eva Allmen knew that refugees sponsored by the federal government were also being looked after by only one year and after that, they were regarded as immigrants and no longer refugees. Immigrants then became the responsibility of the provincial government and Ontario was not equipped with facilities for them. Ontario's Indochinese Refugee Settlement office was not certain hos many refugees were packing up and moving into Toronto. Ai Su praised the Canadians for acting as generously as they had with the refugees, despite having nothing in common. She contrasted Canadian hospitality to the rich Chinese in Hong Kong and Malaysia who certainly haven't helped the way Canada had. Ottawa reported new sponsors growing scarce. According on an immigration department spokesman, in the peak of crisis in 1979, the sponsors were taking in 600 refugees per week. On December of 1980, the number fell to 175 refugees per month. By January 1980, the number dropped to 147 per month. Canada was amid a reunification scheme, letting Vietnamese in Canada to apply to bring in their wives, husbands, children or aged parents. Names were sent to the Canadian Immigration office in Bangkok, with list totalling 20,000 by far. If Vietnam lets those

people go, they could fly out of the country instead of escaping by boat and arrive to Canada as immigrants, not refugees.

People in Canada were sharing their luck. About 50 families came to Me-Kong grocery store to send parcels back home. Big cardboard boxes bound for Saigon and Hanoi were stacked inside the front door of the store. According to the store operator, Tran Vinh, "they send clothing and medicine and Aspirins, or sugar and pieces of cloth and food like this… people save for one or two months to send a parcel. They do not forget their relatives."

On July 13 of 1981, *The Globe and Mail* reported a fatal car crash in Guelph killing a refugee family. 4 members of a Laos refugee family were killed in a two-car collision. Bounchanh Onekhamphoui, his wife and their 2 young children left behind Sone Lee, the youngest, in serious condition at a hospital in Kitchener. They were among the Vietnamese boat people who emigrated to Canada, fall of 1980.

On July 17 of 1981, Toronto Star brought light upon a summer camp, benefiting lonely boat people children. 3 young refugee fathers who escaped Vietnam 2 years ago, lived in a small stifling, one-bedroom apartment in Cabbagetown. They had to leave their homeland without their wives, and two brough their only sons, while the 3rd lost contact with his little boy on a crowded dock. A social worker registered two boys with the Scott Mission's Fresh Air Camp in Caledon Hills. She was concerned about the three adults and two children living in such a hot and cramped space. She contacted camp registrar, Elain Markovic, and registered both boys to the camp despite having more than 400 clients and a growing waiting list. Markovic was empathetic towards the children. "These children have already had a hot and difficult time, hiding from pirates for days in the suffocating holds of the various boats they were on." She signed them up to camp in a beautiful hill country, confident the experience will help them integrate better into society. Another 40 Vietnamese children were attending day camps at Dixon Hall and the Downtown Boys and Girls Club in Regent Park, assisted by the Star Fund.

On August 10 of 1981, the Globe Mail investigated on workplace happenings in Trail, British Columbia. Refugee women from Southeast Asia with no industrial skills and minimal proficiency of the English language were sole works of the only garment factory in Southeast British Columbia city. Mabel Verigin, dress designer and one of the moving forces behind Seam Enterprises, "…found the woman had no experience except with sewing, so [they] decided to take the talent they had and put it into something viable." The plan was conceived by the Rossland

Refugee Society and put into operation by Mrs. Verigin and Canada Manpower. All seven employees were boat people and were trained women. The factory produced "coverups of any kind," from aprons, children's overall and industrial garments. Items were sold directly to local merchants or for a cheaper price if bought directly from the factory.

On March 23 of 1982, the *Toronto Star* explored the Green building on Bathurst St. Refugees appeared to be happy at this drop-in centre, mingling with other Vietnamese, taking part in co-op projects, involved in folklore and drama groups, determined to adapt to Canadian way of like by taking English classes and registering in citizen preparation courses. "…beneath it all… they're suffering a lot of stress. Many can't sleep well anymore. They've had some terrible experiences. Each one [had] a story to tell." As time went on, the refugees felt more and more powerless to help their loves ones back home. They sent money and parcels not knowing if it will reach their destination. Money was converted into the Vietnamese bank rate, leaving little for their relatives and parcels and clothing were often confiscated. Vietnamese authorities push the people to share their gifts to soldiers fighting for their country and the Vietnamese people would give their parcels away in fear of being branded as unpatriotic citizens. Despite the uncertainty, the Southeast Asian refugees continued to send money and parcels, and more recently, medicine. Medicine was a good idea because they were able to sell it and use the money to buy food. Vietnamese newcomers were often confused and frustrated when their sponsors encourage them to put off working for now to set time aside to master the English language. The families were in a dilemma: they wanted to help their family in Vietnam, so they must work to make money as their families needed money to leave the country. Corrupt Vietnamese bureaucrats wouldn't process anyone into Canada unless they had been bribed. Canada also lacked mental health professionals. There were only 2 physicians service 16,000 refugees and helping agencies couldn't cope with the demand either, as they did not speak the native language and differed in values. John Do Trong Chu from the Vietnamese Association was the person everyone went to when they land in Metro. He helped them find cheap housing, jobs, accompanied them as an interpreter and showed them around the city and government agencies.

On March 21 of 1982, the *Toronto Star* interviewed the Vietnamese family behind the scenes of one of Toronto's most popular Vietnamese restaurant, *Saigon Star*. Owner Peter Tran said there was no order on how a Vietnamese meal was served, "just put all the dishes on the kitchen table at once and everyone helps himself." His restaurant served the food in a more

conventional French style. Entrees followed pates, soups and salads and rice was served with every meal, accompanied with Jasmine tea, their national drink. Peter looked after the bar and managed the dining salon while his wife, Nga, worked in the kitchen and their 3 children helped serving after school hours. On Mondays, Peter helped Nga prepare stuffing for 800 spring rolls and his cousin helped prepare the food as well. According to Nga, "traditional Vietnamese cooking takes a lot of time, especially to prepare the food." She showed the Toronto Star how she made traditional food like Cuon (fresh spring rolls), Nuoc Cham sauce (to dip the Cuon), cold salad, and an assortment of fruit such as jackfruit, lychees and mangoes for dessert.

On March 31 of 1981 Vietnamese Immigrants made a plea for help, according to *Toronto Star*. The Board of Health was informed that many of the 16,000 Vietnamese people residing in Toronto were suffering from mental strain and bordering breakdown as they struggled with social and financial problems and reliving memories from their escape. A group of Vietnamese community leaders stressed the desperate need for trained professionals to help refugees and immigrants adjust to the new way of life at the bottom of Toronto's economic ladder. There were only 2 Vietnamese doctors in the city and no psychologist, psychiatrist nor social worker was able to communicate with the Vietnamese population. The Board approved the recommendations from the health department staff and saw the need for establishing a community centre for the refugees, hiring mental health workers and training staff in "culture and attitudes." One of Toronto's 2 Vietnamese doctors, Mach-Tuyet Dan, said 60% of her patients were suffering from mental ailments and had seen more stress-induced ulcers in her private practice than she did during the years she worked in Toronto's General Hospital. The Board was also aware of the emotional problems refugees experienced through loss of social status, as many were members of the wealthy merchant class in Vietnam and had to grow accustomed to working unskilled jobs in Canada, often 2 jobs, to make ends meet. Cheu Tran, a consultant with the New York Board of Education, disclosed a case of a teenage client wanting to commit suicide because her family were millionaires in Vietnam. The Board was also presented with a copy of a study done in the US, evidence of 56% of boat people were suffering from psychological problems.

In a report by the *Toronto Star* on May 6 of 1982, the paramedic team had thought of integrating forces with the Vietnamese population to act as interpreters in hospitals or local health offices, counselors to people with family problems, assist with housing and job searching, help newcomers learn the ways of Canada and support them until life began to look better for them.

The elderly were the hardest to help, along with single men who had to leave their wives and families behind. It was typical for 4 to 5 single men to live together. During the work week, living under these terms was fine but there was often friction during the weekends, where they had no privacy. Several refugees interviewed by the Star initially felt euphoric having survived camps and being sent to Canada in hopes of a better life. However, their feelings had plummeted within a year. Setbacks occurred, such as the loss of a job. They wanted to work and learn the language but were often too tired after work or job searching to sit down and take night English courses. Optimistically, Khuyen Ly, laughs at the thought of living with her husband and 2-year-old son in a cramped one-bedroom apartment. "Anything [was] better than the boat."

On July 16 of 1982, *The Globe and Mail* investigated how the Southeastern refugees were coping with Canada's employment crisis. Social workers estimated 20-25% of refugee workforce across Canada was unemployed, comparing to the jobless rate of 10.9% of the general workforce. Concordia University sociologist, Kwok Chan, was studying how Montreal's 9,000 boat people were adapting to Canada. In a recent interview, he said only about one-quarter of the employable refugees in the city were able to find work. The Calgary Immigrant Aid Society had helped about 10 refugees per day to apply for unemployment insurance benefits, which was a drastic jump considering only having as many as one or two 1 year prior. Vira Radio, executive director of Mosaic – a Vancouver social service agency for non-English speaking immigrant, described unemployment amongst the refugees in the lower mainland as "…extremely high and quite depressing." The Vietnamese Association of Toronto was helping 40 people per day find jobs. The job market was so poor, they were only able to give one or two people jobs per each day.

In a *Toronto Star* article on March 8 of 1983, a family living in the south end of Aurora, Ontario was interviewed on how they were adjusting to the new ways of Canada. Luy Nguyen and his family were living a well-off life. Though their apartment was sparsely decorated, they had new couches in the living room and a brand-new television set. Moving into Canada 3 years and 3 months prior, Luy and his wife had acquired jobs and purchased a 1981 Omni car. The Nguyens arrived with no money and spoke very little English. Now "there are no problems… [they] [have] jobs and everything else." Luy's friends, Minh Nguyen, arrived at the same time and had already accumulated enough savings to make down payment on a house in Newmarket. Another local resident, Nzoc Vo, had a recent fire in his apartment and his possessions went up in flames along with it. However, he was optimistic in planning to replace those items, along with purchasing a

new car. Dan Hong and his wife Sue had saved enough money in 3 years to open a restaurant on Aurora's main strip. These Southeastern newcomers were exampled of success in a system that many people said has failed Asian refugees settling into the Greater Toronto Area in the late 1970s.

Lee Van and his cousin Xay Thao were mountain dwellers of Laos. A Mennonite group in Markham sponsored them in 1979. Van, Thao and other family members moved to Scarborough to search for work after 1 year of sponsorship ran its course. They ran into difficulty, facing layoffs, lack of experience, poor English and struggling through financial hardship. Coordinator of Laos Association of Ontario, Khamkhong Vilayphanh, felt "...as if [they're] in a no-win situation." Laotians traditionally passed on their skills from father to son, so a few have training, or job experiences recognized by Canadian employers. Even many with degrees from their homeland, including doctors, were finding it difficult to be recertified for practice.

Luy Nguyen thought life was different for the Vietnamese living in the York region. Most of the residents were Vietnamese. Not only were they individually doing well, they also encouraged each other by keeping in contact. The families were primarily located in Aurora, Newmarket and King City. They first got together two years prior to celebrate Vietnamese New Year in a church in Aurora city. Over time, there had been so much contact between them, they thought of forming a Vietnamese Association for the region. Nguyen was hoping most refugees will be getting their citizenship in the summer, as most Vietnamese families in the York region had been residents for at least 3 years, the minimum time needed to apply for citizenship. Refugees who settled in the York region were luckier than those who settled in Toronto or moved to Toronto from London or Hamilton or the dozens of northern towns where they were all located. The large number of Metro refugees placed too much demand on unskilled jobs and the jobs left for the refugees were the first ones to go after a recession. In the York region, simple and often low-paying jobs were still available. Vietnamese people, according to John Do Trong Chu, were hard working people and were often farming people who were not used to having leisure hours.

On January 9 of 1984, *The Globe and Mail* explored the growth of a young Vietnamese prodigy making his way to fame. Thanh Huynh escaped Vietnam in 1979 with his parents and his 3 siblings with 420 other Vietnamese refugees on a wooden 24m fishing boat. Since arriving to Canada, he attended classical ballet or jazz classes 3 times per week and had made his way as an apprentice with the Ontario Ballet Theatre. According to founder Sarah Lockett, "he's just phenomenal." Most dancers had between 10 to 15 years of training, "he [had] the ability to imitate

moves without knowing the techniques involved." Thanh had arranged plans to change his name to Dennis because his name was of a similarity in his language. Dennis and his family thought they were lucky to have been sponsored by the Mennonite community in St. Jacobs. His family became independent after residing in Canada for 3 months. His brother, Dong, acquired a job as a sewing machine mechanic. Dennis attended a year of high school before also working as a sewing machine mechanic, though he did not like it. His pen pal encouraged him to attend dancing classes under Ann Suette, who then referred him to Mrs. Lockett. After one audition, she offered Dennis a full scholarship. He attended 2 or classes per day, 6 days per week for one whole year. Within that year, he advanced 5 levels and eventually made his way to become an apprentice with the theatre group. Mrs. Lockett was very confident in his ability to become a member of the theatre company next year. At the end of a Christmas performance, the audience were able to ask questions. One boy asked the dancers how long they have been dancing. When Dennis replied, "only 18 months," it brought the whole house down. Mrs. Lockett was already anticipating his success in bigger theatres. Dennis aspired to become a choreographer and teacher. He had recently choreographed a Chinese fold dance for the Chinese community and planning for a jazz piece in March.

On April 10 of 1984, the *Toronto Star* interviewed John Chu and Peter Tran, the most popular and one of the only Vietnamese counsellors. Vietnamese refugees all over Peel, Halton and Etobicoke who required counselling were referred directly to them. Chu was a former South Vietnamese diplomat who lost everything when he fled to Canada in 1975. Five years later, he became the coordinator of Toronto's Vietnamese Association, where he helped hundreds of Vietnamese people resolve psychological, marital and social dilemmas. Tran was one of the first people to escape South Vietnam in 1975. He arrived in Canada and worked as a counsellor at the Ontario Welcome Centre. A typical case would be referred by a counsellor such as Rosemary Butler from the Canada Employment Centre. For example, she once assessed a Vietnamese woman who had been beaten and wanted to advance to running away with her children. Butler would typically suggest the local counselling service for help; however, they didn't understand the Vietnamese language or culture and their special needs. The couple divorced soon after the referral to Chu was made. According to Chu, divorces were rare in Vietnam but were easier to handle once the social pressures have been lifted, such was their circumstance living in Canada. A woman in Canada had rights and power and it was often easier for a Vietnamese wife to get a job in Canada, so she may end up supporting the family for some time, eroding the husband's authority, causing

conflict. Chu and Tran blamed the lengthy disconnection endured by many refugee couples as the source of many separations. It was also important to note that people on the boats were robbed and raped by pirates and were especially prone to depression. Chu counsels the people, who have suffered for so long, to "look into the future. It's the only way." Many newcomers were depressed, and it was Tran's main job to cheer them up and show them how to move forward with their lives. He used his own experience to motivate others. He often disclosed his past as a respected and wealthy professor at the University of Saigon. He arrived in Canada with nothing but the clothes on his back. At first, he settled working as a dishwasher in Montreal, then promoted to a busboy, then waiter and eventually became a top bartender. He resettled in Toronto, where him and his wife opened their own restaurant, *Saigon Star*, and sold it last year. Tran informed his clients that "lawyers, engineers and teachers [were] not recognized here," and to take any job and use the evenings or weekends to learn English to open doors for them in the future. He ensured his clients that they have entered "the promised land" and they made the right decision to come to a mosaic country such as Canada, and not the melting pot like America.

On April 10 of 1984, the *Toronto Star* interviewed refugees from Oakville struggling to overcome their past traumas. Lamson Tran has had the same recurrent nightmare; ragged, exhausted and starving in a refugee camp. Hung, his wife, had similar dreams about life in Vietnam and their escape to Thailand where she cried herself to sleep most nights, starving in the night amid the crowded refugee camp. When she awakens, she pinches herself and reminds herself that she was in Canada, the country "where dogs and cats [were] treated better than many people in [her] homeland." The Trans fled Vietnam between 1979-1980 and were sponsored by Knox Presbyterian Church in Milton. They rapidly learned English and adjusted to the new culture and will become Canadian citizens the next month. Their 4-year-old daughter, Kim, was already Canadian and attended a daycare centre while her parents worked at factories from 7:30am-4pm every weekday. The couple thanked God everyday of their daughter's safety and not living under the oppressive Communist regime. Dung didn't feel like the Canadians could imagine how life was like in present-time Vietnam, where people slept outside, dying from hunger and did not care about living anymore. If a person did not have money, they would go without clothes and food and would die. Many of Lamson's nightmares recalled the months he spent as a political prisoner, where he ate only a half cup of rice with grains of salt every day. He was rarely allowed to wash, to the point where he developed scabies. During his time there, he lost 50lbs. The Trans think the

best thing about being in Canada was the freedom to think and talk. In Vietnam, even close friends could become an informant if they were thirsty for power. In Canada, they had learned to trust people once again. All 10 members in the sponsorship committee at Knox Presbyterian Church were fond of the Tran Family. They frequently visited between homes and encouraged the Trans to call any one of them regardless of whether it was night or day.

On April 23 of 1985, *The Globe and Mail* published a heart-warming refugee success story. Pham Van Binh was 31 years old and fled South Vietnam in 1979. During his stay in Canada, he saw men wearing earing and black boots. He noticed some people who had made their hair stand up and wore strange clothes with chains. Boys and girls were strolling arm in arm and sometimes stopped for a kiss. He noticed that Canadians did not care about what other people thought. Though, "some things [were] real funny, he had "a good feeling in this country." Pham didn't worry about finding a job, a place to live or improving his English. He owned *Hoai Huong*, a local restaurant that was doing very well. Hi wife and children were happy, and he was keeping up with paying the house's mortgage. Life in Canada had been an improvement over life in South Vietnam after the fall of Saigon in 1975. In South Vietnam, restaurants and stores were confiscated by the government and young people like Phan couldn't sit in a café without fear of being hauled for questioning. The police always tried to find out what people were talking about because they knew the residents didn't like them. The Binh family started their life in Canada out in Teeswater, Ontario. The Townspeople were friendly, but the family saw little future for the development of a Vietnamese community. 8 months later, the family moved to Toronto where about 25,000 Vietnamese people were residing. Pham's 8-year-old daughter spoke fluent English and frequently translated to her mom when they watched TV and his wife had developed an interest in fashion. When intrigued to state the difference between Orientals and people in the West, he felt like the Western people never had a hard time and he often wondered why they didn't save money to get married and have children. He was worried for his daughter's safety, as back in Vietnam, children weren't allowed to watch people kiss on the lips on TV until they were 18. Since arriving in Canada, kissing scenes were common amongst most channels. He felt that it was too early for his children under 14 to see such a thing. He also specified that Vietnamese in their homeland would not respect a man wearing earrings because they believed that type of jewelry was for women. They wouldn't even walk on the same side of the street with a man wearing earrings. Pham was one of the many success stories amongst the Vietnamese immigrants.

Thousands of immigrants were still having nightmares about relatives lost out at sea and overthrown with guilt for leaving their friends because they didn't have enough money to take them along their escape. Welcome House settlement officer Peter Tran talked to refugees living in Canada for 5 years who had not yet recovered from the trauma of their life in Vietnam and their escape. One of his clients came every week for two years. Every time she came in, she never said anything. Until one day, she cried and said she was raped by pirates. Guy Nguyen, a Vietnamese psychiatrist at the Royal Ottawa Hospital, said the refugees' trauma often did not surface until their 2nd year of settling into Canada and even so, nightmares would still be an ongoing problem for many. One of his clients were still jolted in his sleep when he hears a truck reverberating down the street. The sound of the truck reminded him of his days at the camp, where it meant people would be taken to be shot. Researchers form Pennsylvania's Department of Public Welfare conducted a study of 1,100 agencies involved with the resettlement of Vietnamese refugees. The report indicated an increase mental health issues within the near future and single people between the ages 19 – 35 were reported to experience thought disorders, inflict violence upon themselves and other and were experiencing alcoholism and feelings of helplessness. Dr. Nguyen said the Vietnamese were often self conscious of saying "Hello" because their English wasn't very developed. The language barrier prevented the opportunity to make new friends or acquire work. Next door to Mr. Pham was Daniel Nguyen cutting hair in his hair salon. The Salon used to be called *Thoi Tran*, meaning "Fashion Hair Design." He wanted to attract more Canadian clients, so he moved his business form a hole in the wall and renamed his salon *Hair by Strands*. He did not want to keep the Vietnamese name because he had an increasing number of Canadian clients and changed his name from Tam to Daniel because he wanted a more Canadian sounding name. His dream was "… to be well known, really famous and on the top of [his] profession." He planned to "… move to a really hot area like Rosedale or Queen Street" soon. As for the time being, he spent his days cutting hair for hours and chatting with customers, promising his wife that things will get better. He worked 10 to 12 hours per day and never had time for himself to relax. When he came home, all he wanted to do was sleep.

On April 23 of 1985, *The Globe and Mail* investigated a Vietnamese ex-general hiding in Montreal. General Dang Van Quan was one of the most powerful figures in South Vietnam. He arrived in 1975 on a special one-year immigration minister's permit. He was accused of being one of the most corrupt officials in South Vietnam and plans for deporting him had been established

shortly after his arrival, but no country would take him. Immigration officials did not disclose his exact location of residence and occupation due to a concern of breaching privacy. He was accused of heroin trafficking in Vietnam and leading a major security operation which resulted in the torture and death of 20,000 Vietnamese people. It wasn't until he was admitted to Canada in May of 1975 from a Vietnamese refugee camp, when government officials were made aware of his background, then later issued a deportation order. New Democrat MP Derek Blackburn led in opposition against General Quang. Backburn felt rather bitter that Quang, who was highly suspected of committing all kinds of crimes in South Vietnam, was untouchable. Last time he had heard of General Quang's whereabouts, he was living on the south shore of Montreal, as a born-again Christian. Immigrant official Len Westerberg said Canada could only force him to return to the United States, which was the country where he entered Canada, or back to South Vietnam.

On November 11 of 1985, the *Toronto Star* reminded their readers how the experience of war still felt very real to most refugees residing in Canada. When Canadians remembered the war dead, many may think about the millions who died in WW1 and WW2. However, there were thousands of people who had more recent recollections of war. Refugees who have fled to Canada had escaped approximately 150 wars, despite the proclamation of world peace in 1945. These people carried with them their trauma of war despite living in the safety of Canadian grounds. Three women shared their experiences of war in an attempt to help Canadians understand the devastation and hoped for everyone's cooperation to achieve a peaceful world.

Phuong Nguyen still woke up in the middle of the night from nightmares of pirates raiding the boat she escaped Vietnam with. For her, the war started when she was 3 years old. She feared she was destined to never understand the feeling of freedom, and "prayed for death a thousand times." She grew up knowing the only certainty in life was uncertainty. She remembered family and friends being killed and the times when she was almost killed, herself. She married a man who felt it was his duty to fight for Vietnam's freedom. She said most wives realized soon enough that they would be widows. Life was uncertain, and they could only talk about the future and hope. She made treks upriver and through the jungle to visit her husband's barracks. She always heard snipers fire and was always scared for her life. When the Vietnamese Cong took over South Vietnam, they captured her husband and threw him in a prisoner war camp. She only saw him for 1 hour in the 2 years he was help captive. She would follow him as he travelled from camp to camp and waited outside barbed wired fences begging to see him. She would ask prisoners to send

messages to him and in turn, she would send messages to their families. “Life was lonely, and [she] was scared. [She] did not know who [she] could talk to, who was a Communist informer and who wasn’t.” Her husband was released in 1977 a changed a quiet man. He acquired a job as a teacher and tried to make a normal life for their children, but wherever he worked, he was marked. They escaped Vietnam with their 2 children in May 19 of 1980 by boat when crowds were distracted celebrating Founder of Indochina’s Communist party, Ho Chi Minh’s birthday. They crammed in a fishing boat with 80 others for two days. Their supply of food ran out and Phuong and her daughter became ill. “[She] prayed… to di, for [her] daughter to die, it was so terrible.” They were attacked by Thailand pirates on their 5th day out at sea, where they robbed and beat the passengers, including the children. She had to stop her sister from jumping aboard, every woman was sure they were going to get raped. They were held up by pirated twice more in 2 days. She doesn’t know to express how terrible the war was, “it was far more terrible than [anyone] can ever imagine.”