

Learning Foundation gala benefits students in need

It's all about supplying students with the basics to help them succeed — and in some cases providing them with the means just to stay in school.

Imagine ... the Possibilities is the theme of the Halton Learning Foundation's annual Benefit Bash, being held Thursday, Nov. 12, from 5:30 to 10 p.m., at the Burlington Convention Centre, 1120 Burloak Dr. The event aims to raise \$85,000 to support Halton public school board students who live at or below the poverty line.

"In a community as wealthy as Halton, it's hard to believe that 10 per cent of public school students struggle with the challenges of poverty every day," Lesley Mansfield, executive director of the Halton Learning Foundation, said in a press release.

"Imagine the possibilities if we could keep more kids engaged in learning by ensuring they have enough to eat, appropriate clothing and school supplies, and the money to take advantage of educational opportunities such as field

trips and school teams," she added.

Focus

The Halton Learning Foundation's focus is to eliminate financial barriers to learning by providing emergency funds to students in need, as identified by administrators at elementary and high schools across Halton.

So far this school year, the HLF has provided \$17,000 in assistance to students across the region.

The Halton Learning Foundation provides emergency help for stu-

dents in need, post-secondary scholarships and money to assist schools that have classroom needs that aren't met by core education funding.

The foundation also provides funds to schools to provide enriched learning experiences in areas such as arts and music, healthy active living and technology.

This year's Benefit Bash will feature performances by several student musicians and local rock band Midlife Chaos. One of its members is Jeff Blackwell, the former Halton

public board associate director and current executive officer of human resources.

Silent auction

A silent auction will be supplemented this year with a live auction featuring vacation getaways. Cost to attend the gala is \$125 per person or \$900 for a table of eight. It includes a gourmet dinner, cocktails, guest speakers and a raffle. Visit www.haltonlearningfoundation.ca for more information or to register.

Assisting Syrian refugees chance for nation to lead globally: professor

challenge, she says, "There is nothing but support for the project." But the project wasn't without skeptics, says Shaarei Beth-El's Rabbi Stephen Wise. Some members of his congregation were hesitant about helping people from Syria, a long-time enemy of Israel. Then there was the United Church of Canada's decision to boycott products made or linked to Israeli settle-

ments on Palestinian land.

"There was initially some discomfort working with the other groups," Wise says, "but we have built strong bonds and trust with the United Church and the Muslim community over the years through honest dialogues. There is less fear of the others."

"Most of us came to this country as Holocaust survivors," he continues. "In the 1930s, we were the refugees. We

had nowhere to turn to. The world turned its back on Jews. We just couldn't do that to somebody else."

Dr. Aliya Khan of Canadians in Support of Refugees in Dire Need, an endocrinologist and McMaster University professor, says helping Syrian refugees "is an opportunity for Canada to lead globally."

The project set out to raise \$27,000 but has so far received \$120,000 in

"We are known to be a generous and just nation."

Dr. Aliya Khan

donations.

Khan says she hopes this initiative can show the world how different faith groups can work together and

live in peace through universal humanity.

"All the (three) faiths share the same beliefs in the same prophets. This is an example to the world that we can live in harmony and peace with each other. We are not going to allow our religions to be distorted to suit other's war agenda."

"We are known to be a generous and just nation."

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