

MP's REPORT: Happy Holidays!

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Best wishes to you and your family for a wonderful holiday season and a happy New Year!

As we spend time with family and friends over the holidays we are reminded of all that we have here in Canada, and of the future we want to create.

There are those in our community who face barriers as they endeavour to connect with their family members who live outside of Canada.

Many people have family living abroad and it is sometimes a difficult process to obtain visas for relatives to visit. One of my duties as a Member of Parliament is to support people when they need help with services that the federal government delivers. For people in our community, that help is often to assist with services such as immigration issues and passport applications.

These residents who come to my office for assistance are looking for support in their or their family's immigration cases, and help to update them on the status of their visas or permanent resident cards, among other things.

As the holidays are a time to be with family, I wanted to share with you a story that shows how our office can help to reconnect families who have relatives living abroad.

(Please note that names and specific details have been removed to protect the privacy of individuals.)

Reuniting Families in the Final Days

One Saturday afternoon a family came in to the Richmond Hill office asking for our help. Their father was dying and had recently been removed from life support and was in palliative care at a hospital. One of his daughters lives in a foreign country and had applied for a travel visa months before to be able to come and visit her ill father.

This was the first time the family had been into the office, but they had heard that it is our responsibility to assist with visa issues. The family requested our help to receive an update on the daughter's case and to communicate the urgency of this matter. They had not received any update on the status for months and were getting worried that the daughter may not be able to see her father before he passed. The family returned to our office later that day with a letter from the father's physician verifying that the father had only a week to live.

With this tragic news, my team and I worked urgently to collect relevant documents and write support letters, which we sent to our colleagues at Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada (IRCC). We communicated the urgency and importance of this particular case.

Two days later we learned that the visa was approved and the daughter was able to return to Canada to be with her father and family at this sad time. My team and I understand the importance of working to help families like this one every day, especially when it matters most.

As heartbreaking as this story is, and others like it, they serve as a reminder for me of the responsibility that I have to you; the citizens of our community. I am honored to be able to serve in this way, and I thank you for the privilege of being entrusted with this responsibility.

I encourage everyone who may need assistance with immigration or other federal government matters, to visit our office and speak with my team or me. We are here to help you.

I would like to wish everyone a warm, safe, and happy holiday season. I hope that you can spend this time with family; because family is truly the greatest gift we have. Happy Holidays!