



MARYGROVE COLLEGE

## **Background Information**

### **Marygrove College Calls on President Obama to Resolve the Moral Crisis Of Thousands of Refugee Children Fleeing the Violence in Central America**

DETROIT, MICH., July 17, 2014 – Dr. David J. Fike, the president of Marygrove College, a Catholic liberal arts institution in Detroit, Mich., today called upon President Barack Obama to provide leadership in resolving the moral crisis of thousands of refugee children fleeing the violence in Central America and seeking safe haven in America.

In the first-of-its-kind statement by a U.S. college president since this crisis began, Dr. Fike stated that Marygrove College is committing college resources to provide education, shelter and other assistance to the refugees.

“We are calling on President Obama to recognize these children as refugees,” said Dr. Fike, adding that “if he does so, we are prepared to do our part to help.”

Among the issues accompanying this initiative are the following:

#### **The support Marygrove College is prepared to provide:**

Marygrove College would consider housing youth between the ages of 16 and 24 years of age in available excess beds in the College’s newly renovated residence hall (and former convent). As a long-standing institution with deep relationships throughout the Detroit region, the College is also committed to providing leadership to build a network of community-based organizations, including churches, in order to place families and children in appropriate settings, if the President acts to rescind the proposal to “fast track” authority to expedite their deportation.

#### **The services Marygrove College is prepared to provide to the refugees who would live on its campus:**

In addition to housing in a safe and secure environment, the College would be able to feed and offer customized educational programming.

**The number of refugees Marygrove College is prepared to serve:**

The College may have as many as 20 rooms available on one floor of the former convent and newly renovated residence hall in order to house 16- to 24-year-olds.

**The cost of this initiative to the College:**

The College's annual tuition is \$19,936 per student. The College's room and board is \$9,290 per student. The total value of college support would depend on how this humanitarian crisis unfolds and, if the President demonstrates moral leadership, the precise number of excess rooms that would be available at that time.

**The reason Marygrove College is taking this position in support of individuals who are so far away from Detroit when there is so much need in Detroit:**

President David Fike believes it is wrong to characterize the college's response to this humanitarian crisis as "either/or." Marygrove works hard to provide financial support and education for young people in need of education here in Detroit. In fact, Marygrove is providing more than \$6 million in scholarships a year, most of which supports students from Detroit. Many of these students represent the first generation in local low-income families to earn a college degree. Marygrove alumni give generously to support these scholarships and knowing that the values of love, compassion, reconciliation, and justice were instilled and reinforced during their time at Marygrove, President Fike hopes and expects these alumni would respond even more generously as a result of this action.

President Fike goes on to say, "Again, I believe it is wrong to characterize our action as 'either/or.' I can see from news reports that some people in this country choose to respond to this crisis out of fear and choose to characterize it as 'other people' taking something from 'us.' But, Jesus does not call upon us to respond to our fellow human beings' needs from a position of fear and selfishness. And, fundamentally, I believe the Marygrove community views our response not as something being taken from us but as an opportunity to offer leadership that lifts up this country's most cherished values and an opportunity to experience the joy and love of serving those in need. Moreover, this initiative is centered in all the values that we seek to instill in the students we serve – love of fellow people, especially those in need, and the importance of Christian leadership in times of crisis."

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