



Vietnamese Community create walkathon to raise \$100,000 to help Rohingya refugee crisis

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

On 15 September, the Vietnamese Community in Australia - Victorian Chapter (VCA-VIC) along with local migrant communities, will walk as one across Princes Park in Carlton to support the UNHCR's efforts to bring aid to those suffering from the fastest growing refugee crisis in the world, the Rohingya refugee crisis. Created by VCA-VIC, the Walk for Humanity walkathon will start as a leisurely walk across the park and will end at the Walk for Humanity Global Village. The village has been designed to reflect the true journey of what it means to be a refugee. Different migrant communities will be present and will open up about their personal refugee journeys, share some of their cuisine and perform from their culture. There will also be food trucks, activities for children, DJ and a chance to meet local community leaders.

The VCA-VIC group was formed in 1976 and incorporated in 1987, it is the peak representative body for all Vietnamese in Victoria. The organisation's focus is to promote and preserve Vietnamese cultural heritage and identity, and empower Vietnamese Australians to actively participate in all aspects of Australian society. "Hearing about the crisis really brought us back to our early days of settlement here in Australia." Says Vice President of VCA-VIC, Andrew Do. "We know how it feels to flee your home country in fear of violence and persecution. As soon as we heard about this, we decided to do something to help the Rohingya."

The Rohingya are a stateless Muslim minority in Myanmar. Following outbreaks of violence on 25 August 2017, the Rohingya were forced to flee to Bangladesh in search of safety. Hundreds of thousands of people walked for days through jungles and across mountains; others braved dangerous sea voyages across the Bay of Bengal to find refuge. They have reported traumatic experiences including murder, torture, rape and their villages being torched to the ground. The UNHCR are leading the support efforts in Bangladesh to help the Rohingya with shelter, core relief items, clean water, emergency nutrition, healthcare and protection.

"We were once refugees and now have the opportunity to help other refugees in need." Says Andrew, "We understand the heartache, the difficulties of learning a new language and want to help our fellow migrant communities find their way to thrive in Australia. Bringing other community groups together is just the beginning."

VCA-VIC have pledged to raise \$100,000 for the Rohingya crisis. The group is at 85% of their fundraising goal following the Vietnamese Concert that was held in July 2018. They hope to reach their target through the Walk for Humanity walkathon.

All funds raised by the walkathon will contribute towards the United Nations Refugee Agency's (UNHCR) efforts in Bangladesh to provide life-saving aid and shelter.

"It's absolutely inspiring to see the drive and generosity of the Vietnamese community and other diaspora groups reaching out to others caught in tragic circumstances." Says, National Director of Australia for UNHCR Naomi Steer, "The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) relies almost entirely on voluntary contributions so community support like this is vital for emergency relief efforts. This special event will provide safe water, medicine, shelter and other life-saving supplies."

The Vietnamese community in Australia has long supported Australia for UNHCR. In 2016, the community raised \$500,000 to assist Syrian refugees. Participants will need to purchase a ticket to take part in the walkathon. Wheelchair access is available and dogs are welcome but will need to be on a leash at all times.

EVENT DETAILS

Time: Registrations open at 9:00am and the walkathon begins at 11:00am

Date: Saturday 15 September 2018

Register now to walk and raise funds: <https://registration.everydayhero.com/ps/event/WalkforHumanityWalkathon/>

Website: <https://www.everydayhero.com.au/event/walkforhumanity>

KEY INFORMATION

Each participant will have access to their own online fundraising portal, which family and friends can donate

to: <https://registration.everydayhero.com/ps/event/WalkforHumanityWalkathon/>

Participants will have the opportunity to learn about different communities and their migrant stories along the walk. The walk will finish at the Global Village - a celebration of our multiculturalism where different communities will showcase their food, traditions, stories and games. Participants will need to register between 9.15am – 10.45am, and the walk will commence at 11:00am. Participants will receive an event T-shirt to wear during the walk. This must be kept on for the duration of the walkathon. Reminder: dogs will need to be on a leash at all times. VCA-VIC

VCA-Vic is the peak representative body for Vietnamese people in Victoria. It was established in 1976 to assist Vietnamese Australians integrate and

resettle in Australia.

Australia for UNHCR

Australia for UNHCR is the National Partner of the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR). Australia for UNHCR is an Australian charity, which fundraises to provide life-changing humanitarian support to refugees and other displaced and stateless people supported by UNHCR.

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