

Aida's Story: Faith in Action

"I was a stranger and you welcomed me." Matthew 25:35

Aida was born to an Eritrean mother and an Ethiopian father in Ethiopia, an African nation torn by an ethnic conflict so deep that the country split into two in 1993. The uneasy peace between Ethiopia and the newly independent nation of Eritrea lasted for five years. In 1998 a territorial dispute plunged the nations into war. When the war ended two years later, the Ethiopian government purged the nation of its Eritrean population. Aida's family—half Ethiopian, half Eritrean—were caught in the middle.

Aida, still only a teenager, fled Ethiopia with her mother and brother, beginning an all-too-typical refugee's journey, one marked by violence, poverty, homelessness, and unemployment. After Aida's mother suddenly passed away in Kenya, her brother migrated to Sudan while Aida ended up in South Africa, where she gave birth to her daughter Ella. When anti-immigrant violence forced the family into hiding, Aida surrendered her meagre savings to human traffickers, who promised safe passage to America. Instead, the traffickers stole Aida and Ella's passports, leaving them stranded in a Guatemalan airport. Low on options, Aida took Ella to Peru. As a refugee, Aida had no recourse to justice when she was ruthlessly exploited by her employers.

Thankfully, Aida and Ella's journey doesn't end there. Thanks to the Diocese of Peterborough's refugee resettlement program, Aida and Ella, sponsored by the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph in Cobourg, finally found their permanent safe haven in 2023. Ella is now enrolled at a local school and sings in the choir at St Michael's Church in Cobourg on Sunday mornings. It's the life that every parent wants for their children.

As a Sponsorship Agreement Holder, the Diocese of Peterborough works with the federal government and local individuals, organizations and parishes to settle families like Aida's. Since 2015, the Diocese of Peterborough has welcomed almost 400 refugees from around the world.

Your support of the Annual Bishop's Appeal funds critical initiatives like the refugee resettlement program. By donating, you help provide hope and security to families in desperate need. Please give generously to the Annual Bishop's Appeal, ensuring that we can continue to make a profound impact on lives like Aida and Ella's.

Donate to the Bishop's Appeal at www.peterboroughdiocese.org.