

Foundation Highlights

Happy New Year!

With the end of 2022, BDKWWF has successfully ended 10-year milestone. This is obviously a great achievement which we achieved together with challenging work, our commitment and dedication for a common cause. Once again, I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks and gratitude to all our members and well-wishers for their incredible and selfless support to our Foundation's goal.

BDKWWF's total donations to support various humanitarian relief works both local and worldwide for 2022 was \$21,240.00 including 556 pounds of foodstuff donated to our regional food bank as a part of our Ramadan Food Drive which is equivalent to 434 meals for the most vulnerable group in the society.

Year 2022 was eventful in so many ways. With our all the happy occasions, few of our fellow community members went through loss of their nearest and dearest family members. May the departed souls live in peace. May the Almighty have mercy on them and make it easier for them in hereafter.

While writing this message, our hearts bleed with the news of a terrible earthquake that hit Syria-Turkey just last week killing thousands of men, women, and children. BDKWWF has decided to donate \$2000.00 collected for the purchase of food stuff for our local regional foodbank. Our members have also decided to dedicate our upcoming Ramadan Food Drive to the suffering humanity in Syria and Turkey because of this terrible earthquake.

Finally, I wish us all a happy and successful year ahead. May the Almighty keep us all safe.

Omar Faruk, President, BDKWWF



From Left: Ishtiq, Ayyad, Nazneen, Tamim and Tahid at the Canadian Blood Services, Waterloo, On

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Upcoming Events

- **Next Quarterly Meeting**
Friday, March 03, 2023
 - **Eid Re-union**
 - **Community Picnic**
- Stay Tuned for the Dates!**

Group Blood Donation

Ayyad Moksud, Nazneen Mirza, Istiaq Ullah, Tahid Sayed and Tamim Faruk - donated blood in the Group Blood Donation event of BDKWWF on November 12, 2022 for the Canadian Blood Services. Their kindness and thoughtfulness are our strength that our community and this organization stand on. We cheer for them!!

At A Glance: BDKWWF's Monetary Contributions In 2022

Date	Project	Amount	Comment
Feb 21, 2022	Kidney transplant of Dr. Habibullah Tamal, Chittagong Medical College, Bangladesh	\$7,747.00 Tk.5,50,000.00	
March 25, 2022	2nd installment of Omar Faruque's scholarship. Chandpur, Bangladesh	\$750.00	It was Omar's second year of study
April 26, 2022	Ramadan Food Drive for The Food Bank of Waterloo Region, Kitchener, On, Canada	\$700	Spent: \$693 Food weight: 556 lb (equals to 434 meals).
April 27, 2022	ORCA Homes, (Old Rajshahi Cadet Association - ORCA Homes are some orphanages in Bangladesh sponsored and managed by Hasna Begum's (Lovely) brothers).	Tk 210,000	Fund collected by Hasna Begum's personal effort to sponsor 3 orphans in different districts of Bangladesh in 2022
July 1, 2022	Flood Victims of Sylhet 'Students of Physics Department', Shahjalal University of Science & Technology under the Banner of 'SUST Physics Alumni'.	\$3000.00	Distributed to 300 families in Dekhor Haor area in Sunamgonj, Greater Sylhet, Bangladesh
September 12, 2022	Critical Heart Surgery for Sheikh Abdul Kalam in Gopalganj, Bangladesh	\$1365.00 Tk. 117,390.00	Collected \$1300, \$65 added from BDKWWF Extra \$200 collected after the cheque was made, deposited to the BDKWWF account
Sept. 22, 2022	Annual Contribution to the Canadian Red Cross	\$150	Cheque mailed by Canada Post
Sept 22, 2022	Annual Contribution to the Cancer Research Society, Canada	\$150	Cheque mailed by Canada Post
October 5, 2022	Omar Faruque 3rd installment of Dr. Monzur Kabir Student Scholarship	\$750 Tk.58,000	He is now in 3rd year (1st installment of the current school year)
October 21, 2022	To the Canadian Red Cross for Hurricane Fiona in Eastern Canada	\$570.00	Cheque mailed by Canada Post
December, 2022	Holiday Food Drive for The Food Bank of Waterloo Region, Kitchener, On, Canada	\$1460 (raised)	Purchase and drop off of the food items will be done on Feb 11, 2023

Bangladeshi Canadian Community in Kitchener - Waterloo Looking Back A Quarter Century

By Omar Faruk, Waterloo, On

It was in a severe winter month many years ago, a new immigrant Bangladeshi couple with their three sons – 8yrs, 4yrs and 4 months old set foot in Kitchener, Ontario to start a new life. The day was Thursday January 04, 1998. This was me, my wife Hasna and our three sons Nabil, Fahim and Tamim. I got a job offer from Limnoterra Ltd. The owner was Dr. John Plank – a scientist of Biology background. Dr. John Plank was originally from the United States, a faculty there, later opted to settle in Canada with his wife Janet. It was a 5 acres property with two houses 35 Shirk Place and 42 Shirk Place surrounded by huge open space with trees and bushes. My office was in 35 Shirk Place along with John's residence on one side. The distance between the two houses was approximately 150 – 170 feet and the Bridgeport Public School is located up the hill where we enrolled Nabil in Grade 3.

42 Shirk Place houses two separate single-family houses. I was allotted one of them as part of my employment agreement. A Pakistani family used to live on the other side. However, we were still to introduce ourselves to each other. January of that year was specially very cold. When we were coming here, we saw several cars slipped out of the highway and ended up into the roadside ditch. By the time we reached to our place, it was dark, the place appeared to be kind of a ghost house. The mover was unloading our belongings, we all were standing in the living room. Nabil and Fahim started crying, they wanted to go back to Barrie from where we moved to Kitchener.

It was in a severe winter month many years ago, a new immigrant Bangladeshi couple with their three sons – 8yrs, 4yrs and 4 months old set foot in Kitchener, Ontario to start a new life. The day was Thursday January 04, 1998.

Barrie was a small city at that time with a population of roughly 75,000 approximately when I came to settle in Ontario, Canada in 1995 after completion of my master's in Water/Wastewater Engineering at Massachusetts and came to Barrie in Ontario, Nabil and Fahim did not feel isolated leaving their cousins in Northeastern University Boston, MA.

We choose Barrie primarily because of our in-laws were settled there for 20 yrs. Additionally, Barrie had quite a good size Bangladeshi community. So, when we left Boston, Massachusetts and came to Barrie in Ontario, Nabil and Fahim did not feel isolated leaving their cousins in Boston. Tamim was not born yet.



Get together at 42 Shirk Place, Kitchener – sometime in 2000 - 2001

As I was mentioning, it was quite hard for my two little ones to be up-rooted 2nd time. I was also confused, thinking whether to leave this offer and go back to Barrie. For a moment the mover group was kind of confused too. They offered that if we decided to go back from where we came from, they would charge half.

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...Looking Back A Quarter Century

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However, my wife Hasna convinced me to stay and give this new job a try. Thus, our new life in Kitchener started. We still had no idea of Kitchener- Waterloo as a whole – its community, its social life. But I had confidence in my wife's ability to cope up with any situation, creating new hope, new life, and new social connections.

The mover left. We were thinking what to do. Just at this moment we heard knocks at the door. Our neighbor was standing outside with his wife with a tray full of food for dinner. We welcome them inside and introduced ourselves.



Friends, Colleagues and Community members joining a barbeque at the front yard of 42 Shirk Pl. Kitchener, (1999-2000)

Thus, a new chapter of our life started to unfold. We thank them for the food and help. They assured us of any help possible. When they left, Hasna started to search people living in K-W Area going through the telephone guide "the yellow pages", looking at the last name such as Rahman, Ahmed etc. typical Bangladeshi last name. The attempt was not successful. She probably got in

touch with the co-owner of the Bangladeshi restaurant Kohinoor.

An elderly lady wearing shari with a young girl were standing a few meters from us. Seeing them, Hasna told me that they could be Bangladeshi, and she approached them, ask the lady "are you from Bangladesh?"

Slowly we started getting used to our new life, new surroundings. I started my new office, got introduced with other staffs. Hasna was busy with our three kids. We were yet to step out of our boundary to know the world beyond our perimeter. Winter weather of that year was not very friendly, and we basically were stuck within our home. However, our new neighbor Mr. Zia took us sometimes to the nearby mall as I was not a very good driver at that time. Slowly I started getting better, more confident with my driving skill. So started going out more frequently taking Hasna and the kids, first to the Bridgeport Street Plaza, then to the Conestoga mall. It was during one such day, we found



Summer barbeque at 42 Shirk Place, Kitchener

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some South Asian looking people in Conestoga mall. An elderly lady wearing shari with a young girl were standing a few



Barbeque with UW Students at the Columbia Lake, University of Waterloo (2000 – 2001)

meters from us. Seeing them, Hasna told me that they could be Bangladeshi, and she approached them, ask the lady “are you from Bangladesh?” They turned out be Bangladeshi and later she came to know that the Lady was Mrs. Sulaiman. Her husband Mr. Sulaiman was a high-ranking engineer in the Bangladesh Water, Power Development Authority (WAPDA) under my father-in-Law. The young girl was her daughter. Her son-in-law’s name was Shahnawaz and her son Baki, was a Ph.D. student at the University of Waterloo. That was the beginning of a new chapter for us opening the door to new world.

We came to know that there were a number of Bangladeshi students both at the undergrade and graduate level at the University of Waterloo and very few at the Wilfred Laurier

University. There were not that kind of organized community events or social get together. As the students were busy with their studies and their family, they probably had no time to organize those kinds of events. Additionally, professional Bangladeshi community like what we have now, was yet to be developed as RIM (Blackberry) was gaining momentum for a big start. It was mostly a student-based community during that time. Students used to come for studies, stayed few years, then leave the city for good once they finished their studies just like the spring birds.

So, our journey started organizing these spring birds into a more community-based group. We started with the university students and their family. Mrs. Sulaiman’s son-in-law was quite helpful in this regard who contacted the students and family. Next few months Hasna remain quite busy organizing the first event. She booked the SLC (Student Life Centre) of UW. From then on, we never had to look back. As the community started growing so did our events. Hasna started arranging Eid Party at our Shirk Place house.



Bangla School, Kitchener-Waterloo

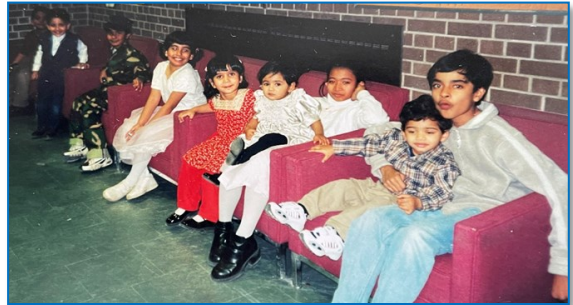
The Courtyard was quite large, so during summertime we used to arrange it outdoors, and Wintertime inside the house. In addition, she organized summer picnics, potluck parties for the community at various locations, tours for the local Bangla school kids to Wonderland, Marine Land, African Lion Safari in Cambridge, Toronto Island and so on. The kids including my sons were extremely happy with the social interaction.

Talking about the local Bangla school, it was another great thing we accomplished together. We revived the local Bangla school. It was established by some ladies from West Bengal, India and ran at that time by Dr. Mitali, who is now a Dean of WLU. She requested Hasna to take charge of the Bangla school and became the School Board’s Bangla School Coordinator. Since then, the Bangla school is being managed by her with bigger involvement of our community. People like Dr. Ilyas Biswas (Chemical Engineer, an alumna of UW, who now settled in Texas, USA), Zia Arastu and many more were quite involved with the Bangla school. The school has still been providing our dear mother tongue to our kids.

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Days went by. City of Kitchener and Waterloo, particularly City of Waterloo getting more vibrant with the boom of RIM who started recruiting young professionals in different areas. Soon we found several young Bangladeshi families within our community. With their coming, the community started expanding, so did our activities. Soon the student-based community started transforming into a more professional based community. Additionally, several students graduated, got jobs with the RIM and moved to the other side e.g., the professional side. Arranging our big community programs in the SLC had now become difficult. So, we started renting community Halls in different parts of Kitchener – Waterloo. Local dignitaries such as Waterloo Mayor were invited several times. In addition to all these social activities, we also arranged numerous fund-raising programs to help the poor and needy during a time of need. At one point, we realized that activities should be run more structured way



Eid Re-union at SLC – University of Waterloo (2000-2001)

and so the idea of forming BD-KWWF (Bangladeshis in Kitchener – Waterloo Welfare Foundation) came into being.



Waterloo's then Mayor Dave Jarowski attending K-W Bangladeshi Community's Eid Celebration Party

In 2012, a group of highly motivated and dedicated Bangladeshi Canadians living in Kitchener – Waterloo formed 100% voluntary charitable organization The BDKWWF. With the formation of this foundation, the foundation members supported significant number of charitable activities throughout the world encompassing activities like helping cancer and kidney patients, earthquake and tsunami victims, food donations to local food banks multiple times in a year, providing scholarship to meritorious needy student in Bangladesh, community blood donation activities etc. etc. Since its official formation, BDKWWF's total charity activities will be well over \$100k. Hopefully our kids will take over these activities one day moving it to a new height. Over the years, we have become so closely connected with each other like an extended families sharing each success of our children, their achievements, their marriage and starting a new life, and above all loss of family members. **It has become a home away from home for most of us. Over the years many of our community members moved to different places and different countries. They are still in our hearts and many of them still maintain a close tie with many of us.**

We are in 2023. It is January 2023 – 25 years have gone just like that. Looking back, I feel so nostalgic!! memories of all those days flash back in my mind. How quickly time flies by!! I remember a Sher (a poem in Urdu) uttered by Dr. Ali (a Barrie Psychiatrist) while burying a community member in the graveyard – “ Ayee thee Ham job joan thee, Hamaree Bachchae chotee thee, Aj Ham buddaha ban gyaee, Hamaree bachchee joan ban gyaee” – a translation will be like “ We were all young when we came here with our kids. Now we grew old, and our kids **have** become young”.

The End

Helpful Resources

Some helpful resources for our community people living in Waterloo Region and beyond:

Registration is now open for the KWMC Let's Talk program!

Let's Talk Winter Sessions:

Weekly on Wednesdays between **Feb. 1 - Mar. 22, 2023, 4:30PM - 7:30PM**

Let's Talk is a free program for newcomer youth ages 14 - 21 that focuses on academic and career guidance. Their Winter Sessions will be starting soon. They will take place in the KPL Central Library located in 85 Queen Street North, Kitchener. During this 8-week free program, youth will be connected with various community and career mentors for support and guidance based on their needs and interests. Let's Talk participants will also gain volunteer hours, meet new friends, practice their English, and more as they become empowered to reach their future career and education goals.

Covid, Cold and Flu Care Clinic

Grand River Hospital has recently opened the **Grand River Hospital Regional Covid, Cold and Flu Care Clinic** in support of the health and well-being of students, staff and the community. The Grand River Hospital Regional Covid, Cold & Flu Care Clinic offers appointments for community members who are over 3 months old and:

- Are experiencing Covid-19 Symptoms
- Are experiencing Cold and Flu-like symptoms
- Need Covid-19 PCR Testing If eligible for PCR testing, no appointment is required

To book an appointment, call 226-806-5690. Location: 50 Sportsworld Crossing Road Unit #2B, Kitchener, ON, N2P 0A4. Hours of Operation 8:00 a.m. to 3:45 p.m. Seven (7) days a week. Learn more about this at this link on their **website:** www.grhcareclinic.ca

On March 2, the Immigration Partnership is hosting a networking event for local employers to connect with international talent. Employers are encouraged to book a FREE exhibit table at this networking event as part of the 13th Annual Global Skills Conference hosted by the KW Multicultural Centre.

The event will take place at the Crowne Plaza Ballroom, Second floor, from 3:30 to 5:00 pm.

For further information or to book your space, contact Nora Whittington, Community Engagement Coordinator, Immigration Partnership: NWhittington@regionofwaterloo.ca.

The Anonymous Bullying Reporting Tool is available to WRDSB students to report safety concerns related to bullying for themselves, or on behalf of another student.

More information is available at this link **The Anonymous Bullying Reporting Tool**.

National Newcomer Navigation Network (N4) is a national network for the diversity of providers who assist newcomers in navigating the complex Canadian healthcare and social service systems. You can find more information on their website www.newcomernavigation.ca

The Immigration Waterloo Region calendar has information about local programs and events for newcomers. Subscribe for **a digest of events coming up in the next week or add your own events to share** or check **Calendar - Immigration Waterloo Region**

Age Friendly Directory of Waterloo Region

https://issuu.com/cityofwaterloo/docs/ageing_well_waterloo_directory

Guide for Parents from WRDSB

The Psychological Services Team of WRDSB has created this resource that could be helpful for anyone looking for support around executive functioning. It contains guides on Stopping, Starting, Managing Emotions, Self Monitoring, Sustaining Effort, Planning and Flexibility. It is available at this **link:** schools.wrdsb.ca/-/Guide-for-Families-WRDSB.pdf

Free Workout Program of YMCA of Three Rivers

Membership is not required to access YMCA's home workout programs. Workouts in different levels and categories are available at this link: www.ymcahome.ca



If you have any information or article that you think is useful for our readers please send to us at bdkwwf-info@googlegroups.com

We have started another whole New Year! This newsletter has stepped into it's third year with all of your help that is something very inspiring!

This issue is publishing little late due to some unexpected circumstances and we are very sorry for this. Anyway waiting has resulted into something special...as Omar Faruk has unfolded his memory of last 25 years in this city accompanied with some rare photos. I believe you all cannot but like it! You can read it on the 3rd page of this issue.

Correction:

In the last issue of July 2022 it was mentioned that Tyseer Toufiq graduated form university, it should be 'graduated from Highschool'. Sorry for the error.

We are always looking for interesting stories from you! Please send your article or news to be shared to the readers of this newsletter. You know how to reach us!

There are always some opportunities for the youth in the community to be involved with interesting works the Foundation does. Interested? Please contact: bdkwwf-info@googlegroups.com

Subcommittees

There are many ways one can be actively involved with the Welfare Foundation. Some of these are to include yourself in one of the subcommittees:

- Food Drive Subcommittee
- Wellness Subcommittee
- Student Scholarship Subcommittee

Please bring your inputs and ideas for any these or outside of these fields.

BDKWWF

E-mail: bdkwwf-info@googlegroups.com

Like us on facebook

Website:: www.bdkwwf.org

(currently under construction)



Bangladeshis in Kitchener-Waterloo Welfare Foundation (BDKWWF) is a voluntary organization registered and approved as a charity organization under the Provincial Government of Ontario.

Our Mission

Improve life of the vulnerable people in Bangladesh and all over the world by extending humanitarian support through our concerted efforts and promote friendship and bondages around the world among people of all origin.

Our Vision

The BD-KW Welfare Foundation will be a fully humanitarian organization through which Bangladeshi community in Kitchener-Waterloo voluntarily demonstrate their effort and caring for others in need.

Membership

Become a member is easy, Just email bdkwwf-info@googlegroups.com. Membership fee is \$120 per year or \$10/per month per family.

Newsletter

This Newsletter Foundational Highlights aims to publish two times in a year January and July. If you like to subscribe to the newsletter please email bdkwwf-info@googlegroups.com or do it online by visiting our website: www.bdkwwf.org.ca