



Photo by Noah Park

Former Belleville mayor Robin Jeffrey, 85, holds a candle during a vigil in front of Belleville City Hall for those who are affected by the Quebec shooting. "I wanted to honour the people," says Jeffrey. Hundreds came out to the event on Thursday night. For more photos, see page 7.

## Honouring lives lost in Quebec

By Chris Donovan

Despite temperatures well below freezing, hundreds of people took to the streets of Belleville Thursday night to honour the six lives lost in the shooting at the Quebec Islamic Cultural Centre.

The world watched with horror last Sunday as news broke of a young far-right extremist, Alexandre Bissonnette, entering a mosque in Quebec City and spraying the building with gunfire, killing six people and injuring an additional 19.

Those attending Thursday's march waited at the Belleville Islamic Society as members of Belleville's Muslim community prayed for the dead.

One man from Brighton, Frank

Blanchet, was in attendance during the prayers.

"I only knew one Muslim man in Brighton, when I heard about the shooting, and I reached out to him to offer my condolences after the shooting," he said.

The man invited Blanchet to pray alongside the Muslim community of greater Belleville.

"It was a really special moment," said Blanchet holding back tears. "For these guys to open up their place of worship to me after such a traumatizing event was just beautiful."

After prayers ended, the hundreds of attendees marched from the Islamic Society, across the river to Belleville's City Hall, where a vigil was held for the dead.

Belleville Mayor Taso Christopher took to the podium to share a message of welcome and inclusion.

"We're overwhelmed by the love and support in this community," said Christopher. "I stand before you here today not as a mayor but as a father and a husband," he added, as he choked on his words.

"We will not tolerate hate in this city, this province, or this country," he said to a loud cheer from the crowd.

Christopher added that the city will fly the Quebec flag at half mast in honour of the victims and the flag will then be framed. He announced that he will make a trip to Quebec City with local Imam Mohammed Saleh to present the framed flag to the Quebec

Islamic Cultural Centre.

Prince Edward-Hastings MPP Todd Smith then spoke about the victims of the shooting. He spoke of a university professor at Laval University, a well-known local grocer, a computer scientist for the provincial government, and of the children, wives, and parents who waited for their loved ones to come home from the mosque, never to see them again.

"They were fathers, they were sons, they were uncles, they were friends, and we will never forget them," said Smith.

Smith also took the time to point out a sign in the crowd which read "Canada is for everyone," as he restated a message of acceptance and religious tolerance.

Finally Imam Saleh took to the stage to share a religious message that we are all one family.

"Allow me to call you brothers and sisters tonight, rather than ladies and gentlemen," said Saleh as the crowd cheered.

"We are all one body and if one part of that body is hurt, all of us will feel the pain," he added.

"We Muslims were hurt and you showed us tonight that all of you feel the pain. We will all be united under the Canadian flag," said Saleh.

As Saleh made his final comments, the crowd spontaneously broke out into the national anthem.

To see more on this story, click on this link: <https://vimeo.com/203326923>

## International students find place at Loyalist

Ten per cent of college population made up of students from other countries

By Bea Serdon

Coming to a new school is a something that most of us have probably only done a couple of times in our lives. However, coming to a new school in a faraway country, with a whole different culture than yours and adjusting to that in a short period of time, is not something that all of us can say we've done.

Currently, 10 per cent of Loyalist's student population is composed of international students. For these students, Canada is very different and far away from their home. It took a lot of guts and courage for them to venture into the unknown but they took the chance to come here and study. They are living in a place where they probably experience or are still experiencing something new everyday.

Rizwan Ahmed from Punjab, India, came to Loyalist this year to pursue an education that he said was better than what was possible for him back home. Although the learning experience has been great, Ahmed does not deny that he misses home and is still adjusting to the culture here in Canada.

"Recently, the only things I've been making are toast and eggs. I boil eggs and drink milk for breakfast. I can't cook food from back home. I miss food from home," Ahmed says.

Currently, Ahmed lives with three other international students. He says



Photo by Bea Serdon

Rahul Kansal, Anjali Kapoor, and Inderpreet Singh Sandhu eat together at the Shark Tank pub during their lunch break. After meeting at the International Student Welcome event, this group of friends decided to start bringing Indian food from home to share with each other.

that with the help of Youtube, he and his roommates are able to cook food from their native country so they can have a taste of what they are missing. As much

as he craves the food he has grown up with, it does not stop him from trying new things.

"What I like about Canada is that I can

try all the cuisine I want here: Japanese, Chinese, you name it. They have it."

Another thing that surprised Ahmed and his roommates, Anisafatd Saiyed

and Asfak Mala, about Canada is the snowfall.

"When I saw snow, I made a snowman and took photos to show my family. I posted it on Facebook," Ahmed says.

Ahmed says that the next Canadian trip he would like to take is to go see the Niagara Falls while Saiyed would like to try skiing. Mala would love to go to all the popular places in Canada.

"I went up the CN Tower already. It was a great experience, but scary. Now, I can't wait to see the Falls," Ahmed says.

The three roommates admit that it's been tough being away from home but say that adjusting to Canadian culture has been smooth because of the people surrounding them.

"People are polite here and it's easy to communicate with strangers. If I have a question, I can just ask someone about it and they will help," Mala says.

In late January, there was an International Students Welcome Event. That is where Harman Sandhu found his new group of friends. After meeting with them, they decided that they would start bringing food to share with each other and eat lunch together.

"The next day after the welcome event, we decided to bring food because not everyone knew how to cook food from our country. It's more fun to eat like this," Sandhu says.

According to the research study conducted by the Canadian Bureau for International Education in 2015, there were 353,000 international students in Canada at all levels of study, and 51 per cent of these students plan to apply for permanent residency in Canada.

"I like the Canadian culture and I want to stay here after my program ends. It's very easy to settle here," Ahmed says.