

Ride For Refuge

My name is Leo Johnson and I am the Event Coordinator for the RIDE FOR REFUGE scheduled to take place on October 16 in Hamilton this year.

From its humble beginnings with 25 riders and a handful of volunteers, the Ride for Refugees now the RIDE FOR REFUGE (the "RIDE") has swollen to 3600 riders and over 1000 volunteers. And while that small inaugural ride raised a very respectable \$25,000, last year an amazing \$860,000 was raised in 17 cities across Canada, USA and Australia. Since 2004 the RIDE has directed \$1.9 million to the refugee "Impact Programs" of International Teams and qualified Ride Partner Grant recipients. Effective February 1st, the Ride for Refugees officially re-launch as "The Ride for Refuge". This subtle name change will help the RIDE extend its reach and impact significantly. Hundreds more churches and ministry partners will be able to use the RIDE not only to finance their work of reaching and caring for refugees, but to reach out and care for others in desperate need of refuge as well.

The Ride for Refuge offers churches and charitable organizations an innovative way to raise money for their own work with the displaced, vulnerable and exploited. Through the RIDE Partner Grant Program churches and charities can now receive 60% of the money raised by supporting teams of riders that choose to ride and raise money on their behalf. **Raise \$25,000 or more and keep 70% of the money raised.** New for 2010: a bonus for churches and organizations that really engage the RIDE as a key fundraising tool.

The Vulnerable: **The numbers are heart-breaking** - an estimated 100 million children orphaned or abandoned worldwide. War and HIV have left 100 million women widowed. In North America 3.7 million are counted as homeless with a third of those children. Marginalized and devalued, the vulnerable are supported through the RIDE by churches and charities who provide shelter, food, education and encouragement.

The Exploited: **The numbers are sickening** - every week an estimated 25,000 children are sold or rented for sex across the globe. Human trafficking is a billion dollar business with North America liberally sharing in the shameful exploitation of thousands of women and children. Child-labor and restaveks (children given as house servants) remains in demand. The RIDE engages these horror stories through churches and organizations providing advocacy, intervention and post-traumatic counseling services matched with direct caring aid and support.

The Displaced: The numbers are staggering - 67 million refugees and internally displaced people according to the 2007 UN report. Many are women and children fleeing war, persecution or like in Haiti, environmental disaster. The RIDE partners with churches and well-known refugee-serving organizations providing resources that support their programs including relief and humanitarian aid, settlement, housing, immigration advice, education and counseling.

You and/or your Church/Organization can get involved: [Sign-up to help](#) at any of the RIDE locations. There are many positions to choose from including set-up, sweep vehicle drivers, rest-

stop cheerleaders and registration hosts. Training and supervision provided at all locations. *Note: the RIDE qualifies as volunteer hours for students*

[Sign-up as team captain](#) and recruit friends and family to ride with you, or [Sign-up as an individual rider](#) and raise personal pledges. RIDE location offers a compliment of routes that will fit your fitness and ability level, whether it's 10, 25, 50, 75, or 100 km. Riders 12 and under must be accompanied by an adult parent, guardian or leader at all times

[Support a rider or team](#) - go to the website and give securely online. As a former refugee who spent eight years on two refugee camps separated from my entire family as a teenager, the RIDE has is a source of empowerment for me. It is also an opportunity for me to give back and share my story. I am available at your convenience for a presentation for a presentation or meeting with your group on how the RIDE can be utilized by your Church/Organization.

For information on our Financial Management and specific details of the RIDE, feel free to contact me or check the website: <http://www.rideforrefuge.org/facts Rideabout.php>

Look forward to working with you.

Leo Johnson