

# Valeda House Challenge



ELK ISLAND  
CATHOLIC SCHOOLS  
*Seeing Christ in Everyone*

At the beginning of the school year, Elk Island Catholic Schools (EICS) adopted Valeda House, a ministry of Catholic Social Services (CSS), as its faith theme for all schools throughout the year. The faith theme is used in our division to inspire each and every one of us to do better - by making our communities stronger and more enriched.

## Challenge Presented

Valeda House serves as a home for up to six young women, who either have young children or are expecting. Valeda House is operated entirely through donations and offers much-needed support to those who otherwise have found themselves without and alone.

Valeda House not only a home to new mothers, it also offers a variety of programming to help them become stronger and more independent - helping them to build a solid foundation for their family - now and into the future.

With operations entirely dependent on donations, CSS issued a call for support. Some may even call it a challenge, or a mission. EICS saw it as such and answered that call. Students, teachers, staff and parents joined forces to be a Valeda House champion; proving, once again, that we are stronger together as a faith community - rather than separate and apart.

## Challenge Accepted

By simply answering the call to the challenge, our EICS community was given a real opportunity to directly help the moms and babies at Valeda House. The struggle is real for many of these moms, and thanks to Valeda House, and the extra support EICS provided during this challenge, these moms now have a solid foundation of support, a warm place to call home and help to achieve independence.

## We Are EICS

The results of our hard work and dedication have finally paid off with over \$32,000 in cash and in-kind donations - and the number continues to rise with additional fundraising efforts still ongoing!

Each school within our division came up with creative ways to raise funds for this worthy challenge - from bake sales and performing arts presentations to student art auctions and read-a-thons. Our community of schools raised money and collected or purchased numerous, in-kind donations, including: furniture, cribs, formula, toys, diapers and blankets. Every single school - the parents, students and staff - rose above and beyond expectations, and for this, we are overjoyed.



## The Power of Many

However, one school on its own can't match the strength of our entire school community. Our strength and unity is where our power to affect real change lies. And the result of our committed and unified efforts is nothing short of amazing - **over \$32,000 with more to come!** By working together, EICS is a powerhouse that can lift others up in support and faith. When we put our minds, energy, faith and spirit towards a goal - there is nothing we can't accomplish.

*Images (Top): St. Theresa students (Below L-R): Ecole Pere Kenneth Kearns Students; Staff from Archbishop Jordan after a day of landscaping at Valeda House; St. Theresa students; St. John XXIII students*



**What can one school division with five communities, 6000+ students, and thousands more parents and community members accomplish when they reach for the same goal?**

Well over **\$32,000 and still counting.**

Plus thousands more of in-kind donations - including toys, clothing, cars seats, furniture, food, baked goods, transportation, and the gift of time.

It's easy to see how much stronger we are as one community. All of our schools did a tremendous job in raising funds and awareness of Valeda House and the people it serves. Our 2018 challenge to support Valeda House and Catholic Social Services was a success; however, continued support is needed to ensure Valeda House is successful. Our mission does not end with the school year - there are more moms with new babies that need Valeda House support. Let's continue to keep Valeda House and all who they serve in our prayers.

Funding for Valeda is provided through community support and the Sign of Hope campaign through Catholic Social Services, an annual fundraising campaign for ministries offered by Catholic Social Services. To learn more about Catholic Social Services and the important work they do, please visit their website at [www.cssalberta.ca](http://www.cssalberta.ca) and generously support the Sign of Hope campaign.



*Students from OLMP in Camrose during the Flower Fundraiser for Valeda House*

#### **EICS Central Learning Office**

\$900 in grocery gift cards, 9 gift packages, \$3,044 - Silent auction and donations \$500 from Staples Canada via EICS, \$1000 from Amam Builders via EICS Handmade quilts - from Our Lady of Perpetual Help parish

#### **Archbishop Jordan Catholic High School - Sherwood Park**

Bus tickets, stroller, Starve-a-thon fundraiser - \$5000

#### **Holy Redeemer Catholic School - Ardrossan**

Gifts-in-kind including a car seat, new toys and games, cash donations and many boxes of food and much needed hygiene items.

#### **Holy Spirit Catholic School - Sherwood Park**

Bus tickets, new toys, clothing and \$700 from the schools' Lent fundraiser

#### **Jean Vanier Catholic School - Sherwood Park**

\$400 - December fundraiser and a Mothers Day Spa organized by two students.

#### **École Père Kenneth Kearns Catholic School - Sherwood Park**

Cards and flower bouquets for the moms of Valeda house, plus \$4312 raised from their February Read-a-thon fundraiser.

#### **Madonna Catholic School - Sherwood Park**

\$1040 raised through fundraisers including: Christmas Concert, Mothers Day and Bend the Rule Friday - plus food items, coffee gift cards and flowers to Valeda House moms for Mother's Day.

#### **École Our Lady of Perpetual Help Catholic School - Sherwood Park**

3 iPads, plus handmade knit baby blankets and Walmart gift cards.

#### **Our Lady of the Angels Catholic School - Fort Saskatchewan**

Bus tickets, play pen, high chair, stroller, car seats, baby monitors, clothing, diapers, baby wipes, formula, toys, books and blankets.

#### **Our Lady of Mount Pleasant Catholic School - Camrose**

\$800 raised through the schools' Lent fundraiser

#### **St. John Paul II Catholic School - Fort Saskatchewan**

\$500 from student-art silent auction; household items, hygiene and infant products including formula and toys.

#### **St. John XXIII Catholic School - Fort Saskatchewan**

\$4694 raised through various initiatives including a fundraiser with the Oil Kings, Kindergarten Art Show, Pokemon and bake sales - plus blankets, comforters and gift cards.

#### **St. Luke Catholic School - South Cooking Lake**

\$885 raised through silent auction and Lenten fundraiser, plus grocery gift cards, welcome baskets

#### **St. Martin's Catholic School - Vegreville**

\$426 raised through their Grade 6 "Greek agoras" market fundraiser, plus toys, diapers, clothing, toiletries, and books.

#### **St. Mary's Catholic School - Vegreville**

Furniture including a bed, crib, rocking chair, excersaucers and booster chairs.

#### **St. Patrick Catholic School - Camrose**

\$1056 raised through their Lent-a-Hand fundraiser.

#### **St. Theresa Catholic School - Sherwood Park**

Over \$6595 raised through a variety of fundraisers, including: bake and drink sales, clothing drives, Advent through the Arts show (performing arts classes), Hawks Hockey Challenge, Winter Concert, Hats Off Day, and a Business Fair.