

The National Secretariat of Social Pastoral of the Catholic Church had arranged a "temporary departure from Colombia" for the family, but because of his age, Schneydher could not accompany them.

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Within a month, Schneydher was able to follow them to Uruguay.

*"My grandparents stayed behind, whom I love deeply, [with] the other members of my family, my friends and my life".*

For a year, the family almost felt safe in Uruguay. Schneydher completed his degree in Film, with a final grade of Excellent, for a short film he had made in Uruguay. UNHCR granted them refugee status in October 2005.

Then in November the whole process of fear and threats started again with phone calls made in a Colombian accent. Once more they had to move, miss school, and Valentina give up ballet, Daniel give up his University job, Schneydher changed his appearance to be able to work.....*"and my mother comes to work and give encouragement but I feel that every day is more exhausted and if she is exhausted and collapses, this family is destroyed."*

*"We are all very excited to move to Canada, in my case I have employment opportunities and in some way to continue what I do, but the security, fear and uncertainty do not allow me to fully develop and may not know happen to us. In addition my family we are all consumed and lost in this sea of constant anxiety and few certainties. We believe that moving to a country that is truly secure, guaranteed to make smooth life, projects, and live in peace is the solution to this crisis which deepens over the days."*

Here at Chalmers our problems are not so grave but we do need volunteers with every sort of knowledge, ability and skill from shopping to riding the bus and everything between to help in the CHALMERS REFUGEE PROJECT.

Please think of one small area in which you can help to have the strangers feel at home with us. I believe they are a very able family and if the toll of the past years has not been too great on them they have much to offer. They have abilities and values from which we can all benefit.

Next week we will ask you to indicate on paper where your commitment may lie.

Rosalie Armstrong  
rarmstrong28@cogeco.ca  
613-530-3736

## CHALMERS' REFUGEE PROJECT

At the congregational meeting last June, the Outreach Committee presented the opportunity to sponsor a refugee family. This idea was approved in principle and the committee has been working with the National Church Offices to get the paper work underway. Now, the family's papers have arrived in the Canadian immigration offices and we are looking forward to welcoming the family. The family is comprised of Doris Helena (mother), Daniel (father), Schneydher, 25 year old son, and Valentina 15 year old daughter.

In Schneydher's refugee application, he spoke of their situation. To introduce the family's story to the Chalmers congregation are parts of their story in his words.

*"The political situation is very complicated and there is no guarantee for our life. In Colombia, currently being discussed [are] problems that involve many complicated issues of paramilitary and guerrilla forces and processes of justice and peace."*

The family was involved in "the processes of peace and justice". They worked with the Governor of Tolima in building a government program called, *Tolima, Land and Peace Laboratory*. When the Governor launched a presidential bid in 2003, the family started to receive threatening phone calls at their home, as a result of their work with the "guerrilla" governor.

*"At the start of 2004, several armed men came to our house, I was alone and threatened me to open up, I did not because I realised they were armed. From that day my mother and Daniel decided to send my sister to my grandparent's house. My family began looking for alternatives to immediate change of home.....so they decided to go [from Bogota] to another area of Cajica. For a month all was more or less quiet."*

The local population protected them and they had official police protection but soon there was no security - they had to change routes to work, to school, stop meeting friends. Schneydher was sent to the grandparents.

*"I was 'trapped' in the house...could not communicate with anyone with all the anger of the world and thousands of inconsistencies in my head."  
"One day at 7.00 in the morning, [there] arrived a taxi to the house of my grandparents, [with] my mother, sister and Daniel, with a few things. They had left very early one morning from the home in Cajica, many laps [drove around to lose those following them]. My sister was sick and threw because her nerves made her so sick."*

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