

## PRESS RELEASE, WINGS OF HOPE FOR AFRICA FOUNDATION

Aug 31, 2016

### Headline: Calgary Charity Delivers Canadian Donations to Refugee Camp in Rwanda



A Calgary charity delivered supplies to Burundian refugees during a long-awaited trip to Rwanda's largest refugee settlement, the Mahama Camp.

Aline Nzeyimana, founder of Wings of Hope for Alberta Foundation, her husband Jordan Mack and photographer Amber Hartnett travelled to Rwanda in July to deliver supplies purchased from donations collected across Canada.

The team bought supplies in Rwanda's capital of Kigali, then embarked on a 4 hour journey to the camp, where they handed off the donations to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). The team of 3 bought and delivered 100 mattresses, 1,200 pairs of undergarments, 118 shoes for women and children, as well as 60 shorts and 60 T-shirts, 40 pants and 40 long sleeved shirts for children.

"The donation was given to the UNHCR and was distributed later that day," said Nzeyimana. The Calgary volunteers were at the camp for one day where they were able to meet some of the refugees they helped.

Nzeyimana said the trip was stressful, but well worth it.

“We did our absolute best to bring a ray of hope and optimism to those living in desperate conditions — showing them that the world knows and cares about them” she added.

Nzeyimana said she saw desperation and hopelessness as people try to cope living in cramped areas filled with worn-out tents. The charity raised \$8,496 during a three-and-a-half month campaign earlier this year. Initially, the group planned to arrive earlier in July in Rwanda, but due to visa and flight delays didn't arrive until July 17th.

Wings of Hope for Africa is grateful to all of the Canadians, many of whom are Calgarians, for donating to the Burundian refugee campaign.

“We want to give a million thank-yous to all Canadians who donated and brought hope to these families,” said Nzeyimana. “We showed (the Burundians) that even though there is a big distance between Canada and Africa, they are human beings and we care for them.

“Thank you very much to all our supporters who made this possible.”

Nzeyimana moved to Canada in 2005 after fleeing Burundi as a refugee. Fearing for her life, she left partway through her university studies in computer science and landed in Montreal, where she stayed for two years, before settling down in Calgary. Today, she is married and raising one boy while working in customer service for a shipping company. She founded Wings of Hope for Africa in 2011, motivated by a personal understanding of the hardships faced by her fellow Burundians, as well as her Christian beliefs.

She's currently one of five nominees for the 2016 Philanthropist of the Year Obsidian Award. The awards, celebrating African, Caribbean and Afro-Canadian culture and excellence in Alberta, will be handed at the Jubilee Auditorium in Calgary on Sept. 17.

According to the UNHCR, more than 265,000 people have fled Burundi since violence erupted in 2015 due to President Pierre Nkurunziza's bid for a successful, third term. An estimated 50,000 Burundians live at Mahama camp. Families have been forced to flee due to violence and persecution, arriving in refugee camps where they'll live for an undetermined time in plastic tents.

Wings of Hope for Africa, a registered Canadian charity based in Calgary, is dedicated to emergency relief, education, sponsoring children in need, and developing self-sufficiency programs like community gardens in order to end poverty in Burundi. Since its creation in September 2011, Wings of Hope has successfully completed more than 30 projects, ranging from promoting education to income generation, healthcare, and disaster relief.

Donations to the project are welcome through the charity's website at:  
[www.wingsofhopeforafrica.ca/donate](http://www.wingsofhopeforafrica.ca/donate)

For more information, email [info@wingsofhopeforafrica.ca](mailto:info@wingsofhopeforafrica.ca), or call 403-815-0037.

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**FURTHER BACKGROUND:**

The UNHCR requested US\$175.1 million for the humanitarian response in the region, but has only received US\$47.8 million, or 27 per cent. It's making an urgent appeal to humanitarian agencies worldwide, to help with the gap to mobilize additional resources for support, either by money donations or in-kind support.

“This means we are struggling to provide even the basics such as shelter, household items and latrines,” says the UNHCR in its April 22 report. “The provision of services such as specialized counselling, care for the disabled and elderly, protection of the environment and even primary health care may also fall by the wayside.”

Burundi is one of the poorest countries of the world and is known as the world's “world's hungriest nation” (article <http://qz.com/508774/burundis-political-crisis-is-making-one-of-the-poorest-countries-on-earth-even-worse-off>). The World Happiness Report 2016 Update, released on March 16, ranked Burundi as the world's least happy nation.

For more information on the refugee crisis, the UN Refugee Agency reports, Burundi Situation: Emergency Response January-December 2016 and Regional Refugee Response Plan, have been attached.