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A REFUGEE CAMP IN THE HEART OF THE CITY

Médecins Sans Frontières Announces 2008 Western Canada Tour This Fall

Toronto – The international medical humanitarian organization Médecins Sans Frontières / Doctors Without Borders (MSF) will tour western Canada this fall with **A Refugee Camp in the Heart of the City**, an 8,000 square-foot reconstruction of an actual refugee camp.

This interactive, outdoor exhibit asks visitors to imagine what life is like for the estimated 42 million people worldwide who have been forced to flee their homes and seek refuge from conflict in places like Sudan, Colombia and Iraq.

A Refugee Camp in the Heart of the City is free, open to the public and will run from 9 am to 5:30 pm daily in each city. Beginning in September, the exhibit will travel to four cities across western Canada.

Winnipeg: September 11 –14
The Forks

Edmonton: September 18 – 21
McIntyre Park

Calgary: September 25 – 28
Olympic Plaza

Vancouver: October 2 – 6
Vancouver Public Library

Experienced MSF aid workers (doctors, nurses and logisticians) will guide visitors through the camp, explaining the different areas, including a cholera treatment centre, a health clinic, emergency refugee housing, as well as nutrition and vaccination tents.

Visitors will learn how refugees and internally displaced persons confront the challenges of daily survival, including building shelter, finding food and clean water, and enduring disease. Teachers can use the exhibit as an educational tool and can pre-book tours for their students, while the public is welcome to come at any time.

“The number of people who have been forced by conflict, violence or disaster to flee their homes continues to grow each year, and today totals a staggering 42 million worldwide – almost 10 million more than the entire population of Canada,” said Marilyn McHarg, general director of MSF Canada.

More than half of MSF’s programs in more than 60 countries exist to provide assistance – including medical care, sanitation, shelter, and nutrition – to people suffering because of armed conflict or internal instability.

“People who have been forced to flee their homes generally have had no notice, no time to plan or pack, and no clear destination. Camps are established to help provide a place where these people can settle temporarily and receive food, shelter, water and medical assistance in safety. Often they will arrive in a state of high vulnerability after days of walking and may well have been affected by the conflict long before they fled their homes,” said McHarg. “We hope this exhibit will raise awareness of their plight and the need for concrete action to alleviate it.”

The exhibit’s 2006 and 2007 tours visited Atlanta, Chicago, Dallas, Houston, Nashville, New York, Milwaukee and Minneapolis, with last year’s tour alone attracting 18,500 visitors. **A Refugee Camp in the Heart of the City** has travelled to 13 countries since it was first exhibited in France in 1995.

For more information on the exhibit please visit: www.refugeecamp.ca

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Médecins Sans Frontières/ Doctors Without Borders (MSF) is an international independent medical humanitarian organization that delivers emergency aid to people affected by armed conflict, epidemics, natural and man-made disasters, and exclusion from healthcare in more than 60 countries. MSF was awarded the 1999 Nobel Peace Prize.

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