



Our House to Yours



Ontario Greenhouse Vegetable Growers (OGVG) is proud to partner with select agricultural partners across Ontario to develop the 'More than a Migrant Worker' campaign to collect and share real stories of migrant workers from across Ontario. As farmers, we know first-hand how vital seasonal workers are to our sector, the

skills they bring to our operations, and what they're able to accomplish for their families and communities in their home countries by coming to work temporarily here in Canada.

Through the media and other channels, these people have come to be known as migrant workers - but as you'll discover on this site, there is so much more to their story than just the work that they do or the label they've been given.

Migrant workers who come to Ontario legally to work on fruit and vegetable farms do so under the umbrella

of one of two government programs: the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program (SAWP) and the Temporary Foreign Worker (TFW) program. Workers under these programs have the same rights and privileges as Canadian workers do, and their employers have the same obligations and responsibilities to those workers as they do for their Canadian employees. Anything else is unacceptable and not supported by the sector.

We hope you take some time to check out the website and learn a bit more about our farm-working neighbors. <https://www.morethanamigrantworker.ca/>

Here is a selection of stories from greenhouse workers right here in Leamington!

THE ADVENTURES OF Lady Bug

I work alongside many people in the greenhouse from all over the world. Many on our team come to Canada to work as part of the Seasonal Agriculture Worker Program or Temporary Foreign worker program. I have colleagues from all around the world, including: Mexico, Jamaica, Guatemala, Thailand and The Philippines!



Juan Carlos,
Seasonal Agriculture Worker from Mexico, working at DC Farms

My name is Juan Carlos and I come from the State of Guanajuato. My reason to be here, to come here to Canada, is for the welfare of my family, to help them and to give my children a good future.

I have come for 14 years. My job here at the farm is to pick and package the product. Once I am finished packaging, I also do maintenance, repair the vehicles, and so on.

At first, my family was sad because I come here,

but the days pass and we know that I have to go out to seek a better life for the children, for my wife, for our parents who we also help when we can. There are low times, there are good times and more than anything you have to give it all to get ahead.

I like the people here. They are nice. I am grateful to Canada, for the opportunity it gives to many people like in Mexico, Central America and many countries. Unfortunately, in our countries, there aren't the opportunities like the ones Canada offers and I thank the people and the employers who give us this opportunity to come to work here.



María Gonzales,
Temporary Foreign Worker from Mexico

My name is María Gonzales and I've been coming to Canada from Mexico since 2001. I always had the idea in Mexico to come and look for new opportunities and when I heard about the program, I

became really excited to come and try it. It was very difficult at first because 20 years ago, this program wasn't intended for women - only men. When we were accepted, it was a triumph because only two or three of us were accepted.

I've been working at this greenhouse since 2012.

I started as a vegetable picker and then I moved to packaging.

For my family and I think for all the families here, they are proud of us because it's so hard to get into this program. My family is proud that I am here and because I'm here, their lives are more stable in Mexico.

Here, we form another family but the heart always stays in Mexico. The family that I leave behind is big. I think about them every day - my mom, my son, my daughter and everyone. They need me there but they also need my job here.

For fun, I like to do shopping first and then outings. I like going to the lake (Lake Erie).



Julio Polanco,
Temporary Foreign Worker from Guatemala, Nature Fresh Farms

My name is Julio Polanco. I am from Guatemala. I came in December 2015 to this greenhouse called Nature Fresh through a foundation in my community. In Guatemala, there is very little work, it

is very scarce and sometimes when there is work it is poorly paid. In Guatemala I have done a lot of different jobs, from a car battery workshop, pig farm, in the fields working with tomatoes, a rose greenhouse, packaging beans, peas, lettuce and in construction. I have worked as security guard, too.

My wife used to say to me, "I want to work, I want to help you also with work, so you do not have to travel anymore". But because I am working here, my wife has been able to go back to school. After three years of studying, she is now a nurse. I am so proud of her, of myself and of my daughter who is 7. My wife now earns more and we are able to send my daughter to a good school where she will receive a good education which will help her when she grows up.

I am very grateful - first to God and then to Nature Fresh. Thanks to the work that I have here, I have a better life. I feel good. I feel happy. I feel that it is a very good company and I am very grateful.

I like to go fishing, go biking and play soccer

but I do not play anymore because 2 years ago I had a fracture. I like to read and listen to music.

Help for Ukraine

OGVG had the opportunity to partner with the great residents of Leamington on an initiative that was collecting donations of medical supplies, sleeping bags, blankets, and other necessary items for the citizens of Ukraine.



There was a call for essential items that were able to be shipped to Toronto and flown to Ukraine free of charge! We would like to extend our sincere gratitude to all that had donated, no matter what the item was. The thought of helping and touching the lives of those who need it most has truly been an inspiring experience. Since Friday March 4th, nearly 20 skids of donated items have been packed, wrapped, and loaded. We are inspired to have had an opportunity to take part in this and are always ready and willing to assist our communities!

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