



Waterloo Catholic
District School Board

35 Weber Street West • P.O. Box 91116 • Kitchener Ontario Canada • N2G 4G2
Telephone: 519.578.3660



News Release

September 17, 2015
For Immediate Release

Catholic Board Launches “Project Hope” in Response to Refugee Crisis

Schools support appeals by Cardinal Collins and the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops to assist families fleeing war-torn Middle East

Waterloo Region, ON – Waterloo Region’s Catholic Schools, responding to the ongoing and worsening humanitarian crisis that has displaced thousands of families in war torn regions of the Middle East, today launched “*Project Hope*” – raising funds to assist in the resettlement of families fleeing the war-torn Middle East.

This special campaign supports efforts already begun by Toronto Archbishop *Thomas Cardinal Collins* as well as the *Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops*.

In coming weeks each of WCDSB’s five secondary and 46 elementary schools will engage in school-specific activities to raise funds for this vitally important cause. Further information about specific activities will be made available as school plans are finalized.

QuickFacts

- ✓ Since 1998, Waterloo Region’s Catholic Schools have raised more than **\$5 million** for various charitable causes.
- ✓ The Catholic Church in Canada is blessed with several aid and development agencies which do outstanding international work and are deeply involved in assisting Syrian and other refugees and displaced persons. Their work is only possible through the generous donations and support of many Catholics as well as other people of good will. These include the *Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace*, *Aid to the Church in Need – Canada*, the *Catholic Near East Welfare Association of Canada* (CNEWA Canada) and *Canadian Jesuits International*. Please see [Related Links](#), below.
- ✓ The *Catholic Refugee Sponsors’ Council* brings together personnel from a number of diocesan and other Catholic offices involved in refugee sponsorship. Its focus is to assist in providing coordination, advocacy and information for Catholic refugee sponsoring organizations. Anyone interested in personally sponsoring a refugee family should visit the CRSC website for further information. Please see [Related Links](#), below.
- ✓ The Waterloo Catholic District School Board’s *Newcomer Reception Centre* and *St. Louis Adult Learning & Continuing Education Centres* provide a wide variety of services and learning opportunities for newcomers to Canada and Waterloo Region. Please see [Related Links](#), below.

Quotes

“These brothers and sisters of ours were trying to escape difficult situations to find some serenity and peace; they were looking for a better place for themselves and their families, but instead they found death. How often do such people fail to find understanding, fail to find acceptance, fail to find solidarity. And their cry rises up to God”!

Quality • Inclusive • Faith-based • Education
w w w . w c d s b . c a

-- Pope Francis speaking on the island of Lampedusa, July 8, 2013

“The heart-wrenching images we have seen in the last number of days have put the refugee crisis on the front pages of our papers and the lead stories in newscasts around the world. I also hope it has stopped us in our tracks, to allow us to take stock of what is going on in the world...When a family feels their only hope is to flee their homeland to join hundreds on small, drifting boats; sliding a child beneath razor wire or packing into cargo trucks, we should not only be disturbed but also ashamed.”

-- Thomas Cardinal Collins, Archbishop of Toronto

“There are some 13 million refugees now throughout the world, of whom four million are from Syria. The problems they face are immense, and their situations will not be easily or quickly resolved. Our efforts to work with refugees must be long-term, if they are to be treated justly and our world is to know peace”.

-- Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops

“As a school system serving students from 114 different countries who speak more than 70 different languages we celebrate our diversity as one of our greatest strengths. So when we see our brothers and sisters – regardless of religion – suffering terribly in foreign lands, we are moved to act. We truly believe our schools are “Heart of the Community” and in times of tragedy such as this our “community” knows no borders.”

-- Loretta Notten, Director of Education, WCDSB

Related Links

[Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace](#)

[Aid to the Church in Need – Canada](#)

[Catholic Near East Welfare Association of Canada](#)

[Canadian Jesuits International](#)

[Catholic Refugee Sponsors' Council](#)

[WCDSB Newcomer Reception Centre](#)

[St. Louis Adult Learning & Continuing Education Centres](#)

The Waterloo Catholic District School Board, representing more than 96,000 Catholic school supporters, operates 52 schools and four adult education facilities serving more than 40,000 elementary, secondary and continuing education students in Waterloo Region – continuing a 179-year tradition of quality, inclusive, faith-based education. Follow us on Twitter: [**@WCDSBNewsWire**](#) - [**#WCDSBAwesome**](#).

- 30 -

For more information, please contact:

John Shewchuk – Chief Managing Officer
(519) 578-3660 | john.shewchuk@wcdsb.ca