

# NEWS RELEASE

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## **Alberta poverty awareness project wins Peace Medal and launches national campaign**

CANMORE, AB — New poverty statistics indicate a growing number of Canadians in poverty or hovering barely above poverty. Even in prosperous Alberta, the number of children living in poverty has increased 40% this past year. In this context, Sean Krausert – a social justice advocate, Anglican deacon, and principal of That Poverty Project – will be launching a poverty awareness campaign in early December to elected officials across Canada, starting with Members of Parliament.

“Twenty-two years ago the Parliament unanimously voted in favour of eliminating poverty in Canada, and then unanimously affirmed that decision on November 24, 2009, the 20th anniversary of the original vote,” recalls Krausert. “But nothing has been done by the Canadian government in response to these motions.

“The national campaign, called the Priority Poverty Campaign, asks our elected leaders to affirm that their top priority is ensuring everyone in their constituency has food, clean water, shelter, access to education and health care, and proper sanitation/electricity,” says Krausert.

With the assistance of the growing network of project followers, elected provincial and municipal officials will also be asked to commit to poverty alleviation as their first priority.

“Canada has the resources to ensure everyone’s basic rights are met; it’s simply a matter of priorities,” says Krausert.

“That Poverty Project” began in July of this year to engage more Canadians in the fight against poverty, which causes more deaths than AIDS, TB, malaria, natural disasters and conflict combined. The project involves Krausert, 42, undertaking a series of lifestyle challenges in which he aims to bring attention to homelessness, the financial pressures of the working poor, and hunger. On November 23, 2011, Krausert was named a 2011 Peace Medal Recipient by YMCA (Calgary) in recognition of the project’s success to date.

During the first phase of the project, Krausert simulated elements of being homeless by moving into a sparsely equipped tent in his backyard for three months. The second phase of the project began on November 1, 2011 and draws attention to the struggles of the working poor (approximately 10% of Canadians.) Canada is also not immune from hunger, which will be the focus of the third phase of the project early next year. “I’ve been called crazy because of this project,” Krausert said. “But what is really crazy is living in a world of abundance and having billions of people going hungry, not having clean water or being homeless. Poverty is deadly — but it’s also preventable.”

The Priority Poverty Campaign is intended to complement the efforts of other organizations such as Make Poverty History and Dignity for All in encouraging action on Parliament’s previous motions, including passing of Bill C-233, An Act to Eliminate Poverty in Canada.

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Additional information about *That Poverty Project* can be accessed at [www.thatpovertyproject.com](http://www.thatpovertyproject.com). The project is being implemented in partnership with The Mustard Seed, which delivers basic services, housing, and employment programs to those in need and partners with the community to address the root causes of poverty in Alberta.

# BACKGROUND

## **Poverty Statistics (& Sources)**

- It is estimated that 25,000 people die every day due to hunger or hunger related causes (over 9 million people per year).  
*Source: Poverty.com based upon statistics from World Food Programme, Oxfam, and UNICEF*  
<http://www.poverty.com/index.html>
- It is estimated that 3,575,000 die each year from water-borne diseases.  
*Source: Water.org citing World Health Organization 2008 Report: Safer Water, Better Health; Costs, benefits, and sustainability intervention to protect and promote health*  
<http://water.org/learn-about-the-water-crisis/facts/>

***NOTE – It is not certain whether the hunger and hunger related deaths includes the water-borne disease deaths, but even if it does not there is likely some overlap. Therefore, the estimated deaths from poverty are between 9-12 million people per year.***

- It is estimated that between 1.6 – 2.1 million people die from AIDS each year. *Source:*  
<http://www.avert.org/worldstats.htm>
- There were almost 300,000 deaths due to natural disasters in 2010 (an unusually high year).  
*Source: United Nations News Centre – January 24, 2011*
- It is estimated that there are 1 million deaths due to malaria each year and in 2006 there were 1.7 million deaths due to TB (tuberculosis). *Source:*  
[http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/what/development-policies/intervention-areas/humandev/humandevhealth3\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/what/development-policies/intervention-areas/humandev/humandevhealth3_en.htm)
- Currently, 925 million people in the world do not have sufficient food to eat. *Source: World Food Programme (http://www.wfp.org/hunger/stats) referencing the Sept. 14, 2010 News Release from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations*
- Nearly 1 billion people lack access to safe drinking water and 2.5 billion people do not have proper sanitation. *Source: (http://water.org/learn-about-the-water-crisis/facts/)*
- Almost half of the world (over 3 billion people) live on less than \$2.50 per day. *Source: (http://www.globalissues.org/article/26/poverty-facts-and-stats#src3)*
- 3.5 million Canadians live in poverty, including 1 in 10 Canadian children. *Source: Make Poverty History (http://www.makepovertyhistory.ca/learn/issues/end-poverty-in-canada)*
- *Recent news story (CBC) – "Canada accused of still failing its poor"*  
<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/story/2011/11/22/canada-poverty-campaign2000.html> )
- *Alberta child poverty increases 40%*  
<http://www.edmontonsocialplanning.ca/content/view/1087/256/>)

## **The Rev. Sean Krausert (Deacon) B.A.,LL.B.**

- Executive Director of Global WE Initiatives Corp. with prior experience in the fields of law, writing, international relief and development, and improv theatre.
- Ordained Deacon in the Anglican Diocese of Calgary (2003 – present). Serving at St. Michael's Anglican Church, Canmore, Alta..
- Married to Janet for the last 22 years; two children – Ben (16) and Jenna (12).

***About Global WE Initiatives Corp.***

Sean Krausert is the executive director and co-founder of Global WE Initiatives Corp., which is implementing That Poverty Project. For more information – [www.globalwe.ca](http://www.globalwe.ca).

***About The Mustard Seed***

Additional information about The Mustard Seed's incredible 27 year street ministry can be found at [www.theseed.ca](http://www.theseed.ca).

***About the Dignity for All Campaign and Bill C-233***

Additional information about Dignity for All and Bill C-233 can be found at [www.dignityforall.ca](http://www.dignityforall.ca) .

***About Make Poverty History***

Additional information about Make Poverty History can be found at [www.makepovertyhistory.ca](http://www.makepovertyhistory.ca) .