

NEWS RELEASE

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Thanksgiving marks end of homelessness phase in Alberta poverty awareness project

Moving home after 3 months living in a tent to simulate aspects of homelessness, Alberta-based poverty advocate Sean Krausert has reason to celebrate Thanksgiving and World Homeless Day

CANMORE — An Alberta-based Anglican deacon and poverty advocate is about to launch the second phase of a year-long poverty awareness project, after living akin to a homeless person for the past three months to raise awareness about homelessness.

Based in the affluent Rocky Mountain town of Canmore, Sean Krausert kicked off "That Poverty Project" earlier this year to engage more Canadians in the fight against poverty, which causes more deaths than AIDS, TB, malaria, natural disasters and conflict combined. Krausert, 42, is a long-time social justice advocate; having branded himself "That Poverty Guy," Krausert is undertaking a series of lifestyle challenges in which he will aim to bring attention to homelessness, the financial pressures of the working poor, and hunger.

"In my mind we have a moral obligation to help those in need," says Krausert. "Call it what you want: 'doing unto others as you would want done to you' or 'being the change you most want to see in the world'. I call it alleviating pain of suffering that we have the ability stop. Pain anywhere is our pain."

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. In this time, he endured a sprained ankle and dog bite, walked everywhere, laundered his only two sets of clothes (including socks and underwear) by hand on a rock, gave up shaving and cutting his hair, and showered infrequently.

"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."

Fittingly, Krausert returns to living in his home on Thanksgiving weekend. Phase II of the project will start on November 1st and focus on the challenges facing the working poor, and Phase III will start March 1st and focus on hunger. However, before looking ahead to the next phases of the project, Krausert says he will be cherishing Thanksgiving Weekend like never before.

"I'm certainly grateful for getting back into a real bed and I look forward to celebrating a feast with my family," Krausert said. "But I am most grateful for the lessons I have learned in the tent, especially showing me all the blessings we take for granted. And I am grateful for everyone who is unleashing their compassion to help those in need."

This year, Thanksgiving also coincides with World Homeless Day, which is recognized on the 10th of October every year with events in over 50 countries. World Homeless Day aims to draw attention to homeless people's needs locally, and provide opportunities for communities to get involved in responding to homelessness.

"Some people think I have it backwards, moving back into my home on World Homeless Day, but to me it's a symbolic action, since getting people back into a home is the whole point of the day," Krausert said. "We can end poverty and the suffering that goes with it. It's just a matter of priorities."

Additional information about That Poverty Project can be accessed at 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
- 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>)*

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).

World Homeless Day

For more information - www.worldhomelessday.org.

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.

About The Mustard Seed

Additional information about The Mustard Seed's incredible 27 year street ministry can be found at www.theseed.ca.