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From Aleppo to Québec: An interview with Jad

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What things do you like most in Canada?

I would say that the first thing is respect for human rights, respect for differences between people, and freedom of expression; then good organization and the ease with which you can get through administrative procedures, for example enrolling in university,

getting your insurance card. The third thing I like is nature and parks - that's real paradise for me.

How were you welcomed as an immigrant to Canada?

I received an exceptionally warm welcome! As soon as I arrived at the airport, people helped me, then at university when they found out that I was from Syria, they were very interested and very kind. They saw my arrival as something that enriched their country and they wanted to know all about Syria.

What do you like about the atmosphere at Boisgomin Student Residence?

We are all like brothers and I can live my Catholic faith as in a Christian family. The people of Boisgomin are really like a second family for me.

How did you use to celebrate Christmas in Aleppo?

Christmas celebrations are basically the same as in Canada. I worked a lot with the young people of Aleppo as part of the Marist Scouts. Every year we had a Mass on the 24th, then a supper with all the people involved in the Scouts (parents, members of the Scouts and the Marist brothers themselves), then on the 25th I celebrated with my family, my uncles and aunts, who all gathered for a big Christmas supper.

What is your wish for the first Christmas that you are spending outside Syria?

My sole desire and the great gift that I ask for Christmas is peace for my city Aleppo and my country Syria.

Jad devotes part of his spare time to preserving images of Aleppo, his hometown, on a Facebook page that

has attracted over 40, 000 visitors. He does not want people to remember Aleppo as only destruction and war. For more information, you can read this report by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation CBC about the Aleppo National Archive Facebook page that Jad administers.

Jad's Facebook page @ <https://goo.gl/fPq4pR>

Below are some pictures from his page:

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