

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

65,000 HOMELESS YOUNG CANADIANS WANT YOU TO KNOW -- THERE ARE SOLUTIONS TO YOUTH HOMELESSNESS IN CANADA

**November 24, Hamilton, ON:** Wesley Urban Ministries launches Raising the Roof Toque Campaign. Buy a toque. Help put a cap on youth homelessness in Hamilton and across Canada!

Hamilton's official launch of Raising the Roof's annual Toque Campaign will take place at Westmount Secondary School on Tuesday December 1st from 11:30 am - 12:30 p.m. Raising the Roof, a national charity dedicated to building partnerships, raising awareness, raising funds and supporting solutions to homelessness, works with Hamilton area partner Wesley Urban Ministries to achieve this goal.

This year's theme is "Let's put a cap on youth homelessness!" On any given night, across Canada, 65,000 youth are without a place to call home. In Hamilton, it is estimated that at least 600 of Hamilton's youth are homeless on the streets.

The launch of the local Toque Campaign will be hosted by Westmount Secondary School students in the Social Justice program. These students are taking a leadership role by hosting the Hamilton and area Raising the Roof launch and educating students about the issue of youth homelessness. Assad Hoosein, Chair of the Toque Campaign and Wesley Urban Ministries' board member says, "It is impressive to see youth working for youth. We have businesses, churches and community agencies participating in the program and having the students involved creates a really strong partnership working on behalf of our street involved youth."

Wesley Urban Ministries offers Wesley Youth Housing, a transitional housing program for youth aged 16-21, and Wesley Centre a 24-hour Drop-In providing emergency shelter for both men and women. Funds from Hamilton and area toque sales will support these critical programs.

Buy a toque with a \$10 donation. The toque you buy will keep you warm and provide the following in our community:

- 1 Toque (\$10):            2 hot meals at Wesley Centre.
  
- 10 Toques (\$100):       Groceries for 2 weeks for one young person living in Wesley Youth Housing.
  
- 100 toques (\$1000):    Bus tickets for 1 week for 100 homeless or at risk adults going back to work.
  
- 200 toques (\$2000):    Will support a local youth for 6 months at Wesley

Youth Housing learning important life skills for independent living.

Raising the Roof is pleased to announce that Virgin Mobile/RE\*Generation is Lead Partner in this year's National Raising the Roof Toque Campaign, and Canadian Traffic Network rejoins the campaign as a National Partner

The Toque Campaign will run from December 1st until the end of February with the December 1st launch kicking off a 2 month fund raising and awareness building program. A highlight will be Toque Tuesday, February 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2010, the national public awareness day where we invite all Hamiltonians to wear their toque and show their support of Wesley Urban Ministries and long-term solutions to youth homelessness

Toques can be purchased locally at the following locations:

- \* La Jardinière Flower Market on Locke St.
- \* Global Village in Westdale
- \* Goodness Me - Upper Gage location

Or go to [www.wesleyurbanministries.ca](http://www.wesleyurbanministries.ca) for more information.