

December 9, 2020

## ***Elk Island Catholic School Division Employees Stuff A Stocking This Christmas Season***

*Sherwood Park...* Employees at Elk Island Catholic School Division are getting into the true spirit of Christmas during the Advent season by participating in the Catholic Social Services' (CSS) *Stuff a Stocking for Sign of Hope* initiative. Employees are creating teams or individually donating to the initiative in order to bring Christmas joy to vulnerable women and children.

Donations received through this campaign will go towards purchasing gifts, stockings, and Christmas trees for over 100 women and children currently seeking refuge at CSS shelters. For many of the clients, these might be the only gifts they receive this year and stands as a symbol that they are loved and valued by the community we all call home.

For over 37 years, Catholic Social Services has been responding to the evolving needs of the most vulnerable individuals in our communities. From services for at-risk women and children, to programs supporting the recently housed, the donations received from the *Sign of Hope* campaign provides the opportunity to change lives.

Beginning in the Fall of 2017, Elk Island Catholic Schools reached out to Catholic Social Services' Valeda House to adopt them as our faith theme for the entire 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. Valeda House serves as a home for up to six young women, who either have young children or are expecting. It is not only just a home for 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.

The last number of years, each school in the EICS division has come up with unique fundraising and creative ways to raise funds for this worthy challenge. The total in-kind donations and cash that has been provided to Valeda House since the challenge began is over \$100,000.

To find out more about the CSS' *Sign of Hope* Initiative, please visit <https://signofhope.cssalberta.ca/>

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