

**TAMILS HONOUR 25<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF RESCUE OFF COAST OF NEWFOUNDLAND**

On August 11, 1986, Captain Gus Dalton and his crew left Admiral's Beach to fish for cod and flounder. On this day, however, fish would be the last priority on the minds of these men.

"My first thought was their boat must have sank," Dalton recollects.

Dalton's ship, the Atlantic Reaper, was the first to reach the 155 Tamil refugees floating in a pair of crowded lifeboats off the southern shore of St. Shott's.

Just two weeks earlier, the Tamil refugees had boarded a cargo ship to flee persecution by the ruling Sinhala Buddhist nationalists in their homeland of Sri Lanka. For the Tamil refugees, August 11<sup>th</sup>, 1986 marked their third day adrift on the chilly Atlantic Ocean without food or water.

Dalton says as the Atlantic Reaper approached the lifeboats, the relief of the refugees aboard was palpable.

"They were crying and shouting for joy," says Dalton. Huddled on lifeboats, another day for these refugees could have proved fatal.

Dalton says the crew worked quickly. They alerted the Canadian Coast Guard and local fisherman for back up. In the meantime Dalton was able to fit 55 of the women and children on his vessel.

The Canadian Coast guards subsequently arrived and completed the rescue. The majority of the Tamil refugees went on to resettle in Toronto and Montreal.

At a special dinner this August in St. John's, the Canadian Tamil Congress celebrated the efforts of Dalton, his crew, and the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, marking the 25th anniversary of the dramatic rescue at sea.



Meanwhile for 80-year-old Dalton, the experiences of the day still remain fresh.

"I think of them every time I see the fog roll in or I step out to go fishing, even today," says Dalton. "I just think how happy they must be to live in Canada."

In a news release commemorating the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary, Canadian Tamil Congress Director Piragal Thiru praised the efforts of Dalton and his crew as "heroic."

"They are national heroes worthy and deserving of national recognition for their efforts in saving 155 lives. Their efforts are engrained in the hearts and minds of those who were rescued." ■



**AISHA AL AWAW DISPLAYS NOTES FROM HER LEVEL 2 CLASS WITH ED RODGERS IN HER ST. JOHN'S HOME**  
Photo Credit: Robin Grant

**SCHOOL SUCCESS STORY: AISHA AL AWAW**

Confined to a wheelchair and unable to speak English, a single parent makes the journey as a refugee to begin a new life in Newfoundland and Labrador. By any accounts, these odds might seem insurmountable.

But 38 year-old Aisha Al Awaw, a Sudanese newcomer, is no ordinary woman.

"She's the most positive person you'll ever meet," says Ed Rodgers, Al Awaw's Level 2 English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher.

"I can't think of one day she's not smiling, happy and ready to get to work." Rodgers adds that since Al Awaw's studies began at the Association for New Canadians' ESL Adult Training Centre, she has rarely missed a day.

"It was tough when I first got here," says Al Awaw, who says she couldn't speak a word of English when she first arrived in 2005. "For the first two years, I couldn't understand a word anyone was saying."

Meanwhile Rodgers says Al Awaw is remarkably undaunted when it comes to overcoming both physical and communication barriers.

**I CAN'T THINK OF ONE DAY SHE'S NOT SMILING, HAPPY AND READY TO GET TO WORK.**

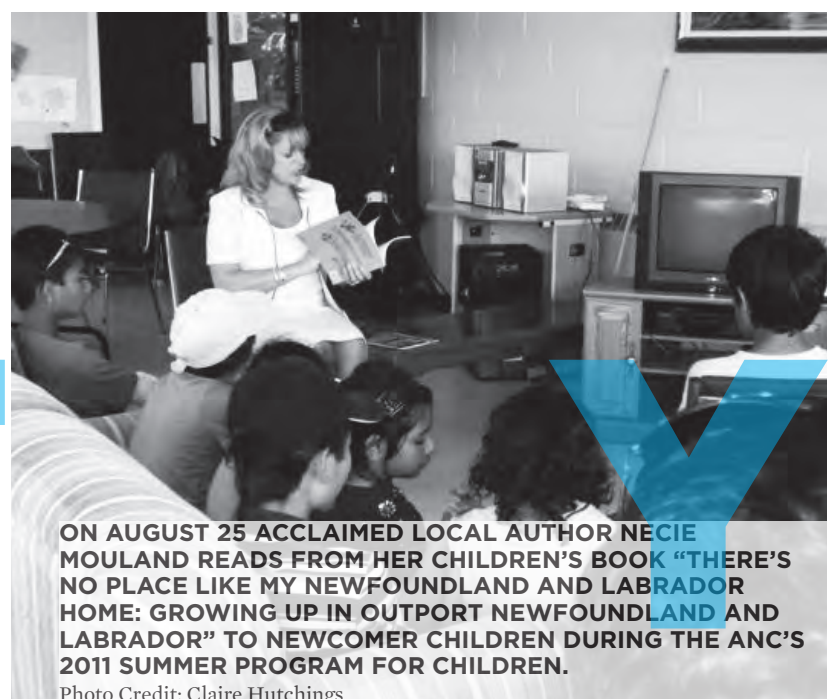
When it comes to learning letter formation for example, Rodgers says Al Awaw, despite her wheelchair, is the first to get up to the front of the class.

"Aisha is determined to be included. She'll lift herself from her seat to her wheelchair, wheel to the front of the class, and, slowly and methodically, write across the bottom of the board," says Rodgers. "Her English writing skills are continuously improving."

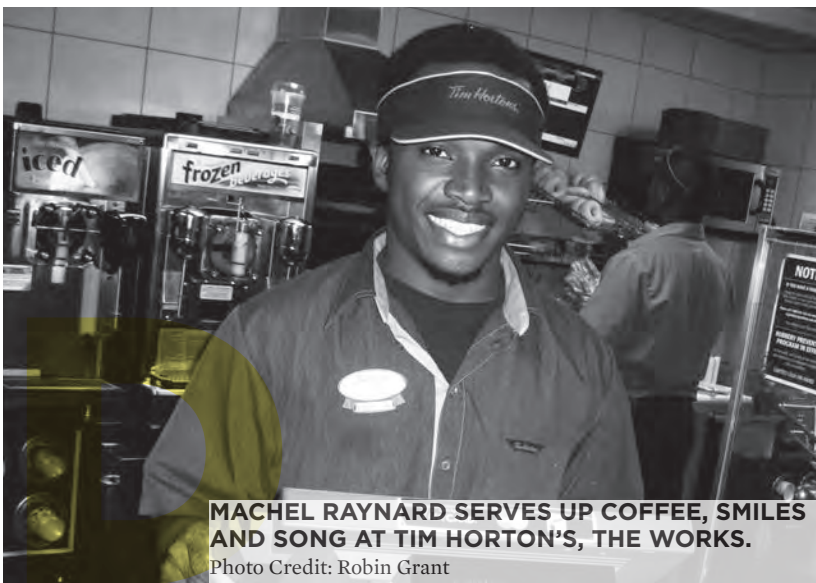
Rodgers says Al Awaw's also quick to lend another student a hand.

"Even though she struggles with English she's always willing to help out her peers in the class," says Rodgers. Learning for Al Awaw, says Rodgers, "... is like growth. She doesn't knuckle under. She likes to learn simply because she's challenged by it."

Al Awaw, who left school for the summer to spend time with family and friends and observe Ramadan, says she's excited to start class again September 5<sup>th</sup>. ■



**ON AUGUST 25 ACCLAIMED LOCAL AUTHOR NECIE MOULAND READS FROM HER CHILDREN'S BOOK "THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE MY NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR HOME: GROWING UP IN OUTPORT NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR" TO NEWCOMER CHILDREN DURING THE ANC'S 2011 SUMMER PROGRAM FOR CHILDREN.**  
Photo Credit: Claire Hutchings



**MACHEL RAYNARD SERVES UP COFFEE, SMILES AND SONG AT TIM HORTON'S, THE WORKS.**  
Photo Credit: Robin Grant

**WORKING IN NEWFOUNDLAND: THE BRAATA OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENT MACHEL RAYNARD**

The summer of 2011 in St. John's will be remembered by most as the worst summer weather-wise in recent history. But thanks to Machel Raynard, customers of Tim Horton's at The Works, Memorial University, could at least count on a little sunshine with their daily coffee.

"He just brightens up my day," says Jill Murphy, a MUN biochemistry student and Tim's patron, of the now well-known Tim Horton's server, Machel Raynard.

A newcomer to Canada, Raynard's cheer and charisma even caught the attention of CBC's Here & Now, who featured him in a July 2011 television segment. Raynard landed in St. John's a year ago as an international student and began working at Tim Horton's in October.

Making the two thousand mile journey from Kingston, Jamaica, it would seem Raynard indeed packed some Jamaican sun in his suitcase. On any given morning Raynard can be spotted behind the counter serving up coffee and donuts along with smiles, jokes and even spontaneous singing and dancing.

"I like to think making people happy is an international quality," says Raynard, who worked at The Sandals Resort in Kingston, Jamaica before moving to the province. "In Jamaica, we call this *giving braata*. It's just about giving a little something extra."

According to Raynard, he was convinced to study at Memorial by a newlywed couple visiting the Sandals resort. Two days later, he applied to MUN, and by August he was on a plane. Raynard says the same newlyweds, in truly hospitable Newfoundland form, picked him up at the airport.

Meanwhile Raynard says when it comes to finding a job, he has three pieces of advice for newcomers.

"One: start small. Don't try to go and do something big. Appreciate the little you can get. It's a stepping stone to what you want. Two: appreciate your job and do your best. You never know where it might lead. And three: always treat people as though you would want them to treat you."

Raynard says once he's completed the kinesiology program, he plans to further his studies at Memorial to become a physiotherapist. ■



**AT THE MSF-RUN HOSPITAL IN DAGAHALEY CAMP NEAR DADAAB, KENYA, A MOTHER FEEDS HER CHILD THERAPEUTIC MILK. AS SOON AS HER CHILD STARTS TO IMPROVE, HE WILL BE ABLE TO START COMBINING THE MILK WITH READY-TO-USE FOOD. MSF MEDICAL STAFF CLOSELY MONITOR THE PROGRESS OF CHILDREN AT THE HOSPITAL.**  
Photo Credit: Photo Courtesy of MSF

**REFUGEE CAMP IN BANNERMAN PARK** From September 8<sup>th</sup> to the 11<sup>th</sup>, 2011 Bannerman Park became the site of "Refugee Camp in the Heart of the City" -- a free outdoor exhibition hosted by Medecins Sans Frontieres/Doctors Without Borders (MSF). MSF aid workers were on site to guide informed tours of the reconstructed 8,000 square foot refugee camp.

The fully reconstructed camp incorporated a range of shelters typical of a real refugee camp including various medical units such as a health clinic, malnutrition and cholera treatment centers, as well as latrines, food distribution and water supply areas.

The first sight on the guided tour was a stop sign posted to a wooden barricade. Marlene Power, a former MSF Logistician and Administrator, says the barricade is meant to signify the barriers refugees face when crossing a border to a new country.

**(REFUGEE CAMP IN BANNERMAN PARK - CONT'D)** "There's a lot of uncertainty. Many refugees, when they reach the border, have no documents, for example," says Power.

Once we pass the 'border,' we enter the refugee camp to see the ramshackle shelters, or small tents made of plastic and bamboo. Surrounding the entrances of the tents are fire pots made from tire rims, sandals made from rubber tires and children's toys made from plastic bottles and bottle caps.

"Refugees arrive with next to nothing, so they become remarkably resourceful," says Power.

We go on to the health treatment tents, where Power tells me relieving dehydration is often a primary concern of MSF aid workers.

"Often 5 liters a day is all that can be rationed for each refugee, to include water for drinking, washing, cooking, and so on."

According to Power, the average Westerner consumes more than 300 liters of water a day.

We tour the various medical treatment centers, where Power says the most common ailments treated are malaria, cholera, malnutrition, measles and mental trauma. Meanwhile Power says despite the urgency and strain on MSF aid workers, they still manage to strictly abide by World Health Organization guidelines.

"There is absolutely no compromise," says Power. "The highest quality of care is always provided by these workers."

Meanwhile according to Power the St. John's exhibit was a major success, welcoming nearly 1000 visitors a day.

"We're glad to see such a great turn-out here in St. John's," says Power. "It's important as many former refugees are making this province their home."

The exhibition by the international humanitarian organization is designed to educate locals and raise awareness about the plight of 43 million people who were forced to flee their homelands. The first of the four city tour this month, their next stops are Halifax, Moncton and Quebec City.

To learn more about the MSF refugee camps and how you can help, please visit [www.refugeecamp.ca](http://www.refugeecamp.ca). ■



**THE STAFF, VOLUNTEERS AND CHILDREN OF ANC'S 2011 SUMMER CAMP FOR CHILDREN.**  
Photo Credit: Robin Grant

The Association for New Canadians is a non-profit, community-based organization dedicated to the provision of settlement and integration services for immigrants and refugees. For over 30 years, the Association has delivered programs and services designed to support all aspects of newcomer integration, ranging from settlement information and orientation, to language learning, skills development and employment.

Relying on an experienced and dedicated team of employees, supported by more than 100 volunteers, the Association offers the following programs and services:

- Resettlement Assistance Program
- Settlement, Orientation and Integration Services
- Language Training and Assessment Services
- Distance ESL
- Volunteer Connections Program
- Settlement Workers in the Schools Program
- AXIS Career Services
- Targeted Programming for Children, Youth, Women and Men
- Diversity Training/Public Education Projects
- Support Services (Childminding, Daycare, Toll Free Helpline, Transportation, Translation)
- Capacity Building Projects

To learn about the ANC, visit our website at <http://www.anc.ca> or to learn more about volunteering, contact Claire Hutchings at (709) 722-0921 or email [ancvolunteer@nfd.net](mailto:ancvolunteer@nfd.net).