

Tareq Hadhad

2025 Recipient



Tareq Hadhad is telling his story. He was a Syrian refugee and now living his new life with his entrepreneurial family on Canada's East Coast. He is the founder and CEO of Peace by Chocolate, the recipient of the EY Entrepreneur of The Year 2021 for Atlantic, named one of the Top 25 Immigrants in The Maritimes, selected by Google as the National Hero Case, was awarded RBC's top Immigrant Award and Entrepreneur of the Year in 2020 and Queen Elizabeth II's Platinum Jubilee Medal, and he was recently awarded Atlantic Business Magazine's 30 under 30 Innovators. All of this has happened since Tareq's arrival to Canada's East Coast in December 2015 as a Syrian-Canadian newcomer.

In 2012 the Hadhad's home and factory that housed the family chocolate-making business were destroyed which forced them to seek safety in other countries. A former medical student at Damascus University and long-time peacekeeping advocate, Tareq joined medical relief efforts after arriving in Lebanon. A new life began when Tareq and his family were welcomed to Canada on a community-based sponsorship.

Passionate about peace and entrepreneurship, his family relaunched the family business to recreate the chocolates they once exported across the Middle East and their story has turned into an international inspiring phenomenon.

Tareq and his family have a focus on job creation, utilizing a network of local community members and refugees from across Nova Scotia and Canada to help support the local economy. Now that their chocolates are distributed across Canada, they look to offer more employment opportunities as their business grows.

In January 2020, Tareq received his official Canadian Citizenship which garnered international attention and has become one of the greatest accomplishments of his life. He has had the privilege to meet former President of the United States, Barack Obama, several Canadian Prime Ministers, and has had conversations with many World Leaders. Author Jon Tattrie wrote a book about the Hadhad's story, which has become a bestseller. A feature film, Peace by Chocolate, also based on the family's story premiered at the Tribeca Film Festival and launched in Cineplex theaters across Canada in the spring of 2022. The film won several film festivals, awards, and accolades.