



Thought Leadership Corner

By Nawroz

A refugee child and new American

"Thank you and America for giving me a safe place, a new life and a better future."

Thank You, America

Meet Nawroz: An inspirational, young new American who hopes to be a doctor one day. "Nawroz" literally means "a new year" – so we thought it only appropriate that we share her story and her wisdom in the days leading up to 2019!

Dear friend:
I am a Kurdish refugee
from Syria. Thank you and
America for giving me a
safe place, a new life
and a better future.
I want to work and
study hard to serve my
new country and home,
America. I want to be a
doctor because I want to
help all of the people
around the world and I
want to make America
better.

Sincerely,
Nawroz
A refugee child and new
American.



Nawroz was just six years old when she and her family fled Syria for Istanbul, Turkey, but she remembers seeing people hurt and dying all around her.

While in Turkey, her parents couldn't work, and she witnessed her teenage sister (**Randa**, whose name means "good" or "beautiful") working long days in a clothing factory to support the family. She watched her brother **Alan**, who has cerebral palsy, virtually immobile and unable to participate in a quality life. After registering as refugees with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the family was in Istanbul for two years going through the screening process. Despite all the hardships her family saw along the way, Nawroz says that Turkey is the most beautiful country.



The Youssef family finally arrived in America three years ago and was resettled by New AP. They were amongst the lucky ones who were able to resettle in the United States and start a better life. Nawroz shares stories of gratitude – for New AP and for the welcoming community all around them. She doesn't remember all of their journey, but she knows that her family is safe here in America.

Her father is happy. Her mother works at a local bakery and makes the most amazing breads and sweet treats. Her sister went through the GED program. Now she goes to Georgia Piedmont Technical College and plans to continue her studies to become a nurse. And, after years of specialized treatments coordinated by New AP's intensive healthcare team, her brother is now far more mobile than ever before. Nawroz says he's going to school for the first time and is happier than she's ever seen him.



Today, Nawroz is thriving at a private school. She loves her school, has many friends and, at the time of the interview, she was hyper-focused on the "white elephant" exchange her class was planning before the break. She was worried that she had guessed which classmate had drawn her name – and she hopes she is wrong about that, because she really wants to be surprised by her gift.

She says she's "a crafty girl" and loves to create art. She started making a series of heartfelt card designs that express her joyful spirit. She makes pop-up cards with many different designs. One day she showed some of her designs to **Dr. Heval Kelli** – a family friend and New AP's own 2017 Friend of Freedom. Recognizing her talent, he suggested that she add an American flag to the front and make the cards to share with her country how much she appreciates the opportunities given to her.

She has made several.



She sent one of her “Thank You, America” cards to President Trump but she hasn’t heard back yet.

She shared her favorite three designs to be reproduced in some way to help New AP raise money to help more refugee families. (We will find the right way to do this!)

When asked about gratitude and what it means to her, Nawroz says that being thankful is the “respectful thing to do.” We asked how she faced the challenges of coming to America – adapting to a new environment, different cultures and a new language to learn. She simply says that she tried her best.

“You should always try your best to never give up, and be nice to people. I tried to be friends. Friendship is the best thing you should do in life.” She says that you should always share, communicate openly and help others.

Nawroz and Randa both express thanks to America “for accepting me;” to their mom and dad “for bringing us to a safe place;” to **Heval** and friend **Mary Helen** “for teaching us good things, making everything easier and helping us stay strong.”

New AP is honored to help all new American children like Nawroz and families like the Youssefs as they navigate a new pathway in America.

To see Nawroz read her card, [click here](#).